

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

**factoid** 44% of UA students are engaged, married or exclusively dating one person. (2006 Health and Wellness Survey, n= 3102)

## Q. How do you build a healthy relationship?

A. Great question! Building a healthy relationship is probably one of life's biggest challenges, but the rewards are both defining and enduring. Clearly, there is no one way to make a relationship work, but they do share some common elements. We've all heard that trust and communication are essential, but the real key is finding everyday ways to establish and reinforce these connections with your partner. Think about how you convey your appreciation for each other in small acts – you may be surprised by how much they say.

A good relationship isn't always a bowl of cherries, nor is it predictably easy. Disagreements are inevitable, so learning to effectively address and resolve conflict is as important as sharing in the good times. And speaking of sharing, remember that interaction is a two way street that requires both individuals to contribute. Give and take should refer to your sense of compromise, not the roles you adopt in the relationship.

Also, try to keep things realistic with plenty of humor. Relationships that thrive tend to be based on down-to-earth expectations, not fairy tale myths. Your friend or significant other may not always be able to read your mind, fulfill your dreams or constantly make you happy. Sadly, these qualities are strictly the domain of magical, telepathic dogs.

Research tells us that having healthy relationships – both amorous and platonic – are (surprise!) good for our health. People with meaningful partnerships tend to have better support networks, which enrich our lives, and may even lengthen them. Unfortunately, technological and social changes among Americans are expanding our address books while shrinking the number of people we can actually confide in and count on.

So go ahead, take a chance and make a new friend or ask someone out – it just might be one New Year's resolution worth keeping.

Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES and David Salafsky, MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.

