Do You Ever Want To Know About Healthy Relationships?

by the RISE project, with contributors
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this project, as well as many others.
Zine Mission:

Relationships can be both difficult and amazing. Truthfully, there is no concrete formula or definition for a healthy relationship. However, we hope to supply some tools and resources that will help to balance the needs of each person involved. Take a step back and consider what your relationships represent. Do you and your partner(s) have mutual respect, clear communication, recognized boundaries, and trust? The following information may act as a guide through the head spinning, heart thumping times of your relationships.

* fun with cutouts *

Practice what you've learned about healthy relationships w/ our domestic partner finger puppets, Godfrey and Jesslyn the giraffes. Here are some prompts:

* I like it when you ( ). * I feel ( ) when you ( ).
* Do you like it when I ( )? * Can I get that for you?
* Does this make you hot? * Maybe I need some personal space right now.
Table of Contents

Table of Contents
Dating Rights and Responsibilities 1
  Love Letter 2
Spotlight On Candice Riley 3-4
  Recipe 5
  Since September 6
  Love Letters 7
Communication in Intimate Relationships 8
  Spotlight on Marilyn and Buz 9
  The Struggle to Communicate 10
  Stop and Go 11
Spotlight on Josie and Margarette 12
  Rad Relationship Remix 13-14
  Love Letter 15
  Engaged Listening 16-17
  Spotlight on Mandrew 18
  Dead Prez "Mind Sex" 19
What is Non-Violent Communication? 20-21
  Silence and Taste 22
  Spotlight on Iris and Lexer 23-24
Up Coming RISE Projects 25
  Support Services 26
  Fun With Cutouts 28
**Have the right to:**
- Have my boundaries/limits and my values respected.
- Tell my partner when I need affection.
- Be heard.
- Refuse sex anytime for any reason.
- Have friends and space aside from my partner.
- Refuse a date without feeling guilty.
- Ask for a date without being judged if the answer is no.
- Say "I want to know you better before I become involved".
- Say "I don't want to be in this relationship any longer".
- Have an equal relationship.
- Change my goals/aims whenever I want.
- Trust myself above all others.
- Disagree with my date.
- Fulfill myself with or without a partner in my life.
- Leave any situation my instincts tell me to.
- To have my needs be as important as my partner's needs.
- Not to be physically, emotionally, or sexually abused.
- Not to take responsibility for my partner's behavior.
- To grow as an individual in my own way.
- To break up and fall out of love with someone and not be threatened.

**Have the responsibility to:**
- Determine my boundaries/limits and values.
- Respect/accept the boundaries/limits of others.
- Communicate clearly and honestly.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Be considerate.
- Check my actions/decisions to determine if they are good or bad for me.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Be considerate.
- Set high goals for myself in dating relationships.
- To support my partner emotionally.
- To allow my partner to maintain their individuality.

**Support Services**

The RISE Project provides confidential, non-judgmental support services to people who have concerns about their relationships or think their relationship is unhealthy, as well as survivors of dating violence, stalking, and sexual violence and their significant others. We understand that you know what you need and want to support you in getting your needs met. Most of our services are provided by the RISE Advocates, including the RISE Project Coordinator and the RISE Project Crew. There are a few services that are only provided by the RISE Project Coordinator, which include court advocacy, survivor support group, filing an informal report, and assistance with residence hall, class, or crew changes.

**RISE Advocates**

The RISE Advocates are a group of students, staff, faculty, and volunteers who have received specialized training and are available to provide support and advocacy to survivors of all forms of sexual violence. These support services include:
1. Answering questions about medical services, evidence collection, the legal process, and the campus judicial process.
2. Referring you to appropriate services.
3. Accompanying you to services such as medical treatment at the hospital, campus health center, or local doctor, counseling services, or legal services through the police station, district attorney's office, or on campus.
4. Receiving emergency contraception, if you are females.
5. Assisting you in accessing follow-up medical treatment (e.g., STI treatment).
Up Coming RISE Events

Vagina Monologues
February 22, 23 at 7pm
Bryson Gym

Sharing Stories
February 28 at 7pm
Upper Fellowship

Self Defense Workshop
March 3 at 7pm
DeVries Gym

Rock For Consent
May 3rd
TBD

*Please see the Rise Project Crew webpage for more information.

Ongoing RISE Projects

Fei Up Queers:
A potluck style group usually brunchin’ the third sunday of every month from 11am-1pm at the Garden Cabin. We are comprised of people who identify as lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, pansexual, and anyone who doesn’t identify as a compulsory heterosexual.
Contact: Jake Salt, jsalt@warren-wilson.edu

Room-In-The-Inn:
A church to church traveling shelter for homeless women without children. Wilson’s church feeds and drives the women to the unemployment agency. Volunteers stay at the church all night in case of an emergency. (Once a term).
Contact: Emily Standridge, esstandridge@warren-wilson.edu

RISE Advocate Training:
The RISE Advocates are a group of students, staff, faculty and volunteers who are available to provide support and advocacy to survivors of all forms of sexual violence.
To be a RISE Advocate you must attend training that educates on the issues of sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.
If interested, contact:
Kelly Kelbel
Ext. 3799
kke.bel@warren-wilson.edu

Jade,

Sorry I have not spoken to you for a long while. I just wanted to try say hello and I hope the years that have past have been good to you as they have me. I also hope life has been nothing but a good experience. For me the last few years have been alright. I have taken up Nursing and am still going to school to become a RN. I also wanted to let you know that you really helped me to shape my life, and have helped me to become the man I am today. You have had and still have a positive impact in my life and those experiences will stay with me for the rest of my life. Even though I may have been cold at times, I have come to find out that there was only a few things negative in our relationship. If you are willing I would still like to be a friend of yours? And if so we will have much to catch up on. If not I can fully understand, and will not peruse or contact you again.

Your friend,

James
My ideal healthy relationship as a 9th grader was to meet someone that cared about me, who I would marry, adopt a boy with, and then divorce two years later, gaining full custody of our son. I had no models, no vision, no understanding of healthy relationships. Here are some models, fictional and real, of what a healthy relationship can look like:

Spotlight on Iris and Lexer

Location: Free Soil, Michigan
Status: Cohabiting Couple, monogamous
Time Together: 6 months

Favorite Activity Together: Puppetry. Lexer constructs puppets out of scrap wood and other found objects. Iris paints the facial details. They write puppet shows together on a range of topics from military persecution of monks in Burma to a world controlled by unicorns. Neither of them know how to use the internet, otherwise, they would be hits on YouTube. They are a hit amongst close personal friends and dinner party guests who laugh out loud at unicorn antics.

Most difficult conflict: Dealing with the stress of Lex’s family, who all reside in New Mexico. His family calls him all of the time, and they want to know everything about his life. Lex is really close with his family, and this is awkward for Iris, who barely speaks with his own family. Iris doesn’t understand why Lex is always talking to them. Iris stopped speaking to Lex after his phone calls with his family. He was upset, which he thought was obvious and that he shouldn’t have to tell Lex. At first Lex just ignored Iris back.

Resolution of this conflict: After the fourth time of the mutual silent treatment, Lex asked Iris why he wouldn’t talk with him. Iris said that he felt neglected and didn’t understand why he wanted to talk with his family instead of with Iris. Lex explained that he wanted to do both, and that he was really close with his family. They talked about how they felt about it and came up with a solution. Lex agreed to talk with his family at times when he did not have plans to be with Iris. Iris agreed to speak with Lex after Lex was talking with his family so that they could check in to make sure everything was ok. They also agreed to talk about Iris’ family, and the problems that Iris experienced with them in the past.

dependency on our relationship as a problem that I was having. That was a difficult conversation for me to initiate. It helped for me to use a lot of I statements. “I feel too dependent on our relationship and it would help me if you would understand and respect my desire to have some alone time.” Then I specifed how long a time I needed to be alone and I re-affirmed genuinely, that I was still very committed to our relationship. Riley was really receptive, she was having the same feelings that I was.

Quote from Riley: Sometimes it can hurt when the person you are with isn’t feeling good and whatever you say or do isn’t helping them feel better. Don’t get pissed off, they just need some time alone to process things themselves. It isn’t you, so don’t internalize it.

Quote from Candice: Don’t be nervous about bringing up front and honest with your partner. I mean, you’ve got to be true about your feelings ‘cause how else is your significant other going to know what you’re feeling. That sounds kind of dumb, but it is something that most of us have trouble with—communicating. We all get better with experience and none of us are experts. Don’t hyperventilate... communicate!
Spotlight on Candice and Riley

Location: Ashe-vegas, North Carolina
Time together: "4 months, 4 weeks, 4 days, 4 hours, 4 minutes, 4 seconds, 4-ever. Just joking about the forever part. Maybe."

Status: Monogamous. We think we may want an open relationship, but we came to the agreement that we are going to give ourselves some more time before we take on that additional responsibility towards each other. If we do pursue an open relationship it’s because we think that both of us could really benefit from learning how to let go of jealousy, so both of us are freer through our rejection of any hierarchal forms of love, and that everyone involved has the opportunity to get to know, love and experience different people.

When we talk about open relationships it isn’t a conversation that is dominated by the topic of sex. It’s all about consent, honesty, consequences, dispelling feelings of possessiveness, and being supportive and communicative. Regardless, right now we have decided to limit the amount of serious sexual partners that we have: that way when we feel ready to reach out to other lovers we have our well established and resilient relationship to fall back on.

Hardest conflict: During our first 2 months [bear in mind that spans almost half of our relationship) we became exceedingly dependent on each other and our relationship for happiness. Both of us had recently moved to Asheville and didn’t have many well established friendships. [Riley] My dog had just died and that really threw me off emotionally. [Candice] And I had just moved away from a long term relationship that ended pretty poorly.

So we both became ultra-dependent on each other for happiness, which led to a decrease in our own self-reliance. Our own relationship and our relationships to others began to suffer. We became less creative in our artwork, our sex-life wasn’t satisfying emotionally, and we were boring to one another and our friends. Basically we were becoming un-happy and uninspired.

Resolution: [Candice] First I had to bring up my over-

Quote from Iris: "Remember to have separate interests while also celebrating what you have in common. As a painter, I can share my skills with Lex in the creation of puppets, but I also spend time on my own paintings, and I need that alone time to decompress and connect with myself." "Don’t ignore your problems; your partner needs to know what they are."

Quote from Lex: "Listen closely to your partner and support your partner in the choices he/she makes. Oftentimes, we want to give our partners’ advice, when we really should just be listening. We need to understand that everyone comes from different places. Just because I feel one way about something does not mean that Iris will also feel that way."
Silence and taste

I don't mind when we don't talk
during meals surrounded-
by clanking plates, eating mouths,
chewing jaws, lines for full places,
scooting chairs, scraping forks,
saving knives, scooping spoons—
oil your presence makes silence.
All I think about is kissing
your mouth full of apples,
and wiping your crumb covered
lips with my thumb.

Erin Murphy

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Make Yummy Brownies and a Healthy Relationship!
Yield: 12-15 servings of love

Ingredients
¾ cup of communication (butter)
1¾ cup of space (sugar)
2 teaspoon of boundaries (vanilla)
3 eggs
¾ cup respect (all-purpose flour)
½ cup of consideration (cocoa powder)
1 teaspoon of understanding (baking powder)

Method
1. Preheat relationship (oven) to 350 deg F.
2. Line a 13 x 9 in cake tin with grease proof or other non-
   stick paper and grease the tin. Melt the miscommunication
   (butter).
3. Beat dishonesty (eggs) with sugar, and add vanilla, flour,
   cocoa, baking powder, and melted butter.
4. Practice ingredients until a healthy relationship emerges.
   (Bake at 350 degrees until a wooden pick inserted in center
   comes out clean, approximately 20-30 minutes).
5. Cool your healthy relationship (brownies).
Benefits of Non-violent Communication:

- We learn to hear our own deeper needs and those of others.
- These skills emphasize personal responsibility for our actions and the choices we make when we respond to others.
- It is observed that demands (for which there is only one "acceptable" response) do not meet the recipient's need for autonomy and tend to produce either submission or rebellion.
- When we focus on clarifying what is being observed, felt, and needed, rather than on diagnosing and judging, we are able to communicate more openly and can be more considerate of others.

Simon September

I feel the softness of my breasts in the morning.
I brush my teeth more often but only after tasting my own mouth
after meals.
with bubble gum
after a pb & j
after I've been chewing my fingernails.
I fit my palms on my shoulder muscles,
scratch my inner thighs.
I listen to my laugh
and my breath as I'm falling
into sleep.

I have always been the changing seasons
in the dust of my hair,
the glow of my skin,
the roughness of my hands
in the winter.
This is the body I know.

I want to know the collection of me
that fits in your ears,
on your knees,
the calluses of your hand,
the old and new scars,
wherever you let me linger.

Erin Murphy
What is Non-violent Communication?

The process of NVC encourages us to focus on what we and others are observing, how and why we are feeling as we do, what our underlying needs are, and what each of us would like to have happen. Through NVC we can release these forms of communication in a way that prevents conflict, and promotes honest expression within your relationships.

Honest self-expression

- Observe without evaluation, judgment, or analysis. Also, express your feelings without attacking. This will help minimize the likelihood of feeling defensive reactions in others. For example: I feel upset when you don’t call me. Instead of: You are a terrible partner to me when you don’t call, why can’t you just call?
- Specify the behaviors and conditions that are affecting you.
- Look for your own feelings behind the words you are expressing. For example: Why can’t you just stay home with me? Perhaps you are feeling a lack of trust when your partner goes out at night.
- Look for unmet needs, connected to these feelings: evaluate which needs are not (yet) being met instead of evaluating actions in “right” and “wrong”. Needs, as the term is used in NVC, are underlying motivations that are universal, in that we all experience the same needs, even if at different times and to different degrees. Thus, needs serve as a basis for understanding each other’s motivations at a level at which it is easy to be sympathetic to those motivations. In the above example the need not being met is open communication and an establishment of trust.

Make a request regarding how your partner could meet your needs. Essential in this is that the other person is to be left free to honor or decline the request. Delays (for which there is only one “acceptable” response) do not meet the recipient’s need for autonomy and tend to produce either submission or rebellion.

Love Letters

Alright so why I came over last night was the first thing I thought about this morning. So obviously it wasn’t just to pierce my ear. I came by because I like you and I wanted to see what u were up to. My night was pretty pointless and I really would have hung out w/ u and Sarah. I did h/w on a friday depressing enough then I stayed in my room and played mario cart then I went and smoked cuz I had nothing better to do. When I came over I didn’t realize what time it was. I felt really uncomfortable when u started like questioning me. Why James why did you really come here? I’m bored. I rather would have hung out w/ u, but I didn’t and I wanted to see what u were up to. I don’t know if that’s weird but w/e. Hopefully things will be cool tonight w/ us all at the formal. I’ll remember to be in the gym at 12 its written on my hand.

-James

I got myself involved in this because I wanted to be ur friend. I wouldn’t leave you hanging especially when it was about me. It was all a risk I was willing to take. I realized ur still confused especially after ur talk w/ him last night. But everytime I’m with u things seem fine or at least better. Like this morning at work w/ just me u and Sarah again. It also really helps when were in a group, I think we both feel more comfortable that way. And its not like we doing something wrong. Well we have the break coming up fairly soon and I really want to take that time to work things out. Well I may not see u later today, but feel free to come get me or wait not.

-James
Communication in Intimate Relationships

Introduction to Communication:
When a person decides to communicate with another person, he/she does so to fulfill a need. The person wants something, feels discomfort, and/or has feelings or thoughts about something. When you are in a intimate relationship, you should feel understood and accepted for who you are. Intimacy can be intellectual, emotional, and physical.

A healthy intimate relationship is one in which you:

- Pay attention to your partner
- Share ideas and thoughts
- Share feelings with each other without fear
- Try to understand why you and your partner behave as you do
- Express interest in what your partner is thinking and doing
- Try to understand how your partner feels, and you do not assume you already know
- Trust your partner

You can communicate in many ways:

- Words (what you say and what you do not say in phone calls, in person, in writing)
- Gestures (turning away from your partner, nodding your head, showing that you are listening—not looking at your watch)
- Facial expressions (smiling, frowning, frowning disgusted)
- Touch (hugs, holding hands, sexual activity)

The quality of your relationship is directly related to the quality of your communication skills. This does not mean that you always sit around talking about your relationship. It means that you talk about things that really matter. It means that you are not afraid to express what you really think and feel and that your partner trusts you the same way.
Spotlight on Marilyn & Buz

Location: a little house on the other side of the bridge
Type: Married
Time Together: Together 44 years, married 41 years
They met: when mutual friends introduced them during the spring of their first year at Miami University.

Favorite moments together: Weekly dates! Marilyn: "We try very hard to set aside two special times each week just for us. What we do is not as important as just being together." They also LOVE to have lunch together everyday and often Buz comes to Dodge afterwards if his schedule permits.

Most Difficult Conflict: The year before they became volunteers... Marilyn: "Buz's father was seriously ill, the college where we were planning to volunteer was reported to be near closing, we were trying to get our 100 year old home ready to sell, and we needed to decide what to do with the family business."

Resolving the conflict: Our common faith is a very important part of our relationship. We prayed a lot and kept focused on our commitment, keeping the lines of communication open between each other and our sons. We were certain that this was what we should do and so we worked towards that goal. This was certainly well worth the effort. Volunteering has brought great joy to our retirement years!

Quote from Buz: "Don't be selfish, think first of the other person, and have a good sense of humor."

Quote from Marilyn: "Show you care, be a good listener, plan time together, cherish the moments."

Spotlight on Mandi and Andrew (sometimes referred to as Mandrew)

Location: Eco-Dorm, Warren Wilson College
How They Define Their Relationship: Committed, Comfortable and Happy
Time Together: 2 years, 10 months also referred to as 3 years in December

They met: Building a bonfire at Dogwood. They started talking and then when Andrew was living in the landscaping shed and eating in the Dining Kitchen over winter break 2004. Mandi was making chicken and dumplings one night when Andrew walked in with his sac of Ramen noodles. Mandi insisted that Andrew eat what she made.

Favorite Activity Together: Spending time relaxing by going out to dinner or taking canoe trips. Mandi and Andrew recounted fond memories of visiting with Mandi’s little brothers (a newborn, 3 yr. old, and 7 yr. old), all of whom adore Andrew, and having out with Andrew’s older sister, who loves Mandi.

Most Difficult Conflict: At the beginning of their relationship they were both very unsure of everything that was going on. Mandi: "Things happened somewhat quickly and we started living together within the first few months. That uncertainty caused a lot of reciprocal tension and minor conflicts that were all based on the same problem...not talking about it." Andrew: "If you don’t communicate that you are stressed out or why you are stressed out, things get misinterpreted."

Resolving the conflict: Mandi: "Actually discussing how we felt about each other and the situation we were in solved much of the problem. When you assume the other person knows what you want all the time and that problems will solve themselves...they don’t. They just get worse. And they did, until we sat down and fumbled with the words to say it." Andrew: "We had to learn how to listen to each other, and make sure that the other person knew what was going on and not to take things too personally."

Quote from Mandi: "Remember it’s not always about you. If someone is upset, it’s not you. It’s about whatever else is going on."

Quote from Andrew: "Everyone’s got issues. You’ve just got to find someone you’re comfortable working through those with." "If stressed out, don’t forget to do the little things that add up so the other person knows it’s not about them. The little things, like hugs, leaving each other notes, scratching each other’s backs, and making each other tea, break down the tension."
times people ask questions when they really want to express themselves and are not open to hearing an answer.

Know when to quit using engaged listening. Once you accurately understand the sender’s message, it may be appropriate to respond with your own message. Don’t use engaged listening to hide and avoid revealing your own position.

Be empathetic and nonjudgmental. You can be accepting and respectful of the person and their feelings and beliefs without invalidating or giving up your own position, or without agreeing with the accuracy and validity of their view.

Several other benefits may occur with engaged listening:

- Sometimes a person just needs to be heard and acknowledged before the person is willing to consider an alternative or soften his or her position.
- It is often easier for a person to listen to and consider the other’s position when that person knows the other is listening and considering his/her position.
- It helps people spot the flaws in their reasoning when they hear it played back without criticism.
- It also helps identify areas of agreement so the areas of disagreement are put in perspective and are diminished rather than magnified.
- Reflecting back what we hear each other say helps give each a chance to become aware of the different levels that are going on below the surface. This helps to bring things into the open where they can be more readily resolved.
- If we accurately understand the other person’s view, we can be more effective in helping the person see the flaws in his/her position.
- If we listen so we can accurately understand the other’s view, we can also be more effective in discovering the flaws in our own position.

The Struggle to Communicate

We all act and respond to others on the basis of our understanding of a situation, and too often there is a misunderstanding that neither of us is aware of. Communication is multi-sided, and blame should not be placed on one person or the other for a misunderstanding. However, we can always improve our communication skills. Below are some ways that a misunderstanding might occur when communicating with your partner.

Sources of Difficulty by the Speaker

- Making the message too complex, either by including too many unnecessary details or too many issues.
- Getting lost, forgetting your point or the purpose of the interaction.
- Using body language or nonverbal elements contradicting or interfering with the verbal message, such as smiling when anger or hurt is being expressed.
- Paying too much attention to how the other person is taking the message, or how the person might react.
- Speaking in a way that is confusing, assuming the listener will know what certain slang, or contextual language will imply.

Sources of Difficulty by the Listener

- Being preoccupied and not listening.
- Being so interested in what you have to say that you listen mainly to find an opening to get the floor.
- Formulating and listening to your own rebuttal to what the speaker is saying.
- Listening to your own personal beliefs about what is being said.
- Evaluating and making judgments about the speaker or the message.
- Not asking for clarification when you know that you do not understand.
STOP AND GO

The traffic lights we see ahead
Are sometimes green and sometimes red.
Red on top, and green, below;
The red means stop, the green means go!

Green below—go—go—go!
Red on top—stop—stop—stop!

Engaged Listening

Engaged Listening is the single most useful and important listening skill. In engaged listening we are genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes engaged listening and makes it effective. With engaged listening, if a misunderstanding has occurred, it will be known immediately, and the communication can be clarified before any further misunderstanding occurs.

Tips on Effective Listening

- Address the appropriate elements of the situation. If we don’t, we will not be very effective, and can actually make the situation worse. For example: If your partner is telling you about their hurt feelings and you focus on the facts of the situation and don’t acknowledge their feelings, they will likely become even more upset.
- Verify what you’re hearing. You can use statements such as “It sounds like you’re... (really upset, excited, etc.)”, “I’m confused by...”, “Could you explain [this statement] in another way?” By doing this you can fix a misunderstanding early on in the conversation.
- Don’t respond to just the meaning of the words. Look for the feelings or intent beyond the words. For example: If your partner is always needing to know your whereabouts, perhaps there is a lack of trust in your relationship.
- Inhibit your impulse to immediately answer questions because the speaker may communicate in the form of a question. However, some
Twinkles.

I love you! By now you should know that or you should anyhow. I never knew how much life could mean until I met you. I’ll never forget those wonderful Wednesday nights at camp. I could sit for hours remembering our talk around the campfire. I could never forget those wonderful Wednesdays. I never forgot those wonderful Wednesdays. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat. I never forgot the exciting dates we had on the lake boat.
R&D RELATIONSHIP REMIX!!
aka, the advantages to different relationships

Same-sex relationship:

You can use public restrooms together...

Any relationship:

You can wear each other's clothes.

Male/Female relationship:

If married, you can apply for Family Membership at the "Y."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT (AND GIGGLIES)
continued...

Not in a relationship:

You can travel without a calling card...

Open relationship:

You can go on multiple dates.

Same-sex relationship:

You can ward off evangelicals.