

The 9 Most Common Recurring Relationship Issues That Healthy Couples Have – And How To Fix Them

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No relationship is without conflict, whether it's a romantic one or between family members or friends. After all, even though you may feel you know somebody so well – you can read their every thought and want – experience reveals that that's not necessarily true. No matter how happy a couple may look in their Facebook posts, you know that couple and the behind-the-scenes with their day-to-day life, and it's not always 24/7 smiles and Facebook posts. And relationship experts agree that there are some common recurring relationship issues that even the healthiest couples have.

“We all know that arguments and conflicts are a natural part of every relationship in our lives,” [Heidi McBain](#), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and author of *[Life Transitions: Personal Stories of Hope Through Life's Most Difficult Challenges and Changes](#)*, tells Bustle. “However, what is even more important is how we deal with these issues when they show up in our relationships, because they will come up at some point for all of us.” She advises that couples seek counseling if recurring issues become a major problem in your relationship.

“It can be a great way to learn some new, healthier ways of communicating with your partner,” she says. “Counseling can also help you see where some of these unhealthy patterns started (often within your own family of origins) and then teach you ways to break these patterns, so you and your partner can create a happy and healthy relationship together.”

As McBain says, it's all about the way you and your partner work together and deal with your conflicts. Below, relationship experts weigh in on the most common recurring relationship issues, and perhaps you'll identify with some. In any case, you'll know you and your partner are not alone.

1 Money

Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

You may hear that couples often argue about money – anything from one person overspending to the other not managing money well. The moment one money argument may be over, another may begin. Hence, it's an ongoing issue for many couples. “People often have very different ways of dealing with money, especially when it comes to how much they need to have to feel safe and secure in life,” McBain tells Bustle. “It helps to talk openly about how they save and spend, and the sooner they can have these conversations the better (even starting before they are married). Having set financial goals that they are working toward together can also be helpful.”

Dr. Rachel Needle, licensed psychologist and Certified Sex Therapist in West Palm Beach, FL, and the Co-Director of Modern Sex Therapy Institutes, says money is one of the most common sources of conflict in a relationship, whether it's about spending, saving, managing, or sharing it. "In addition, what belongs to who, how much debt each is in, power dynamics, and personality factors also play a role in money conversations and arguments," she tells Bustle. "Our thoughts and feelings about money are often shaped by our personal history with it."

2Sex

Ashley Batz/Bustle

If you guessed that sex is a relationship issue that comes up often, even among healthy couples, you are correct. "Sex is a difficult topic for many to communicate about, and one that often leads to conflict in a relationship," Dr. Needle says. "When communication isn't great anyway, communicating about sex can be even more difficult for most. Conflict about sex can come up for many reasons, including but not limited to: different sexual expectations, desire discrepancy, sexual incompatibility, needs, wants, boredom, and performance issues."

To avoid any misunderstandings around sex, Dr. Needle says that open, honest, and healthy communication is best.

3Bedroom Temperature

Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

Aside from heating things up in the bedroom, sexually, an ongoing conflict among couples also has to do with heating things up in the bedroom thermostat-wise. Dr. Fran Walfish, Beverly Hills family and relationship psychotherapist, author, *The Self-Aware Parent*, regular expert child psychologist on *The Doctors*, CBS TV, and co-star on *Sex Box*, WE tv, tells Bustle. "It is very typical for one partner in the couple to prefer the room cool while the other wants it warm, but it takes two to tango," she tells Bustle. "Compromise is required. It's best to agree to keep the temperature mid-range, around 70 degrees, and the one who prefers it warmer can layer up with blankets and covers."

4Social Media

Ashley Batz/Bustle

Social media— and what role it plays in your romantic relationship — is another recurring relationship issue. "A long stream of relationship issues arise from social media," Margaux Cassuto, relationship expert and matchmaker, *Three Matches*, tells Bustle. "These issues include mistrust from a partner who feels uncomfortable with a new friend request; hurt feelings by social media absence (when one partner doesn't include photos of their partner on

their profile or doesn't update their status to 'in a relationship'); lack of support caused by lack of 'likes' or shares, etc. Given the prevalence of social media in our lives, this problem will usually rear its ugly head more than once."

So with phones not going anywhere anytime soon, what's a couple to do? To overcome this, Cassuto suggests that couples be sensitive to their partner's social media presence. "Try to accommodate their oversharing or under-sharing ways," she says.

5Driving

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When it comes to being in the car with your significant other, can you think of a time when you two disagreed about driving – driving too fast, driving too slow, driving the wrong way, and so on? Driving is another ongoing conflict among couples, according to Dr. Walfish. "Often, the passenger partner will direct the driving partner to slow down or speed up when they are driving," she says. "When you are both in the car, both partners must feel safe. If the driving partner is driving over the speed limit, tailgating, or practicing any other risky behaviors, it is reasonable and fair for the passenger to request safe driving."

But Dr. Walfish says the real challenge here is this: "Most people 'hate' to be told what to do and how to do it. But safety comes first. Loving partners in a couple need to respect the need for feeling safe in their beloved. It is crucial to learn apart what is safety motivated versus what is an attempt to control you."

6Not Accepting Their Unhealthy Habits

Ashley Batz/Bustle

As you probably know, no one is perfect, including you and including your partner. If they have habits you hate, how do you react? "A recurring problem is that you don't tolerate their unhealthy habits," Thomas Edwards, founder of [The Professional Wingman](#), tells Bustle. "Anyone who tries to quit an unhealthy habit is going to have a hard time. The harsher truth is, it won't be easier for them to quit because of you, whether it's smoking, drinking, gambling, or other addictive behaviors."

Edwards has advice, though, if you want to be supportive even if you don't approve of the habit at the moment. "To simplify what can become a complicated issue, if you want to support them through this, focus on these two things. First, remember, it's not your responsibility—people will quit based on their choice, not your pushing," he says. "Second, express to them how it impacts and makes you (and others) feel in a proactive, constructive, and loving way."

7Chores

Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

I doubt anyone *loves* to wash the dishes or take out the trash, and the division of labor when it comes to chores is another relationship issue that pops up frequently.

“Household responsibilities, including chores, are not often discussed at the beginning of a relationship,” Dr. Needle says. “When couples share responsibilities, it tends to feel more like a partnership, which can help couples feel more connected. The most important part of this is communicating about expectations.” She says this will often lead to greater relationship satisfaction and less ongoing conflict.

8 Spending Too Much Time Apart

Hannah Burton/Bustle

You and your partner may both be workaholics, maybe one of you gets home when the other is already in bed, or perhaps one of you is out of town a lot. All these things point to spending too much time apart. “Life can either get too busy or too distracting to consciously remember to make time for those you love,” Edwards says. “The easy way to take care of this is by scheduling dates in advance. While this may take away the spontaneous nature of ‘dating,’ having something to look forward to helps make the actual experience highly enjoyable and can lead to spontaneous dates in the future.”

Cassuto agrees with having a date night to fix this issue. “The best way to address this is to book a standing date with your partner,” she says. She also suggests other creating other traditions, like Sunday brunch and Netflix. “Try to squeeze in any other quality time, even if it is only through FaceTime,” she says.

9 Spending Too Much Time Together

Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

You know those couples who seem attached at the hip? “Spending too much time together can be a problem,” Edwards says. “The solution? What most people don’t realize is their significant other was attracted to them partly because of their lifestyle,” he says. “But if you neglect your lifestyle and spend all of your time with your significant other, both of you will end up forgetting why you were awesome to be with.”

Edwards says that maintaining the lifestyle you used to have, pre-your partner, is essential, such as spending time with your friends and doing things you love to do. “And make sure your significant other isn’t involved,” he says. “It’ll end up being key to maintaining your sense of individual identity.”

Having a healthy amount of togetherness and separateness is important. “It helps to talk about this issue openly and honestly, as people can fall into patterns of wanting to do what their partner wants, even when it isn’t working for them personally,” McBain says.

If some of the above points sound familiar to you regarding you and your partner, you’re definitely not alone. “Issues’ exist in all relationships — it is OK to disagree and even argue

with your partner," Dr. Needle says. "It is the way we argue that makes all the difference in if the relationship is healthy and is likely to last."

The more aware you are of ongoing relationship problems you and your significant other have, the more you can find solutions to them. And communication and compromise are what it's all about.