

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
IN A MODERN WORLD

relating



5 Things to Clean This Spring (No Elbow Grease Required)

GET THAT SPARKLY-FRESH FEELING
IN ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE.

By Sharlene Breakey

PROP STYLING BY HEATHER GREENE FOR HELLO ARTISTS

1
—**Your conversations**

One way we can “clean up” our conversations, especially with kids, is by talking about people as individuals rather than as part of a group. You might think telling your daughter that girls like math is good because you’re countering a nefarious stereotype. But in fact, when you talk about girls as a category, you set up a structure that allows other stereotypes to seep in. Get in the habit of talking about individual strengths; describe one woman as great at math, another as great at something else.

KATHERINE D. KINZLER, PHD, IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY AND THE AUTHOR OF *HOW YOU SAY IT: WHY YOU TALK THE WAY YOU DO—AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT YOU* (OUT IN JUNE).

2
—**Your schedule**

Look for commitments in your schedule that fill you with dread—those things you’ve been doing the same way for years, like a weekly staff meeting—and create new, less time-consuming ways to handle them. Try walking-and-talking meetings. Instead of sitting face-to-face, you can circle the block, which sets a natural time limit. You’ll also be moving and in the sun, and discussing hard things can seem easier. It works with kids and family too! Revamping how we fulfill our responsibilities can make them less onerous, and it carves out more time to do things we want to do.

SAM HORN IS THE CEO OF THE INTRIGUE AGENCY AND AUTHOR OF *SOMEDAY IS NOT A DAY IN THE WEEK*.

3
—**Your wallet**

Keep it simple. I carry a debit card for an account that holds my allowance for discretionary spending (yes, I give myself an allowance!), a credit card for household expenses, a business credit card, and my license. The best way to avoid debt is to take out all other credit cards. Leave hard-to-replace things, like your Social Security card, at home. I store rewards cards in my iPhone wallet and send photos of business receipts to my email.

PACO DE LEON IS A WRITER, A COHOST OF THE *MONEY DIARIES* PODCAST, AND THE FOUNDER OF THE HELL YEAH GROUP, A BOOKKEEPING COMPANY FOR CREATIVE AGENCIES.

4
—**Your wellness routine**

Whatever you’re doing, ask how it affects your body, mind (in terms of mental health and interest level), and heart (in terms of passion). If it doesn’t serve at least two of these elements, let it go. I live where the London Marathon begins, and every year I’d get running fever—all I’d talk about with my peers was times, routes, and how great running was. But I realized running was causing shin splints and backaches, and my heart would sink when it was time to go. Yoga, on the other hand, always energizes me, supports my mental health, and gives me joy. So I hung up my sneakers! Every mind, body, and heart is different. Only you can decide what to make space for.

ALI ROFF FARRAR IS A YOGA INSTRUCTOR AND THE AUTHOR OF *THE WELLFULNESS PROJECT: A MANUAL FOR MINDFUL LIVING*.

5
—**Your relationship**

Is there something that bothers you but that you stay quiet about to avoid making waves? That’s a “silent agreement.” Maybe you always go camping because your partner loves it. Now is the time to bring up what *you* want. It might be uncomfortable, but you and your partner will get closer once you acknowledge it. Don’t begin in frustration: “You never do what I want to do.” Instead, focus on your experience: “Camping isn’t as fun for me as it is for you. I’d love to try an adventure vacation.” Most of us have partners who want us to be happy. Working out silent agreements helps you get to know each other better and makes life more joyful for both of you.

MICHELE L. OWENS, PHD, IS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND COAUTHOR OF *SILENT AGREEMENTS: HOW TO FREE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS OF UNSPOKEN EXPECTATIONS*.