

Five Most Common Mistakes in Love Relationships

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Despite our best efforts, we all sometimes fall short in our attempts to form happy, healthy bonds with those we love. During my years of experience working with people who have relationship problems, these are the five most common mistakes I've found, all of which can cause a relationship to deteriorate.

Mistake #1: We over-caretake. We equate love with caretaking and pleasing, and we often bend over backwards to help, care for and attend to those we love. If our loved ones don't appreciate our efforts (or tell us we're treating them in a patronizing or disrespectful manner), we don't understand their reactions and we end up feeling hurt and resentful. Caring for others is wonderful, but unhealthy caretaking can show up as controlling behavior. Even worse, we can lose ourselves in the process of over-caring for others.

Mistake #2: We try to change or fix our loved ones. We may disguise this as "helping," but we're really trying to make others be what we want them to be. In effect, we're telling them they're wrong to be the way they are.

Mistake #3: We expect our loved ones to make us happy and complete. In reality, there's no way another human being can **make** you happy. Other people can contribute, but happiness is a condition you essentially create within yourself.

Mistake #4: We criticize our loved ones, making them appear to be in the wrong. I can't emphasize this point enough. It's the most destructive mistake of all. People are different. They think, respond and act differently than we do. Unless their behavior is destructive in some way, we need to be accepting and understanding and appreciate our differences. Or we will destroy our relationships – very rapidly.

Mistake #5: We don't set appropriate limits and keep healthy boundaries with our loved ones. We allow them to mistreat us and disrespect us. We don't express our needs and desires clearly and appropriately. We let hard feelings build up until we either explode or withdraw.

So, have you or someone you love developed any of these habits? If so, you can learn to interact with others in ways that are more productive and nurturing. With some self-examination and concerted efforts to change your old behaviors and attitudes, you can communicate effectively, love unconditionally and have healthy emotional boundaries with the people you care about most.