

HOW TO

Be A Conscious Partner

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BRIEF NOTES FROM A RELATIONSHIP COACH AND THERAPIST ON
HOW TO BE MORE AWARE AND CENTRED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP
THIS YEAR AND IN THE ONES TO COME.

Assess before you speak

Honesty is considered one of the most essential parts of any relationship. But one must also always be kind. Before saying something, assess its importance. Is this going to help me elevate the relationship? If not, it is better to not say it as it might be just out of anger. If you answer “yes” and it is a difficult conversation nonetheless – one great way is to set an intention before the conversation actually starts. Starting with something along the lines of “I have to speak with you about this and I am angry but I want us to solve it” will help set the tone and allow the other person to listen better and not become defensive. Addressing uncomfortable issues that might be bothering you in the relationship is helpful, but how you go about it will deeply impact the result of that conversation.

Not everything is red

Every person is unique – that also means they come with their own set of red flags. Give the connection some time. A person can only pretend for so long. If there are certain behaviours that you feel are red flags – they most probably are. Some common ones can be dishonesty, inconsistency and abusive behaviour. In other instances, it is also important to think about what particular behaviours are red flags in your book, because this differs from one person to the other. A serious relationship is a long-term scenario. Pay attention to actions – and do not depend solely on the other person’s words or solely on your own speculations. When it comes to your own self, it is very difficult to spot red flags. You need to develop self-awareness and analyse your patterns so that such red flags can be worked on.

Needs are necessary

Being patient and considerate of the other person’s need for time and space becomes all the more important in times where waiting for anything, in dating or otherwise, feels so cumbersome. But do not put yourself second. Prioritise your needs and wants, otherwise that relationship will not fulfil you. A connection or partner should not be your only source of happiness. You have to build a life outside of it, and relationships are just one part of it. This requires self-awareness too. The more conscious you are of your needs and the more willing you are to understand your partner’s, the easier it will be to strike a balance between giving and receiving.

Be aware of the buzzwords

Many new terms have entered our dating vocabulary and it can be overwhelming to try to understand and use them correctly. Gaslighting being the most common buzzword. When someone gaslights you, they completely invalidate your experience, saying that what happened did not actually happen and that you are just imagining it or making it up. It is not the same as justification, when people try to make you see their perspective and give you reasons for why they did what they did. Justification can have acknowledgement of the problem and of your feelings. Gaslighting has none of that. Take some time to think about the behaviour or interaction that has bothered you to better understand what it was.

Communication is key, but how much?

It is important to be mindful of what you share and especially how you share it. It is common for people to share their thoughts with their close friends or partner – but one great practice that actually helps strengthen that bond is to ask before sharing stuff – especially heavy stuff. The other person might not always have the headspace to listen to all of our perspectives, thoughts and experiences and may feel bogged down after a sharing session - and if that happens, the one sharing might feel unwelcome or question the bond. Hence, asking before communication is also a great practice.

There’s no perfect time

Everyone moves at a different pace when it comes to being ready. Due to unresolved issues carried forward from the last relationship, it is natural to feel afraid to commit to something new. You may lose out on a connection that has potential because those apprehensions have not been dealt with. So, it is good to take your time to process the hurt or negativity that may have brewed in your head in past experiences. It is helpful to reflect on how entangled you still are in the past and understand your own needs before investing yourself in something new.

Cultivate self-awareness

Self-awareness is a journey. Practices like journaling, meditation and therapy can help you in this journey. Regardless of whether there is a partner in the picture or not, it is something that is needed in every aspect of life. The more aware and in-tune one is with their own behavioural patterns, characteristics and emotions, the easier it gets to understand someone else.