

DON'T LOSE YOURSELF

IN RELATIONSHIPS OR PARENTHOOD, YOU CAN SOMETIMES FORGET TO DO THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU, YOU

WORDS: JOANNE WILSON



Welcome to my intentional relationships series where you'll get great ideas on how to "level it up" for that thriving and dynamic relationship.

Great relationships feature a healthy sense of self, independence and interdependence.

It can be a delicate balance that may have you relying on or conforming to your partner too much, leaving you without purpose or direction. Alternatively, too much independence can leave you living like flatmates, with little support and no chance of attaining joint goals.

When there is a mutual recognition and respect for personal space and individuality, your intimate relationship flourishes.

When you've achieved that wonderful balance, your relationship features:

- Friendship
- Ongoing affirmation, encouragement and adoration
- Sexual intimacy and mutual gratification
- Respect for differing values
- Time together and time apart
- Mutually enjoyable activities as well as different interests
- Active help for others but not to the exclusion of your partnership
- Support when your "chips are down"
- Trust

Throughout my counselling, I notice these common themes when couples go askew:

- One or both partners suffer from low sense of worth, they can experience a "primal

panic" of neediness when the other seeks time alone or with other friends.

- An absence of trust, either from experiences from the current or previous relationships that undermine the ability to allow or enjoy freedom.
- Unequal power structures where one is too dominant. It thwarts the other's authenticity of which they usually revolt against in time.
- Important values such as religion, family culture or parenting styles are not supported or encouraged and it's causing distress.
- Life cycles such as starting a family can result in mothers losing time alone, financial freedom and lack of inclusion in major decisions.

How do we achieve the golden balance?

- Evaluate your sense of worth that supports healthy boundaries to assertively seek time out and ask for quality time together.
- Do you lack boundaries that allow your partner to be too dominant?
- If you're told you're too controlling, consider what needs you're seeking to meet to govern your spouse's life.
- Can you re-build broken trust in this relationship or do you need to heal from the scars of hurt from the past?

Know that you're not designed to be the shadow of your spouse, nor their dictator.

You were created with the freedom and responsibility to complement them.

When you enjoy this wonderful balance, you're free to express your thoughts, feelings and desires. You can stand firm when your

principles and values are compromised.

You also openly welcome the opinions of your partner and remain considerate of alternative perspectives besides your own.

Regularly find this synergy and you both shine as an even better version of yourselves, grounded in mutual admiration, encouragement and respect.

Next week: Are you withholding love in

your relationship?

Tune in to Salt106.5 each Friday for my fun chat with Kristian on the breakfast show.

Joanne is a neuropsychologist and relationship specialist. Follow Jo on Facebook at [TheConfidanteCounselling](#) and on Instagram [@the.confidante](#)

