**Spring Cleaning our Relationship**

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Have you felt it? The warmth of the sun on your shoulders? The first rain as it gently washes away the dust and grime that has accumulated over the winter? Yes, spring has finally arrived! With the arrival of spring we get the urge to spruce up our homes and give them a good cleaning. Perhaps the cleaning shouldn’t stop at the house and yard. Perhaps we can “spruce up” our relationships as well.

Set aside a bit of time as a couple to discuss what goals or activities you would like to achieve this summer. Talk about why is it important to you, what the timing is, and how it affects your partner (i.e., what do you need from your partner to be successful?). Taking the time to discuss this means you are being true to you *and* you are being respectful of your partner. Your partner will have an opportunity to agree or negotiate how they can support your goal without giving themselves away either.

Perhaps you want to run your first 10K run this summer. Sounds exciting! To be successful you need time to train several days a week. Perhaps you want to run in the evenings. Is your spouse able to commit to looking after the kids for one hour every second day so that you can train? On the non-training days, maybe you can commit to a family activity or give your partner a much needed break if that is something they would like in return. It is no longer an expectation of your partner, but rather your partner is now part of your success. There is an agreement.

Take the time to discuss summer holidays. Do you need to save a bit extra so that you can incorporate a side trip into your holiday? What small changes could each of you adopt to achieve this? What agreement could you come to that you could both live with?

Commit the time to take an evening walk. Explore your neighbourhood or a park. Walk hand-in-hand like you did when you met. Take a few moments to appreciate the beauty of your partner.

Having an agreement means that each person in the couple knows what is expected and who is responsible. Strong agreements create strong partnerships. With each of you feeling more positive towards each other you will have more time to enjoy yourselves. You will have more time for that run or game of golf, or better yet taking that long walk together and feeling the sunshine warm your shoulders.