

Elements of a Healthy Couple Relationship

1

Evident Respect, Fondness, and Friendship Between Partners

The couple honors and respects one another. They take time and care to know each other well. They develop habits, traditions and memories that build and express their love and friendship in big and small ways. They enjoy each other's company and spend time together. They seek activities that support their relationship

2

Strong Couple Connection

The couple turns toward one another in good times and bad. The couple stores up emotional "savings" for stressful times. They allow their partner to influence their decision-making, and seek their partner's input. The partners are emotionally engaged with each other. The relationship is safe and violence/abuse free.

3

Good Couple Communication: Significantly More Positive than Negative

Communication patterns are predominantly positive and respectful, often involving compromise and humor. The four horsemen -- criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling, as described by Gottman -- do not dominate communication.

4

Shared Approach to Resolving Differences and Conflict

The style of resolving conflicts is shared. This approach allows the partners to move to discussion about their concerns and successfully negotiate and renegotiate roles, goals, and plans (solvable problems, dynamic factors). They understand their differences and learn how to live with them by honoring and respecting those differences, especially when the issue is not amenable to change. They actively seek to repair and affirm the relationship during and after a disagreement.

5

Clear, Long-Term Couple Commitment

The couple has a long-term perspective and a deliberate intention to persevere. They practice behaviors that promote long-term sustainability of the relationship and a secure attachment.

6

Shared Values and Goals

The couple engages each other to talk honestly and openly about their convictions, values and deeply held beliefs in an effort to grow closer together. The couple establishes a shared sense of purpose and meaning.

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