



Relationships Are Not a Corona Casualty

New research from Paired and the Open University reveals.

OCTOBER 2020 – Corona has wreaked havoc on nearly every aspect of our lives, but for many people, couple relationships have stood firm, despite fears to contrary. New research from the Open University and couples app Paired has shown that **one in four of us have relationships which actually improved over lockdown**, while only one in 10 say that their relationships had gotten worse and the majority (63%) of people say theirs stayed the same, despite the strain the pandemic has caused.

So with another lockdown imminent perhaps it is time to look for the positives, and that's not just banana bread, TikTok and big hair, this enforced time at home could be used to strengthen our loving relationships.

Working (on relationships) from home

So why, with the world turning on its head, job insecurity, the removal of routines and many people experiencing low level (at best) stress, are our relationships standing the test of time? External stressors can put great strain on a relationship, but Prof Gabb's research on long-term partnerships (Enduring Love?) showed that couples who can weather the storms may actually be stronger for it. This may well explain why many couples are faring well during the pandemic – what doesn't break you will make you!

The pandemic has allowed couples to spend more time on activities that strengthen relationships. **Half (49%) of all respondents found they were talking to each other more, just under half (44%) found they were spending more quality time together, and 39% were giving each other more emotional support.** It appears we are applying #BEKIND to our partners.

Respondents who said their relationship improved over lockdown were increasingly likely to be doing more of these activities, with nearly two-thirds (74% of women, 72% of men) **talking to each other more, two thirds** (68% of women, 69% of men) **spending more quality time together** and around **three in five** (63% of women, 57% of men) **giving each other more emotional support.** Respondents who reported their relationship worsened were **less likely** to have spent more time on these activities, with only **a quarter** (27% of women, 22% of men) **talking to each other more, one in eight** (12% of women, 13% of men) **spending more quality time together** and around **one in five** (16% of women, 21% of men) **giving each other more emotional support.**

Pulling their weight

With everyone spending more time at home, the housework dynamic saw a shake up. Two in five (40%) of all **respondents reported that they were helping around the house more**, with 36% of women and 45% of men claiming they had upped their contribution. Increased housework may be the secret to a strong relationship, as **happier couples saw even more of an increase in helping around the house** (55% of women and 60% of



men), whereas respondents in **relationships that had worsened showed disparity** – 39% of these men claimed to have increased their help, compared to just 18% of women.

The YouGov survey was commissioned and analysed by the Open University and Paired, a new app for couples which aims to open-up communication between partners and help them learn more about each other and their relationship. The app combines fun daily questions and quizzes users can do with their partner with courses from a team of clinical psychotherapists and academics – the first relationship app to do so.

Paired provides a free course and daily tips to help couples manage their relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic. These cover topics such as: how to manage the effects of home-based working on your relationship, co-parenting while your kids are at home, and managing your mental and physical health together at a time of social distancing.

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Paired is a brand new app for couples. Its mission is to make relationships happier and healthier in just ten minutes a day, combining courses from clinical psychotherapists and academics with fun daily questions and quizzes to answer with your partner. Paired was founded in 2019 by Kevin Shanahan and Diego López, who previously worked at leading language learning app Memrise. Dr Jacqui Gabb, Professor of Sociology and Intimacy at the Open University, is the Chief Relationships Officer at Paired.

Paired is free to download from the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play Store](#), with a monthly or annual subscription required to access the full range of courses.