

TWELVE QUALITIES NEEDED FOR A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

1. **ACCEPTANCE** – In order to have a healthy relationship, you need to accept the other person totally as they are. How many relationships do you know of where there are a lot of hooks or conditions in the relationship? Example: I will love you if you do this, if you do that; if you perform in this way; if you change. These are hooks or conditions. You need to accept people as they are and not try to mold them to your liking or expectations.
2. **AFFIRMATION** – Self worth comes from messages we receive from other people. We need words of affirmation. “You are O.K., you have these qualities and I like that about you. You are a good person.” We all need positive strokes. We all need to be told we are O.K.
3. **TRUST** – How many people really trust their spouse, parents, children or friend? To be trusted, to be totally trusted is important for anyone in a relationship. How many times when a person doesn’t come home on time do you get suspicious? Trust is essential.
4. **LOVE** – It is important that two people in a relationship love one another. Love is so loosely used in our society today. People say “I love you for your body, I love you because of your looks, or your money.” This goes back to the acceptance and unconditional love. Not “I love you because of, but in spite of.” Loving each other because of the goodness we see inside one another. Must love self.
5. **HONESTY** – To be honest and direct with one another. To share honestly our feelings and ideas with one another which means taking some risks.
6. **COMMITMENT** – One of the hardest things to talk about is commitment. Few people really want to make a commitment. A commitment says: “I will be here for you no matter what. I am committed to you. I will support you, I will be your friend. I will accept and love you, I will be there regardless.” It requires maturity, two fairly healthy people, and stability.
7. **MUTUALITY** – Both people have to want the relationship. Both have to be willing to work at the relationship, and to let each other know each other’s needs.
8. **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION** – We need to express to one another how we feel. It can be physical or verbal. Anywhere from holding hands to sexual intercourse. Some people think they aren’t intimate unless they are in bed; other people are in bed a lot but never intimate. Some of the most intimate experiences may be a look across the room, a word, a touch on the shoulder, whatever is comfortable for you. This is essential in a relationship.
9. **CONFRONTATION** – You need to be able to tell a person in a relationship “Hey, I don’t like your behavior, I don’t like what you are doing.” That person needs to know that it doesn’t mean that you don’t like them, but that you don’t like their behavior. Again, it’s openness and honesty and it’s essential. It doesn’t mean they have to change but are given opportunity to choose to modify behavior.
10. **REGULAR CONTACT** – We are all fragile human beings and we all need people. We are not self-sufficient, as much as we may want to be at times. We have to have regular contact with people in order to have our needs met.
11. **TESTING** – How do you know that a relationship is any good unless it’s been tested? Unless you’ve gone through a few rough times, how do you know what the relationship is worth? Every relationship will be tested. It has to be, and if the relationship doesn’t stand up to the test, maybe there never was a relationship to begin with. Good relationships grow better by testing.
12. **HUMOR** – We have to be able to laugh at ourselves and at each other. We have to be able to have some fun. It can’t be dead serious all the time; there has to be freedom and fun.

These twelve qualities are possible in any kind of relationship...marital, family, friendship, parent and child as well as those in love. If we have these qualities, we are going to have healthy relationships. It doesn't mean that we have to have all these qualities to perfection, but are working on them to develop and maintain relationships. Practice makes progress, not perfection.