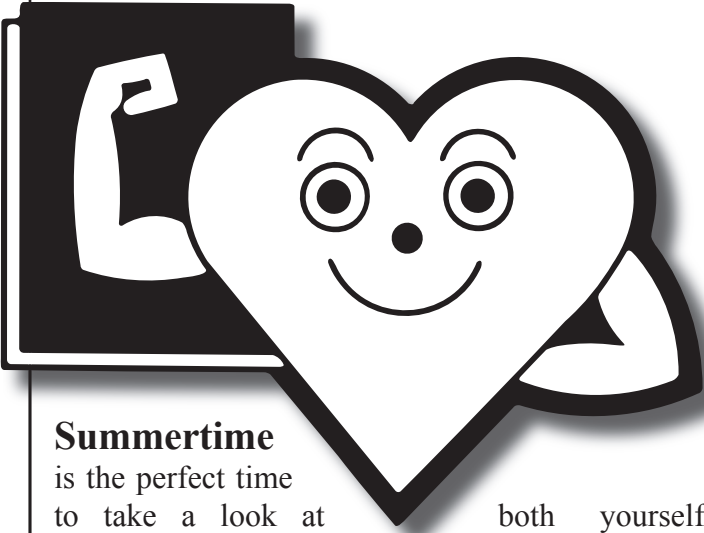


Shape Up Your Relationship

By DR. GOLDSTEIN



Summertime

is the perfect time to take a look at both yourself and your relationship. It's the time that women are wondering how they will fit into last year's clothes, while men may have been romantically dormant. The kids are out of school and the family activities are fast and furious. However, you may have lost sight of the basic reason you are together, and you may have settled into bad relationship habits. As with physical exercise, you have to exercise relationships more to make them stronger. Here are ten things that you can do to shape up your relationship.

- 1. Make** time to put more into your relationship. If you do not make time for the two of you, then you're not exercising your relationship.
- 2. Make** the time specific, exciting and not routine. Change your plans for your planned time, weekly. Short goals are better than long goals. Make it happen.
- 3. Take** turns each week in making the planned time activity. Make it something special for the other person. Remember when you were dating and wanted to please. Do it again and again.
- 4. When** you exercise, you have to push yourself to become stronger and better. Make a conscientious decision to push yourself into doing better in your relationship. This sometimes means doing and saying good things that initially make you uncomfortable. However, it will become easier and make you both stronger, the more you do it.

- 5. Offer** to do something for the other person that they normally don't like to do themselves. In other words, reverse chores or responsibilities every once in awhile. Don't make an announcement, "just do it!"
- 6. In** order to make your heart stronger you have to exercise it. A strong heart will give you a longer and healthier life.
- 7. When** you exercise, you are supposed to change up the pace of your workout so that your body will not get used to the routine. This enhances your strength and endurance. Do the same for your relationship. Do not be predictable. Take positive risks.
- 8. In** physical exercise you have to reinforce yourself with positive affirmations. Say -Yes I can. Yes I can. Yes I can. With a relationship you also need positive affirmations. Say -I love you. I love you. I love you.
- 9. Don't** blame the equipment for not working or causing an injury. Take responsibility for your own actions. Blaming is a bad style of communication. Ask yourself, how I can make this better.
- 10. Be** active with your relationship. The more you exercise it the more you will get out of it.

Dr. Elliot Goldstein is a licensed Clinical Psychologist. His career has spanned over 30 years and has included administering nationally known hospital and drug



treatment programs. He received several awards for program development as well as recognition for facilitating top clinical programs. Dr. Goldstein also developed one of the largest Crisis Intervention Teams in Los Angeles County serving many hospitals, including UCLA NPI. In addition to several clinics, he is the founder and CEO of Allcare Behavioral Services www.allcare.net