

Shared Goals

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1. Aristotle taught us that having a flourishing life had 2 key ingredients:
 - a. pursuing meaningful goals
 - b. pursuing these goals with people we love and respect.
2. Individual and shared goals
 - a. Individual goals are outcomes that an individual can possess (e.g., college degree)
 - b. Shared goals
 - i. outcomes that one can only possess with others (e.g., relationship harmony, team victory, democracy)
 - ii. no one can have more of a shared goal than anyone else
3. The importance of shared goals
 - a. Relationships are made up of shared goals.
 - b. Humans are made to be together in couples, families, and groups, which makes shared goals one of the most important features of our lives.
4. Social science tells us:
 - a. Simply using the pronoun “we” as opposed to the pronouns “I” or “they” changes how one thinks, feels, and acts toward others (e.g., Marilyn Brewer).
 - b. Arthur Aron has found that when couples form, the partners include the other into themselves, leading to an expansion of the self.
 - c. We-ness and couple identity promote commitment, marital quality, and accommodation (Scott Stanley, Caryn Rusbult).
 - d. Shared goals are strongly related to individuals flourishing (Fowers research).
5. Shared goals are powerful ways to enhance relationships.
 - a. Emphasize shared goals
 - b. Cultivate common ground
 - c. Central shared goal is a good relationship
6. Shared goals are the key to resolving conflict positively.
 - a. Focusing on being allies or friends rather than adversaries
 - b. Relationships are more important than conflict (but we forget when we fight)
 - c. Make conflict resolution a shared goal
 - d. Agree to disagree
7. Video clips from “Lasting Love” www.lastinglove.tv