



Keeping things fresh

Welcome to the RelationKit mindfulness series. In this session we will consider how we can keep things fresh and exciting with our partners.

When we first meet our partners, it can feel really exciting, and we can feel on top of the world and all loved up. But after some time and with more to do or to look after, such as kids, these feelings may wear off a little and it may feel stale or boring between you at times. But there are things we can do to keep the relationship alive and exciting.

So find a comfy position now, and take a moment to have a good look around you. Notice something about the room that you are in. Notice something that you haven't noticed before. Become aware of your body sitting or lying here. Is it straight or leaning to one side a little? Can you feel the air flowing upon your skin, noticing its temperature maybe?

Now close your eyes and allow your awareness to come down into your body. Take some deep breaths, feeling your body breathing in and feeling your body breathing out. Can you notice something different or new about your breath, like whether you breathe in one long in-breath or a series of shorter ones? Or do you feel the breath more in one side of your body?

In the same way as you can bring a beginner's mind to your breath or your body, you can bring a beginner's mind to your relationship with your partner to keep it alive.

Stay with your breath to hold you in the present moment, and let's begin to think and to see how we might do this.

Picture your partner in front of you now, and you are going to surprise them with something - maybe you've cooked their favourite meal, or you have a small gift for them. How might they feel getting that? Surprised, joyful, thankful? How might it feel to give it to them? Keeping the excitement and surprise alive can stop you feeling stuck in a rut.

Think about how often you end up sitting on the couch rather than making an effort to do something and how it might feel to arrange a date night every month, where you might you go what might you do together? What type of things did you like doing when you first met? Picture yourself enjoying that time, how your feelings and mood might lift. There might be more talking, laughter, kind touch. You take some time together alone out of the house. How might these regular date nights improve your relationship? Do you have friends that you could do a babysitting swap with so this can happen? And what about trying something new together? It doesn't have to be about going out for a drink or a meal - it could be learning something new, starting a new hobby. This can really help freshen things up and encourages new things to talk about, new interest and 'growing' together.

Consider now: when you are together how much time is spent looking at your phone instead of them? Could you come to an understanding that after maybe after 9pm you have an hour away from your phones to talk about your day, having this time every day to speak to them about what's happened, where you have been, sharing moments? Asking

interested questions about your partner's life can help keep things fresh, like: what was your life like growing up? Or questions about when you first dated to bring back memories such as: what were you attracted to when you first met me? Remind me.

And what about when you are apart from each other and on your phones. Could you send more loving text messages to each other? Imagine how would it feel right now to get one of those. A feeling of being valued, or noticed, or loved.

Think about how might show your partner more affection face to face. How can you greet them when they return home from somewhere? A squeeze and a long hug, a kiss, eye contact? Starting things off on the right foot, creating that loving feeling between you. And it's really important not to forget to say those mushy things to each other that you used to say. We can never tell someone we care about enough and that we love them. Picture yourself saying it more often and how that's received now. Remember to express how you are truly feeling, so that your partner knows. What names did you used to call each other that you maybe now have forgotten to do? Any cute or silly names? Bringing fun into your relationship.

And can you now think about creating some goals that you can work together on as a team, encouraging and being there for each other to achieve them. It may be a money goal, such as saving to go on holiday. It might be a fitness goal like 'couch to 5K'. See yourselves both working together as a team to reach your goals. What would that look like? How would that feel? Again, it might give you new things to talk about and do together.

It's important that we all have hopes and dreams. Maybe you had conversations about those when you first started dating, but they've fallen by the wayside a little now. Make time to talk about what you both still hope for moving on and any dreams that you can help each other turn into a reality. In the words of Walt Disney, *"If you can dream it, you can do it"*.

Take this moment to notice how you feel in your body and in your mind, to have considered these positive steps for you and your partner, keeping things fresh and alive even when there's lots going on around you.

Start to bring your attention back to your breathing now, to the parts of your body that touch the seat or the floor, and then gently blink your eyes back open if they've been closed.

If there's one thing that's really stood out to you in today in this meditation, or something that feels like an easy step you could take today, then go for it, and good luck with it.

See you next time.