

# Facing Hard Times Together

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## *Rise to the Occasion With Patience, Heart, & Ingenuity*

Who would have imagined three months ago that we would be quarantined in our homes, apartments, and wherever you live. Life is truly unpredictable, but this pandemic is unlike any our country has faced since the pandemic of 1918 when none of us were alive.

**As a nation and as individuals**, we have had serious challenges – the civil war, the depression, epidemics - polio, AIDS) other wars, etc. but this is a **very new and serious challenge** for all of us as well as for our families, our neighborhoods, our economy, and our overall wellbeing individually as well as for your coupleship and your children. **It's a hard time!**

In the challenging times we are facing, **we need to be our very best self – conscious, considerate, thoughtful, patient, creative, fair, kind, cooperative, grateful**, and able to work together while having to “shelter in place.” These are all new challenges for you as an individual, for you as a couple, for you as co-parents, and for all of us collectively.

I put together this newsletter to help you manage all these new challenges. I am “seeing” couples virtually using **Zoom** and **FaceTime**. So, if you need some support, we can set up a few virtual sessions to help you through this exceptional time. If you are stretched financially, we can talk about a fee that will work for both of us.

*I am grateful to have a way to support you and your relationships.*

You **will** be able to handle the stress together. Remember you aren't alone even if you aren't in a relationship. That's what friends are for.

**Be the best mate, friend, citizen that you can be so that you can.....**

- **stay home**    • **keep social distance**    • **wear a mask**    • **work together**
- **problem solve**    • **be patient**    • **exercise**    • **play**    • **laugh**
- **If you drink, do so moderately!!**

## *Relationships Have Challenges even in the Best of Times*

Indeed, relationships have challenges in **the best of times!** I try to help the couples I work with to see these challenges as **opportunities for growth and healing**.

If these challenges are “worked with”, discussed in such a way that the underlying issues can be discovered, then each partner can learn and grow through the **intentional discovery process, even in difficult times**.

It takes **patience** and **goodwill**. It takes managing one's **reactive response** in order to keep each other and the relationship **SAFE**.

***This is the way a relationship helps us evolve into a more mature,  
emotionally healthy person – partner, lover, parent, friend.  
A conscious, loving relationship serves us well.***

**However**, during this **strange, unpredictable, and scary time** when couples are spending more time together or are around each other more than they usually are, misunderstandings, tensions, disappointments, or hurts can flare up. The relationship issues can get **magnified**.

I am sending this information to help you manage this extraordinary situation. In addition, many of you are working from home and some are working from home as well as parenting and supervising home-schooling for their children. This is a very challenging situation, even if you don't have children.

**With consciousness and care,  
your relationship & your friendships can be your anchor in this trying time.**

In this week's, **TIME magazine**, there is a very good article entitled,  
***How to Stay in Love During Quarantine*** by **Belinda Luscombe**

Because the article has such good, relevant advice for this unusual & stressful time, I wanted to share it with you. I am highlighting a few quotes from the article; however, I will include the full article at the end of this newsletter. One of the relationship experts mentioned is my mentor, **Harville Hendrix**, and another is **Helen LaKelly Hunt**, Harville's wife. They co-authored ***Getting the Love You Want, A Guide for Couples***.

**John** and **Julie Gottman** are also relationship specialists mentioned in the article. I have, also, studied with them; however, what informs my primary orientation to couples therapy is **Imago relationship therapy** developed by **Harville Hendrix** and **Helen LaKelly Hunt**. I have been an **Imago** therapist and workshop presenter for over 30 years. Here are some highlights from the article in this newsletter.

- **Cool it with criticism**
- **Be more curious than furious**
- **Buy some time or trade for it**
- **Make an appointment for hard conversations that might become a blow-up**
- **Strive to understand your partner's point of view, not necessarily agreement**
- **Respect the now invisible boundaries**
- **Ask for what you want**
- **If all else fails, try some humor**

I think you will be surprised and appreciate Harville Hendrix's quote highlighted in the article.

***"Talking is the most dangerous thing people do, especially when they are stressed."***

I want to close my remarks with...

**Strive to be patient, kind, reasonable, and even playful,  
in this immensely challenging time.**

*carole Kirby*

This is the full page article from TIME magazine  
How to Stay in Love During Quarantine by Belinda Luscombe

## The View Family



ADVICE

### How to stay in love during quarantine

By Belinda Luscombe

AS WE HAVE ADAPTED TO BEING HOMESCHOOLERS, HOME hairdressers and cloistered shut-ins, many among us have noticed that our marital skills—and probably our barbering skills as well—could use a refresher class. But where to turn in such an unprecedented time? Who can advise us on how to stay together, when it's *this much* together? TIME checked in with three sets of relationship experts who live and work side by side. Here are their top seven tips.

**Cool it with the criticism.** The right time to point out mistakes is almost never, but midcrisis is egregious. Especially when it comes to money, says Ashley Willis, a marriage and family coach who hosts the *Naked Marriage* podcast with her husband Dave. “It’s so easy to point fingers and say, ‘I told you you shouldn’t have taken that job.’” Instead, now is the time for appreciation. “It’s really important for people to look for what partners are doing right and express appreciation for it,” says Julie Schwartz Gottman, who co-founded the marital-counseling behemoth Gottman Institute and wrote several best-selling books with her husband John. “Thank them for making coffee, even if it’s for the 500th time.”

**Be more curious than furious.** With all the new responsibilities brought on by the coronavirus, it may feel like your spouse is not doing enough, but it’s more likely that they’re just distracted or have worries you can’t see. “High stress always brings out people’s relational coping skills, or lack of them,” says Helen LaKelly Hunt, who with her husband Harville Hendrix created the Imago method of marriage therapy and wrote *Getting the Love You Want*. Just asking your partner a question

and actually listening to the answer before pulling the ripcord on an argument can have a positive effect. “Talking is the most dangerous thing people do, especially when they are stressed,” says Hendrix, “and listening is the most infrequent thing people do, especially when they are stressed.”

**Buy some time, or trade for it.** If possible, build some time alone into the schedule, even if it’s only for half an hour a day. This may require bartering for some moments free of kids or chores for each of you. “It’s hard to have solitude,” says Ashley Willis. “I have to be my own advocate. I need some time.” And no, escaping into screens side by side doesn’t count. You need to not be able to see or hear each other.

**Make an appointment for your blow-ups.** If a seemingly insignificant fight is suddenly getting out of hand, the Gottmans recommend postponing it for at least half an hour but not longer than 24 hours. Under the Gottmans’ “conflict blueprint,” as they call it, spouses can work on a resolution only after they can state each other’s opinion to the satisfaction of the other person. “Ninety-five percent of it is about understanding your partner’s point of view,” says John.

**Respect the now invisible boundaries.** Even though he or she might not look busy, your partner is not just an empty whiteboard waiting for you to write your thoughts and needs. “The way I like to put it is, when I want to talk to Helen, I open the door to her movie theater, where she’s watching her movie, and I’m going to run my movie on her screen,” says Hendrix. “It’s an intrusion.” He suggests asking first if it’s a good time, and if it’s not, then establishing one.

**Ask for what you want.** Your partner is probably a wonderful person, but almost definitely garbage at mind reading. You need to explain your needs—and be specific. “I would love it if you could plan dinner every second night” is vastly preferable to “You have to help around the house more.” So much is going on that nobody is going to notice everything that every person needs or desires. So ask. Nicely.

**If all else fails, try comedy.** Being able to laugh at the situation or yourself (although not your spouse) is a big stress reliever. This is why we have dad jokes. □

**“Talking is the most dangerous thing people do, especially when they are stressed.”**

HARVILLE HENDRIX