

The Benefits of Couple Friends (*Part 2*)

by Ann Malmberg

We know it's healthy to have separate friendships after you're married. Spending time with your own friends, away from your partner, helps you maintain a balance of "I" versus "we" and nurture your own identity. That being said, there are some unique benefits to having "couple friends," too. The first two were shared last week, here are two more:

You'll see other (favorable) sides of each other.

We get used to seeing our partner in the same context. Maybe that's at home, with no other adults around, doing silly voices for the kids. Or quiet on the couch after a long day of work. Or a little snippy because the house is a mess. Whatever the case, when we're interacting with friends, it often brings out facets of ourselves that aren't always front and center. You might take notice (or be reminded) of how charming and funny your partner is when they're telling a story or have a renewed appreciation for how at ease they are in social situations. These are the things that likely made us fall for them in the first place and spending time with couple friends gives us an opportunity to see those sides of each other again.

It's an opportunity to unwind – together.

Sometimes we get into the habit of spending our fun, relaxing time with our separate groups of friends. This is especially true for couples with young kids – it's easier to just "take turns" spending time with friends than to arrange a sitter if you both go out. Which means that most of that rare downtime you get is not spent with your partner. Don't get us wrong, time apart is an important part of a balanced relationship, but it's important to also prioritize having fun *together*. Plus, if your couple friends also have kids, you might not even need a sitter. The whole gang can get together for some low-pressure fun.

Friendships in general are important, but there are some unique benefits to having friends who are couples. If you feel like you're lacking in this area, don't fret. Friendships take time. They may come and go with seasons of life. They might not work out. Or you might get lucky and find couple friends for life!

The key is to start now remembering the old saying, the best time to plant a tree is ten years ago.