



How to balance separateness and togetherness

Activity 1 Closeness and distance

Experiment with the different notions that you both have of physical space.

Start by standing in opposite corners of the room. One partner is still, the other moves.

The moving partner slowly walks toward the other. The still partner pays attention to what they notice as their partner is advancing. When the still partner notices any form of uncomfortableness they indicate to the advancing partner to stop where they are.

Now switch. Afterwards share your experience.

Activity 2 Having fun

Each of you writes down a set of activities that you enjoy and would particularly enjoy doing with your partner outside of the house, e.g. going swimming, going for a walk, going to an exhibition or inside the house e.g. dancing, having sex, looking at photo albums etc.

Next share your lists and see whether you can draw up a combined list of activities that you both agree on.

Agree to do one of these activities together once per week or fortnight (or whatever frequency you think you can manage.)

Activity 3 Your contribution to differentiation in the relationship

1. Write down a list of things that you witness other people do that you do not find helpful in a relationship e.g. shouting at each other, sulking, constant bickering.
2. Next, think of things that you witnessed other people do or that you have read about or seen in a movie that you think contribute to a strong relationship.
3. Identify one of the items on the first list that you frequently display in your relationship. What would you like to stop doing? How will you go about this?
4. Consider what kind of partner you would like to be including items from your second list. What would you like to start doing?
5. Jointly, consider how you can help each other integrate different ways of behaviour.

Activity 4 Sharing how you feel with each other

Agree to both make time to talk about something that you would like your partner to know.

Agree that you won't respond to what is said during the share. If a response is needed wait until the next day.

Darken the room and put a candle between you. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Both of you look at the candle while one of you is talking. The speaker talks freely for ten minutes. The listener does nothing but listening while looking at the candle. When the timer goes off you switch roles. End this practice with a positive acknowledgement , e.g. hugging, blow out the candle together and then continue with your day/evening.