

10 SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Healthy relationships are ones that bring out the best in you. Even though no relationship is perfect, healthy relationships make you feel good almost all of the time and generally bring you up and not down. Here are some characteristics and behaviors of a healthy relationship. Keep in mind that with all of these behaviors, there's a threshold for when it becomes unhealthy. For instance, loyalty is great, but at a certain point it can be unhealthy if you are being loyal to a partner who continuously disrespects you. At the end of the day, the below characteristics in a healthy relationships make you feel confident and supported.

EQUALITY You and your partner have the same say and put equal effort into the relationship (instead of feeling like one person has more say than the other). Examples are feeling like you are heard in your relationship or feel comfortable speaking up, making decisions together as opposed to one person calling all the shots, and equally compromising on decisions in your relationship to make the other person feel important or respected.

LOYALTY When your partner is reliable and you feel confident that they have your back. Some examples are when your partner is respectful and faithful, sticks up for you, doesn't take sides against you but helps you see the middle ground, and keeps your secrets safe. In a healthy relationship, you don't have to test the other person's loyalty, because you just know it's there. Sometimes people say, "We all make mistakes" and, "Nobody's perfect" to make excuses for disloyalty. If you find yourself saying that often, it's a red flag that the relationship may not be healthy.

HONESTY Being truthful and open with your partner. It's important to be able to talk together about what you both want. In a healthy relationship, you can talk to your partner without fearing how they'll respond or if you'll be judged. They may not like what you have to say, but in a healthy relationship, a partner will respond to disappointing news in a considerate way. Some examples are having good communication about what you both want and expect, and never feeling like you have to hide who you talk to or hang with from your partner.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY You and your partner are both responsible for your own actions and words. You both avoid putting blame on each other and own up to your actions when you do something wrong. Examples are when your partner genuinely apologizes for their mistakes, avoids taking things out on you when they're upset, and tries to make positive changes to better your relationship.

INDEPENDENCE Having space and freedom in your relationship to do you. Examples are when your partner supports you having friends and a life outside of your relationship and not needing to be attached at the hip or know every little detail about your life.

COMFORTABLE PACE You and your partner allow the relationship to happen at a pace that feels comfortable for both of you. Oftentimes, when you begin dating someone, you may feel that you're spending all of your time with them because you want to – that is great! But be sure that nothing feels imbalanced or rushed in the relationship. In a healthy relationship, nobody pressures the other to have sex, make the relationship exclusive, move in together, meet their family and friends, get married, or have a baby. When you do choose to take these steps, you both feel happy and excited about it—no mixed feelings.

COMPASSION Feeling a sense of care and concern from your partner and knowing that they will be there to support you, too. If you're in a healthy relationship, your partner will be kind to you, they will understand and be supportive of you when you're going through tough times, and they will lend a helping hand in times of need. An important caveat is that it has to be two-sided and displayed equally. You should never feel like someone is taking advantage of your kindness.

RESPECT If respect is present in your relationship, your partner will value your beliefs, opinions and who you are as a person. Examples are complimenting you, supporting your hard work and dreams, not trying to push or overstep your boundaries, and sticking up for you.

TRUST Believing your partner won't do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship. Examples are when your partner lets you do things without them, has faith that you won't cheat on them, respects your privacy online (like who you text and Snapchat), and doesn't make you go out of your way or work hard to "earn" their trust.

COMMUNICATION If you can talk to your partner about anything—the good and the bad—this is a sign of a healthy relationship. Examples include feeling like your partner will listen to you when you need to talk, they are open to discussing further, and not feeling judged for your words or opinions.