

Creating Balance in Your Relationship

Objective

To identify the signs of signs of imbalance and use tools to rebalance your relationship for increased harmony.

What to Know

Many relationships end because one partner feels overwhelmed by the burden of doing everything. This can lead to resentment and exhaustion, eventually causing the relationship to break down. This experience is not uncommon, but unfortunately, the signs of imbalance in a relationship are not always obvious. When the signs are there, couples often struggle to find effective ways to restore harmony. Some signs of imbalance in a relationship include:

- One person doing most household chores or tasks.
- Feeling insecure.
- A sense of unfulfillment.
- One person always apologizes.
- Financial issues.
- One person makes all the decisions.
- Sacrificing one's desires.
- One person always seems to make excuses.

Can you think of other signs of imbalance? If so, write them down.

Maintaining balance requires effort, communication, and mutual respect. Here are some strategies to help keep your relationship balanced.

1. Foster Open and Honest Communication. Perhaps you expect your partner to know what you want even when you have not clearly communicated your desires. And, when they fail to know what you want, you may become frustrated and feel like they do not listen to you – when in reality, you did not communicate!

What can you do?

- Regularly discuss your thoughts, feelings, and concerns with your partner to ensure resentment does not build up. For example, if you want your partner to do more around the house, tell them.
- Practice active listening by paying attention and validating your partner's feelings when they communicate their concerns to you. Avoid becoming defensive and see things from their perspective.

2. Build Respect and Prioritize Acknowledgement. The more time you spend with your partner, the more familiar they become. Sometimes this can reduce the respect you have for each other. If you do not feel respected (and even feel like your partner undermines you), you may withdraw and feel underappreciated.

What can you do?

- Acknowledge your partner's efforts even when you think they should be doing more. Acknowledgment and respect can be uplifting and encourage them to do more.
- Focus on respecting each other's opinions, even if they differ from your own.

3. Clearly Outline Responsibilities. Sometimes tasks are left incomplete or are ignored because one partner thinks the other is doing it. In some cases, only one person ends up doing everything. Over time, they become tired and feel like their partner is not doing their part.

What can you do?

- Clearly outline tasks and share household chores and responsibilities fairly. This does not mean you have to alternate doing everything. You may find your partner enjoys doing some things, while you enjoy doing others.
- Check in and ensure each of you contribute to the relationship in meaningful ways.

4. Spend Quality Time Together. Spend time together doing activities you both enjoy. This will allow you to get closer, build trust, learn more about your partner, and create an environment where you can understand their expectations.

What can you do?

- Plan a special evening where you both choose a recipe, shop for the ingredients, and cook the meal together. This activity encourages teamwork and communication. While cooking, you can share stories, learn about each other's culinary preferences, and enjoy the satisfaction of creating something together. End the evening with a cozy dinner, savoring the meal you both prepared.
- Spend a day hiking, biking, or exploring a nearby park or nature reserve. Being outdoors provides a refreshing change of scenery and a chance to disconnect from daily routines. You can have meaningful conversations and share moments of discovery. Bring along a picnic to enjoy at a scenic spot, creating lasting memories and strengthening your bond.

5. Frequently Discuss Finances. While finances are a sensitive topic, they are also a significant contributor to conflict and turmoil in relationships.

What can you do?

- Schedule time to sit down and discuss your financial habits and goals.
- Ensure you and your partner are clear regarding how you want to handle your finances, spending, and savings. Setting financial goals together will help you work toward a goal together as a team.

6. Share Your Goals and Values. Values shape who you are, and your goals direct your life path. Personal values and goals should be discussed in the early stages of a relationship as they act as a compass directing where you are headed as a couple.

What can you do?

- Align your long-term goals and values, such as career ambitions, family planning, and lifestyle choices to make it easier for the two of you to work together toward those goals.
- It is natural to have different goals at times, and that is perfectly okay. If your partner understands and supports you, they will contribute their share and provide the support you need.

7. You Both Have to Do the Work. Balanced relationships require work. The above suggestions will not be effective if implemented by only one person.

What can you do?

- Regularly check in with each other and reflect on your relationship to see how you can make it better.
- Remember that relationships are a work in progress and sometimes they take longer to work out than others.
- Spend time with and get to know your partner so you can identify what works best for your relationship.

This worksheet is designed to help you recognize signs of imbalance and provide tools to rebalance your relationship.

What to Do

Do you think your relationship is imbalanced? Why or why not?

Have you addressed balance with your partner? Why or why not?

Complete each of the following activities.

1. For one month, set aside 30 minutes once a week to have a communication check-in with your partner and discuss your thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Practice active listening by

paying attention and validating your partner's feelings. Try to avoid becoming defensive and try to see things from their perspective. In the following chart, write down the date, note the topics discussed, and write down how it went. Finally, write down what the plan is, if anything.

Date	Topic(s) discussed	How did it go?	Plan

2. Each day, write down at least one thing you appreciate about your partner and share it with them at the end of the week for one month. Acknowledge your partner's efforts, even for small tasks. Focus on respecting each other's opinions, even if they differ from your own.

After one month, write down how it went doing this activity with your partner.

3. Create a list of household chores and responsibilities and discuss how to share them fairly. Write down who is responsible for each task. Use a separate piece of paper if you require more space.

Household Chores and Responsibilities	Who is responsible?

Regularly review the list to ensure both partners are contributing in a meaningful way.

4. Plan and engage in activities that you both enjoy. What will you do, and when will you do it? Write down your ideas below. Try to plan one activity/week for one month.

5. Schedule a monthly meeting to discuss your financial habits and goals. Discuss how you want to handle your finances, spending, and savings. Create shared financial goals to work toward together. Write down the date and time of the first meeting and write down notes about what you wish to discuss with your partner.

Remember, it is important to regularly check in with each other and reflect on your relationship. Discuss what is working, and what could be improved. Relationships are a work in progress and require effort from both partners.

After completing each of the activities, do you think your relationship is more balanced and harmonized? Why or why not?

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
