



10 Top Tips from a man on staying young, happy and keeping your relationship alive

1. Sing and dance

If you were to peep through our front window on most days, you'd see me, Max, Freddie and Amanda (collectively and individually) bopping around to a music track, or trying to remember the lyrics to a Robbie Williams song that Max has been brainwashed into singing whilst in the car on the way to nursery. It feels entirely natural to be dancing when I feel like it (but I have to be very careful not to start doing it at work.....or then again!). It's part of being a child, and sharing the enjoyment of music, so whether it's Robbie Williams or Vaughan Williams, get those hips and tonsils active!

2. Listen to each other

Sounds a bit obvious this one, but we expend an enormous amount of energy trying to get ourselves heard, when really we should be diverting that energy into listening more, and appreciating what each other says and does. This goes for listening to partners, children, friends, colleagues and yes, your innermost thoughts. Expending less negative emotional energy lowers the stress, is less tiring, and keeps my skin looking young and wrinkle-free!

3. Look for ways of having fun

It's oh, so easy to be driven by the trials and tribulations of daily existence. Don't take life so seriously and feel free to do the things that you enjoy yourself, and that you enjoy doing with your partner, family and friends. One of the hardest parts to doing this is giving yourself permission to indulge yourself in enjoyment, and, dare I say it, giving others the permission to do likewise. If, like me, you occasionally enjoy yourself by doing nothing, then go ahead and do nothing (just get permission first!)

4. You don't always need to argue

Even though I know I'm always right, it doesn't mean that it's sensible to argue the point every time. One thing I've learned is that it helps to laugh (at the right point) during an argument, to take the heat out of the situation. Never go to bed without making up, and that goes for children and partners alike. I spent many years not following that piece of advice, and it wasn't a nice way of living my life.

5. Celebrate what you've got

.....which might not always be a lot, but it's yours so make the most of it. So the bedroom wall might not be painted, and you haven't got a lot of wardrobe space but hey, you'll do it eventually! The point is that we can worry about what we haven't done, or what we need to do in the future, which stops us from really appreciating and celebrating what you've got in the here and now.



6. **Learn from each other**

As Amanda alluded to in her blushing wonderful introduction, I have a bit of experience of life! However, I'll be the first to say how much I've learned from Amanda in different ways to deal with situations with Max. My own father came from the Genghis Khan school of parenting and while I'm pleased to say I didn't follow in those particular footsteps, my tolerance levels weren't great. Humility is a wonderful thing – never think you know so much that you can't learn from a loved one. I've learned from Amanda how to deal with Max's little foibles in a more emotionally intelligent way, and I hope she's learned some things from me (e.g. babies bounce)

7. **Have confidence in yourself**

One thing I've learnt over the years is that one needs to trust one's instincts. There are plenty of people who will be queuing up to give advice on everything from bringing up children to the secrets of a happy marriage. There does come a point where you should trust your instincts because when you do (and it works) it is a very uplifting experience. You DO know best more often than not, and if you combine listening, learning and doing, you will feel so much happier about yourself, and your abilities as a parent.

8. **Know your own (and each other's) limits**

I believe we all know when others have over-reached themselves (or are in danger of doing so), but it's much more difficult to recognise that point for ourselves. More often than not, the crunch comes when we try to cram too much into too little time, and end up frazzled, or dissatisfied because we haven't achieved all the myriads of things that we'd thought we could do. My own experience is that this normally leads to arguments!!

The simple solution is to be honest with ourselves and recognise what it is that we do to cause the issue in the first place. Having done this, then at least we have the opportunity to do something about it. Try and give yourself more time to do things, or don't try and do so much in the first place!! I find that this lowers the stress levels tremendously (and keeps my skin clearetc. etc.!!).

The same is true in being honest about what our partners, children, and friends do that is sure to end in tears. It's always a difficult one to address, but a bit of honesty goes a long way.

9. **Line up your supporters (AKA asking for help when you need it)**

I know that Amanda has waxed lyrical on the benefits of having a support network. Speaking as someone who has found it difficult in the past to ask for help (having had parents who just expected me to go ahead and do things), I have wasted many hours trying to resolve issues that with support could have been sorted. Recently I had a situation at work that demanded that I seek help from supportive colleagues, and when I did, the effect was amazing. I was able to place the issue in the right perspective, and also (more importantly) see that I was right in the approach I was taking.

The bottom line is that we all need help, and having the people around that will support you is vital. So screw your courage to the sticking place (to quote the Bard), and ask!



10. The final one is always the most difficult

We all make mistakes at times. They might be small ones, like forgetting to get the turkey, or they might be big (I'll let you fill this one in but it could be something to do with a turkey). Whatever they are, learn from them, or if you've been affected by someone else's mistake, forgive! None of us are perfect (gosh, I hear you say.... not even you Chris?), so accept that we are all human and therefore fallible, and celebrate the positives in ourselves and others.

All in all, we have a lot to celebrate (I know I have)!!

Author: Chris Alexander, the man behind Amanda Alexander of Coaching Mums

About Chris: A highly experienced IT Project Manager aged 53 and a bit, with the heart, soul and sense of humour of a 10 year old. Also known as "Dorian" after the infamous "The Picture of Dorian Gray". His friends are convinced he has a magical portrait in the attic that keeps him looking young and wrinkle free! Amanda says it's the love of a younger woman.

About Coaching Mums

Amanda Alexander, Founder and Director of Coaching Mums, is mum to two boys and a professionally accredited ICF Coach.

Founded in 2003, Coaching Mums is a company devoted to teaching working mothers around the world how to break out of pressure-cooked, guilt ridden vicious circles.

Coaching Mums provides professional coaching for women to enable them to create success on their own terms, ditch the guilt, manage the pressures of modern life, manage their time better, enjoy their family, feel good about themselves as a mother and as a woman in their own right.. and have a lot more fun!

Amanda knows that working mothers can create the work and life they crave via a series of small shifts. Through her personal and group coaching programmes, workshops and innovative online coaching courses, Amanda shows working mums how to experience success and balance inside and out, and to create a life of fulfillment and happiness.

To be experiencing Amanda's approach, get your free copy of "The Cheat's Guide To Having It All - Five Simple Secrets of a Balanced Life for Working Mums" by clicking [here](#)