

# RELATIONSHIPS



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## Private Counseling

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**re·la·tion·ship**: the way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected  
Oxford Dictionaries

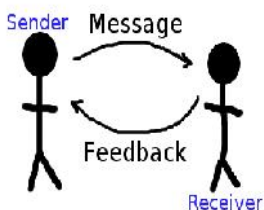
## Communication

Humans communicate in two ways: Verbal and Nonverbal. Healthy relationships effectively use both modes to clearly share what they are thinking and feeling. **Nonverbal communication** includes:

- Body language (eye contact, position of body, movement of hands, touching)
- Tone of voice and Volume of speech

**Verbal communication** is spoken in three manners:

- **Passive**: avoidance of talking about what is really bothering you. **Results** in you feeling unimportant and ignored.
- **Aggressive**: intense sharing of your thoughts and opinions without caring how your words or tone will affect the other person. **Results** in you dominating the conversation and making the other person fear you or fight back with you.
- **Assertive**: honestly, firmly, respectfully, and kindly stating how you feel and what you need. **Results** in you feeling heard and understood, as well as the other person feeling connected to you.



✓ **This is the healthiest form of communication.**

In addition to sharing how you feel, you also need to actively listen when someone else is sharing with you.

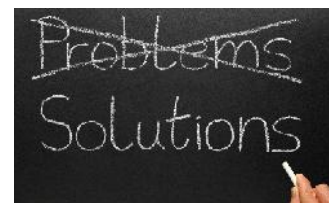
**Active listening** is necessary for you to understand the other person better and includes:

- Not interrupting
- Not thinking about your response
- Looking at the person and watching body language
- Paraphrasing back the other person's words without being defensive or using rebuttals
- Using feeling words to emphasize the speaker's point
- Checking for confirmation on understanding

## Conflict Resolution

Active listening and Assertive Communication are necessary for both people to address an issue. Once you have listened with the intent to understand, you can begin finding a solution.

**Resolution** involves compromise.



**Ask yourself:** How did I contribute to this problem? How have I tried unsuccessfully to resolve this issue? What are some possible solutions to this problem?

**Discuss with your partner:**

What solution is most likely to work? When should we implement this solution? When should we talk about if this works or needs to be adjusted?

For healthy relationships, the **goal** should always be: how can I maintain a strong relationship while also being honest with my partner?

# Intimacy

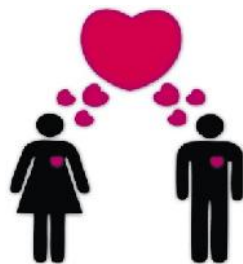
Do you believe intimacy = sex? If your answer is yes, then you are missing out on the true meaning. Intimacy is about connecting emotionally, physically, mentally, and (sometimes) spiritually with your partner. Key elements include:



- **Desire:** wanting, craving, needing to be near and close to your partner.
- **Flirting:** showing your desire with words, gestures, touch, anticipation, teasing, humor, laughter, notes (just to name a few)
- **Love Languages:** a person feels cared for in one (or more) of these ways
  - ✓ **Quality Time:** intentional effort to spend time with the other person
  - ✓ **Acts of Service:** completing tasks that help the other person out (i.e. chores, fixing things, running errands)
  - ✓ **Words of Affirmation:** kind and loving compliments or encouragement
  - ✓ **Gifts:** presents and surprises
  - ✓ **Physical Touch:** holding hands, kissing, cuddling
- **Emotional Connection:** Sharing ideas, eye contact, communicating openly, expressing feelings and needs

# Compatibility

It is human nature to want to be loved; to find someone who “gets” you and is your “person.” Not every person you encounter will be ideal for you. There are several things to consider when dating for a long-term successful relationship. **Remember:** Just because you are attracted to someone, doesn’t mean you will connect for real.



- **Interests:** hobbies, sports, travel, recreation
- **Goals:** career, personal, family, financial, health
- **Personality:** funny vs serious; introvert vs extrovert; driven vs lazy; clean vs messy; early bird vs night owl; fighter vs resolver; religious views; political views; communication style; family connection; how friends and family influence each of you
- **Effort:** Do you both wake up and intentionally make a decision to prioritize your relationship?

# Boundaries

Know your worth! Don’t settle! Don’t be manipulated or coerced into believing you are less than!

If the relationship is rocky or hurtful at the beginning, it will not get better. Boundaries are designed for you to set limits on what is acceptable for others to say/do to you. If your partner (or even friend or family member) doesn’t respect your boundaries, this is a huge **red flag**. If you allow someone to speak to you unkindly, then they will do it again.

## How boundaries work:

**Your Need:** honesty and trustworthiness

**The Issue:** your partner lies and violates your trust

**Boundary:** state clearly your expectation – “I cannot be with someone who betrays me by lying. If this happens again, we can’t continue our relationship.” Then, follow through with your expectation and stated consequences.

## What happens when you don’t have boundaries?

**Neglect** (emotional disconnect, absence, inconsistency)

**Abuse** (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual)

**Loss of Self** (doubt or ignore your own opinions, desires, needs, goals, ideas, choices; stop expressing yourself; low self-esteem and low self-worth)

# Forgiveness

## STEPS FOR SEEKING FORGIVENESS

1. Admit what you did was wrong or hurtful.
2. Try to understand/empathize with the pain you have caused.
3. Take responsibility for your actions and make restitution if necessary.
4. Assure your partner you will not do it again.
5. Apologize and ask for forgiveness.
6. Forgive yourself.

i don't forgive people  
because i'm weak. i  
forgive them because  
i'm strong enough to  
know people make  
mistakes.

## STEPS FOR GRANTING FORGIVENESS

1. Acknowledge your pain and anger. Allow yourself to feel disrespected.
2. Be specific about your future expectations and limits.
3. Give up your right to “get even,” but insist on being treated better in the future.
4. Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity toward your partner.
5. Communicate your act of forgiveness to your partner.
6. Work toward reconciliation (when safe).