



TIPS FOR a HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

We build many different kinds of relationships throughout our lives. Even though every relationship is unique, all healthy relationships follow the same basic recipe. Understanding the key ingredients of healthy relationships can help you build or improve your own relationships and recognize and avoid unhealthy relationships.

The key ingredients of healthy relationships are:

Equality

If one partner controls every aspect of the relationship, the relationship is unequal and probably unhealthy. Equality in a relationship means that both partners:

- **Make important decisions together.** Equal partners share their opinions about important choices, like how to spend money or raise children, and work together to reach an agreement before making any decisions.
- **Respect one another's boundaries.** Couples in a healthy relationship allow each other to have time alone, other friendships, interests or hobbies.
- **Work as a team.** Partners in a healthy relationship do not compete with each other; they encourage each other and work together. They respect each other's way of doing things, cooperate to complete daily tasks, and are supportive of each other's goals.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect means valuing each other's opinions, showing consideration and appreciation for each other. Individuals in a healthy relationship avoid making negative comments or taking hurtful actions that would damage their partner's self-esteem.

Forgiveness

Individuals in healthy relationships recognize that no one is perfect. They are willing to accept that both they and their partners will make mistakes. Partners in a healthy relationship don't hold grudges or try to "get even".

Intimacy

In healthy relationships, partners are so comfortable with each other that they can share their personal fears, hopes, goals and life experiences. Intimate partners enjoy being close physically and emotionally, so they make spending time together a priority.

Empathy

Partners who empathize can "put themselves in the other person's shoes." This skill allows each individual to feel what their partner is going through and put their partner's needs ahead of their own.

Shared Responsibilities

Important household tasks, such as cleaning, running errands, and paying bills, are either divided equally, or shared equally.

Trust and Support

Each partner should feel as though their relationship is a “safe place.” Even when times are tough, partners in a healthy relationship support one another and can depend on one another.

Honest and Positive Communication

Good communication involves both talking and listening. In a healthy relationship, each partner feels comfortable expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions. Each partner also actively listens to the other. Partners in a healthy relationship do not blame, judge, withhold information or verbally attack each other. Instead, they make time to talk every day, give their full attention while listening, and do not interrupt.

Effort, Commitment and Fidelity

In a healthy relationship, both partners are equally committed to keeping their relationship strong. They work together to make the relationship a success and do not share intimate physical or emotional closeness with anyone but their partner.

*Remember, in a healthy relationship, both people are **emotionally healthy** and **physically safe**.

If you feel you may be in an unhealthy relationship, get additional information at www.loveisrespect.org.

Adapted from: Channing L. Bete Co., Inc. “Are you in a healthy relationship?” 1999.

HERE'S HELP



Use the **Family Resources on pages 91–95** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.