

QUICK ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR LIFE

Write names of the five most significant people in your life (whether they are healthy, unhealthy, or even toxic).

Rate how important the relationships is to you, how stressful it is, priority and worthiness in terms of improving upon.

Name	What are they to you? What makes them valued in your life?	How important? (1-10 highest)	Priority of importance (1 to rank)	Current health of relationship (1 = toxic to 10 = healthy)	How stressful? (1-10 highest)	Worth improving? (0 = not at all to 10 = essential)

TOP FIVE QUALITIES IN MYSELF THAT I WANT TO CULTIVATE IN MY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

List five personal qualities that you want to be in relationships.

Examples: *Honest, Caring, Compassionate, Sense of Humor, Fun, Supportive, Loving, Patient, Engaging, Connected, etc.*

Rate how well you are creating these qualities in your relationships.

1 = Not at All to 5 = Wonderfully

1 _____	1	2	3	4	5
2 _____	1	2	3	4	5
3 _____	1	2	3	4	5
4 _____	1	2	3	4	5
5 _____	1	2	3	4	5

Imagine yourself one year from today, you have built confidence in your ability to feel more secure, safe, and joy within your relationships, what are you doing differently? Specify for your romantic relationship only, or friends, family, overall.

WHAT I WANT IN A RELATIONSHIP

What is a healthy relationship, in your opinion?

What would it look like?

What are 3 words you would use to describe a healthy relationship?

How does a healthy relationship feel?

What is an unhealthy relationship, in your opinion?

What would it look like?

What are 3 words you would use to describe an unhealthy relationship?

How does an unhealthy relationship feel?

FOUNDATION OF A SECURELY ATTACHED RELATIONSHIP

LOVE

Describe in Your Own Words

TRUST

Describe in Your Own Words

VULNERABILITY

Describe in Your Own Words

RESPECT

Describe in Your Own Words

BOUNDARIES & STATING NEEDS AND LIMITS

Describe in Your Own Words

COMMUNICATION & CONNECTION

Describe in Your Own Words

COMPARE AND CONTRAST RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS

Identify the positives and negatives of your **current or past** relationships. Include personalities of partners, characteristics you liked or didn't like, aspects of relating, values and more.

Keep in mind that every person meet has positives and negatives. This is more to help you understand negative patterns in relating, as well as become aware of aspects you enjoy so you can either express your gratitude to your partner, or seek this in a new partner if you are currently single.

Positive Aspects, Patterns, Personality Traits

Sense of humor

Similar interests

Negative Aspects, Patterns, Personality Traits

Not responsible

Critical

WHAT DO I REALLY NEED IN RELATIONSHIPS?

Attachment is part of our DNA, part of being human, and a basic human NEED, not a just a want. This doesn't mean that we absolutely need a romantic relationship in order to live an enjoyable life... but it does need we need close, trusting relationships! This can be friendships, family relationships, and connection with our community. Within the context of a romantic relationship, which is the point of this worksheet, we all have general, basic needs and expectations. It can be helpful to understand what these needs are and to also identify your unique needs.

Basic Healthy Attachment = Safety + Trust + Emotional Responsiveness/Connection
(Includes Boundaries) (Accessibility + Responsiveness + Engagement)

Accessibility means I trust that I can access your attention, presence and support... based on your previous ability to do so. Can I depend on you making me a priority? Will you be open and receptive to my feelings? Will you listen to me? Are you emotionally available? If I reach out to you, will you be there?

Responsiveness means that I can count on you to tune into me (empathize, validate, understand, etc.). Will you express sensitivity and compassion? Will you comfort me when I need it? Will you empathize with me?

Engagement means you will embrace me and cherish me. Will you listen to my feelings and allow yourself to connect and be affected by them through empathy and care? Are you interested, curious about me? Will you express and show your affection for me with your words, eye contact, holding me, comforting me?

Describe an example of when you were accessible to your partner/previous partner

Describe an example of when your partner/previous partner was accessible to you

Have you experienced a relationship where your partner was highly responsive? Describe this. How did this feel?

How would you describe your level of engagement in your current/previous relationship

How do you imagine your current/previous partner would describe your level of engagement?

Describe additional needs you have within a relationship that provide you with feelings of safety and connection.

Describe areas you need to improve on in order to provide your partner (future/present) with safety and connection.

SIMPLE IDENTIFYING EXERCISE: DO I HAVE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

I listen when others speak

I can tell you what my significant other/friend said to me the last time we talked

I help someone without expecting anything in return

I can empathize with/feel someone else's feelings

I feel close to another person

I feel respected in my relationships

I respect others in my relationships

I feel heard by others

I feel that my closest friends and family members empathize with me and truly understand my feelings

I let others help me

I feel compassion for myself at all times, even when I make mistakes

I value myself

I have people in my life whom I trust

I have a friend who knows me as well as I know myself

I have healthy boundaries with my parents and/or siblings

I have at least one good friend that I can be completely honest and real with (and he/she accepts me)

I feel valued for who I am

I value others for who they are and understand everyone has limitations and areas to improve on

I value others for what they can do for me and am able to gratefully receive as appropriate

I am able to observe and be aware of others' emotional boundaries (and I understand what this means)

Do you ask for support when you need it?

Describe a recent time you voiced your wants in a current or recent relationship.

Did you feel worthy and confident in asking for what you needed? Or did this feel uncomfortable?

What value do you see in ensuring you are asking for support in your relationship?

Describe how you will communicate your needs clearly in a proactive, calm and respectful way?

Identify Ways an Emotional Unavailable Partner May Have Impacted You

I have worked with many clients who experienced healthy childhoods and secure attachment throughout life, yet noticed a change in how they feel about love, since a certain relationship in adulthood. Factually, our attachment style is formed in early childhood, based on how we were cared for and emotionally attuned to by our parents. However, our "good enough" secure attachment style may falter and waver within a TOXIC RELATIONSHIP that ends up shifting our ability to connect and relate, causing an attachment injury.

- In order to maneuver in a rhythm of connection within a relationship, it takes two to tango. It requires empathy, vulnerability, emotional attunement, and an ability to drop into a state of connected, present moment, emotional awareness and fluidity. Akin to a dance, an ebb and flow of giving and receiving together.
- If this level of connection is not created (or is lost for an extended period of time), it can result in relationship distress and impact the health of the individuals within the relationships, cause emotional neglect symptoms and attachment injury. Attachment injury can result in Insecure Attachment Types, such as Avoidant or Anxious.

Identify What May Be True for You

Found yourself accepting "crumbs" of relating. With time this can become internalized impacting your sense of attractiveness, self-worth and lovability (delayed texting, ghosting, cold, confusion about relationship status)

Confusion around your sense of self, your identity and your worthiness

Confusion around your lovability, whether your needs and desires to be loved are valid or "too much"

Feeling alone, rejected, misunderstood within the relationship, so you may protest/demand attention in subtle or overt ways in attempt to avoid the anxiety and emotional pain of feeling alone, abandoned, and/or rejected

Lose your voice and "shrink" yourself, become a doormat, or sacrifice yourself to keep the relationship together

Become a "fake shell" within your intimate relationship (hiding opinions, passions, substance of who you are)

Feel "invisible" because you may have had to force yourself to stay in the relationship no matter what

Hyper-vigilance within the relationships, over detecting, worrying, jealousy, and/or angst about getting hurt

Overwhelming anxiety about not feeling good enough for your partner or worthy of his/her love and affection

Lack of the emotional depth you desire, to the point of painful emotions of loneliness and despair

Neediness and clingyness, over-texting, over-sharing, over-giving, over-pleasing, placating

Lose your ability to be emotionally available due to failed attempts in the past to connect, so you give up

Pretending to be ok even though deep down you are starving for real connection (your instincts and nervous system will continue to stir up emotions and be on "alert" due to not being connected with)

Self-betrayal (choosing to be in denial and attempting to override discomfort instead of leaving relationship)

Escaping or numbing hurt feelings (subconsciously or consciously) with alcohol, food, shopping, working, etc.

Healthy Connection & Rhythm of Emotional Attachment

The good news is you can recover from attachment injury, whether it stems from childhood or an intimate relationship in adulthood. You may not have even realized how toxic your relationship was, especially if you didn't experience physical, mental or overt emotional abuse. Yet it may have eaten away at your self-worth and sense of lovability. This can show-up in your next relationship in a secure and healthy way. I recommend videos from Alan Robarge, "Toxic Attachment Trauma After Emotional Neglect" and "4 Attachment Styles" from Diane Poole Heller. Both links are within the CONNECT section of <https://www.creatingyourbalance.com/clients>

TRUTH WITH COMPASSION AND ASSERTIVENESS FOR SECURE ATTACHMENT

The single most useful thing you can do to build a secure attachment styles is to speak from your heart.

Truth with Compassion is about speaking your truth, with compassion for yourself and for the other person involved. Knowing yourself well is the only way to be able to represent yourself well, and communicate effectively so your partner can respond to the real you. It's your job to know yourself, and to be honest in a way that increases your emotional understanding of each other.

Assertiveness is another imperative skill for conflict resolutions in relationships. Assertiveness is more complex than most people think. It's actually using three emotional health skills at the same time: experiencing and validating your emotions and anger; forming words to express your feelings; and expressing your needs in a genuine and respectful manner. **"Courage is asking for what you need."** ~ Brene Brown

CATCH AND LOOK AT YOUR THOUGHTS Listen to your inner dialogue, what is your mind telling you? Remember thoughts are not always facts. They are based off previous experiences and may be assumptions. Power is in awareness of your thoughts, while also not be controlled by them.

IDENTIFY YOUR FEELINGS You can only speak your truth if you tune into your feelings first. Validate your feelings and 100% accept them. Are you angry? Disappointed? Justified or not... validate your feelings.

ALLOW FOR CALM Do not communicate with reactivity (unless of course you are in real danger). Allow for calm, then respond. Depending on the circumstance, this may require a time out, a few minutes to process, a walk, maybe even a few hours or days to calm prior to responding in an ideal way.

DRAFT YOUR WORDS Choose thoughtfulness and be considerate with your word choices.

USE "I" STATEMENTS Stating your genuine feelings and needs, begins with "I". This opens space for your partner to lean in and listen, as oppose to "you" statements, which involve making assumptions and can result in your partner feeling naturally defensive, closed off and resentful right off the bat.

CHOOSE TIME AND PLACE When and where is your partner most likely to be open to communicating?

L. O. V. E. CONVERSATIONS TO USE IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST ROMANTIC ONES

If your goal is to having a loving relationship, you need to communicate in a sensitive, loving way. Having this intent is a good start, along with having this conversation tool. The benefit is in PRACTICING this however.

Listen with an

Open heart and mind.

Validate and acknowledge each other.

Express our thoughts and feelings softly, simply and slowly.

Listen Tune into words, tune into feelings, with the intent to empathize, and absorb your partners facial expressions and body language. Although it is necessary to express out feelings and needs in relationships, listening is the most effective tool we have to open the lines of communication and cultivate connection.

The experts say to NOT INTERRUPT your partner. However, I encourage you to have a discussion with your partner, sooner than later, in order to understand how they feel about interruptions. They may actually PREFER INTERRUPTIONS over undivided attention. I state this because I actually enjoy interruptions as they helps me realize my partner is actually paying attention to what I am saying and engaging in conversation. Although, I am rare. Most people prefer not being interrupted.

Open heart and mind Is having the intent to listen with a clean slate, free of judgments and assumptions.

Validate Pause and acknowledge what your partner has said. You may state back what you perceived and offer your understanding. This needs to be genuine understanding. If you need more clarity in terms of what was stated, then say something like, "I want to understand what you are saying, however I need more clarity about what you mean..." or if you are negatively impacted by what was said, it is important to state with honesty something like, "When you told me how you feel, I felt bad/embarrassed/upset/etc. and although that may not be what you expected but thank you for letting me know what is going on with you right now."

Express Satisfying, loving relationships typically involve conversations about feelings, hopes, dreams, and disappointments... rather than superficial small talk. There is attractiveness in vulnerability and deep, genuine, authentic, emotional connection. In fact, this is how we bond as human beings, and cultivate a sense of belonging, trust and love. "When one partner is willing to disclose something of his or her 'inner life' and the other partner is willing to listen and validate what is shared, the emotional bond between these two people is strengthened."1