

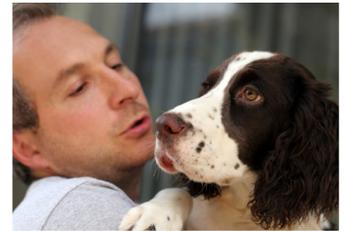


Lasting love: good luck or hard work?

Kids who play sports can truly score!

Counseling: one path to becoming the best “you”

e-Thoughts — My real best friend



Even the most well-matched couples have their ups and downs. Why? Because life is always presenting new challenges. Each requires cooperation, communication, patience and hard work from both partners in the relationship. **More...**

With spring here, your kids may be playing team sports like soccer or baseball. Or perhaps they're taking part in individual sports like tennis or golf. In either case, they're getting a lot more than a workout! **More...**

Have you ever considered individual, family or couples' counseling? Have you been put off by not knowing how counseling actually works? If so, you're not alone! Many people wonder what counseling entails. **More...**

Call me crazy, but my best friend is my dog. **More...**

Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

Lasting love: good luck or hard work?

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Happy, loving couples never argue or disagree. True or false?

The answer: false!

Even the most well-matched couples have their ups and downs. Why? Because life is always presenting new challenges. Each requires cooperation, communication, patience and hard work from both partners in the relationship.

Tips for keeping the “magic” alive¹

So how do couples survive — and even thrive — through the good times and the bad? Here are some tips:

- **Accept.** Differences often attract people to each other. We may be introverted and they’re extroverted; we hate confrontation and they’re ready for an argument. Initially, we may be drawn to these differences in style and personality. Later, those same things can lead to conflict. Remember that no two people are alike. Find ways that both your similarities and differences make you a strong partnership.
- **Appreciate.** It’s easy to harp on things that annoy us about our spouses, partners or friends. How about the things we really like about them? Seek out the positives. Express your admiration out loud to each other.
- **Support.** No couple lives in a vacuum. There are friends, family, jobs and other daily hassles to deal with. Try to see your partner’s side in the stresses of daily living. Decide together how to handle situations that affect you individually or as a couple.

- **Spend time.** Shared experiences help bond relationships. Time together might include athletics, travel, physical intimacy or just sitting side by side to read the Sunday newspaper or watch TV. Nothing fancy required — just a bit of time.
- **Be kind.** Healthy relationships can’t thrive in unhealthy environments. Physical and/or emotional violence are simply not acceptable in caring connections.
- **Communicate.** If you keep your feelings bottled up, you’re more likely to explode at some point. Make time to talk about plans, problems and goals. Be open to compromise. Remember to truly listen to each other.

Finding love may seem like pure luck or an act of fate. But keeping love alive and well takes true commitment and ongoing effort.

¹socialworktoday.com

Kids who play sports can truly score!

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With spring here, your kids may be playing team sports like soccer or baseball. Or perhaps they're taking part in individual sports like tennis or golf. In either case, they're getting a lot more than a workout!

What do children gain from playing sports?

First, let's remember the good time they're having. After all, that's the primary reason for "playing" anything: to have fun!

Beyond the fun, they're also gaining:¹

- **Self-confidence.** Playing sports gives kids the chance to build and improve many skills. Each achievement — big or small — helps kids feel good about themselves. This confidence usually spills over into other aspects of their lives with very positive results.
- **Social skills.** Team spirit, working together toward a goal and getting along with others are all essential social skills. And they're not just important for kids — they extend into positive personal and workplace habits for adults, too.
- **Communication.** Kids learn to receive instruction and take direction in sports. They also learn to share their ideas in acceptable ways. Like social skills, communication plays a critical role in all aspects of youth and later life.
- **Respect for others.** Learning from coaches and other mentors helps teach respect for adults. Dealing with teammates and opponents helps teach respect for other kids — regardless of which team they're on!

- **Self-discipline.** Sports teach kids how to lead and how to follow. Each requires them to rein in their impulses and focus their energies on a goal.
- **Healthy habits.** We've all heard the concerns today about childhood obesity. Playing sports helps children burn calories and stay fit. The President's Council on Fitness and Sports recommends 60 minutes of physical activity each day for children. If kids get into this habit and carry it over to adulthood, there could be a decrease in weight issues, diabetes and even heart disease.

Get your kids out there — and join them if you like!

Encourage your kids to get involved with sports. And consider coaching if you think you'd enjoy it. Sports are a healthy habit for everyone.

¹livestrong.com

Counseling: one path to becoming the best “you”

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Have you ever considered individual, family or couples’ counseling? Have you been put off by not knowing how counseling actually works? If so, you’re not alone! Many people wonder what counseling entails.

What goes on in a counselor’s office?

It’s a mystery to many people. Often, the mystery is scary enough to keep them from ever trying it. Yet counseling is very valuable and well worth a closer look. If you know what to expect in a counseling relationship, you can make a choice based on facts rather than fear.

Why go to counseling?

Many people say they don’t need someone else to tell them what to do, so why go to a therapist? And they’re right! But here’s the fact: good therapists never tell clients what to do. Instead, they:

- Listen closely to what the client has to say.
- Ask questions that help clients think about their concerns from new angles.
- Empower clients to create and even try out actions and behaviors they may not have thought of before.
- Help clients build tools for success.

When is the right time to see a counselor?

There are times in all of our lives when we feel sad, angry, confused or upset. Perhaps we’ve been laid off, had a baby, sent

a child off to college, lost a loved one or experienced conflict at work or home. These events are typical issues that can be addressed in a counselor’s office.

Many turning points in life lend themselves to seeking counseling. That’s because such events force us to make changes. They force us out of our “comfort zone.” When the ground beneath us seems shaky, counseling can often help.

What counselors do and don’t do

Counselors don’t shame, criticize or judge you. They don’t share what goes on in your sessions with anyone else. Everything you say to a therapist is private and confidential.

Counselors are professionals who are on your side, but still objective about what you’re facing or feeling. They can assist you in weighing decisions, building new pathways and reaching your potential in your personal and work life.

Do you really need a counselor?

Can’t you just solve most problems on your own? Sure, maybe you can. But a counselor’s help can turn one-time problem-solving into starting new patterns and making new choices. And that can lead to more happiness and satisfaction in the long run.

e-Thoughts - *My real best friend*

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Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

Call me crazy, but my best friend is my dog.

Okay, so she's not so great at making conversation. She doesn't read or have many thoughts about important events of the day. She can't cook and has zero savvy when it comes to fashion.

BUT...she's never angry, impatient, bored or fed up with me. She's always glad to see me at the end of the day and greets me every night with the same excitement of our first meeting. Our relationship never loses its glow!

Pets are amazing. Whether they're dogs, cats, birds or ferrets, they accept you without condition or question. They even improve your health. Experts say that people who own pets have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure and less depression and anxiety.¹

So, I forgive her cold wet nose in my face because, in exchange, I get wags and wags of love.

¹**webmd.com**

Quality time – *Keeping positive company*

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This material is for informational purposes only. All calls are confidential, except as required by law (i.e., when a person's emotional condition is a threat to himself/herself or others, or there is suspected child, spousal or elder abuse, or abuse to people with disabilities). Services are available to you and your household members, including dependent children up to age 26, whether they live at home or not.

Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change.