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Couples value time together as most important: study. 08/12/2003. ABC News Online

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Couples value time together as most important: study

A new study into Australian relationships has turned up some interesting findings.

Unlike previous years, researchers found money and children were not the top concerns of most couples.

Instead lack of time together was seen as the biggest impediment to living happily ever after.

Julian and Charlie Ellis juggle two kids, three jobs and a busy family life.

They say flexibility is the key to keeping it all together.

"I guess every one has to negotiate how to get the couple time so that the wheels don't fall off the bus with everything else," Charlie says.

Relationships Australia quizzed more than 1,200 adults around Australia about the health of their partnerships.

"Instead of money as rating as highly as previous surveys we've now found that lack of time together, lack of understanding and communication are the top three things that impact negatively on relationships," Anne Hollonds, CEO of Relationships Australia, says.

Almost one-third of participants rated companionship as the best thing about their relationship.

Only 5 per cent said being in love was the most important element.

"The clear winner was friendship and companionship and this stood out way beyond anything like love and sex which you might think is most important," Ms Hollonds says.

Balancing work and family remains a big issue for most couples.

To help ease the load, Charlie is working part-time until their children are older.

"That's the constant juggling, all the time is trying to fit the needs of the children and your own needs come some time after that," she says.

The survey found parenting worries do not lessen as children get older.

In fact most parents report concern about their children peaks when the kids turn 18.

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