When You Love Somebody...

...... you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is a lie even to pretend to, and yet this is exactly what most of us demand ... we insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth - in fluidity - in freedom.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Gift from the Sea

Everyone struggles with relationships. Every place we look in our society we see signs and symptoms of people having difficulty with intimacy. At some point or another all of us have asked ourselves questions like:

Does a healthy relationship look and feel the same way all the time?

What can I do to make my relationship healthier?

How do I know if my relationship is healthy?

These are very important and real questions that need to be addressed. Having an intimate relationship is often exciting and fulfilling, but can also be confusing, time-consuming, and even frustrating or painful. Many of us are unaware that all of these experiences - good and bad - may well enter into healthy relationships in one way or another. It is a matter of how we deal with them. So, what are key ingredients of a healthy relationship?

Relationship Assessment Scale

Please mark the letter for each item which best answers that item for you.

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Poorly  Average  Very Good

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Unsatisfied  Average  Very Satisfied

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Poor  Average  Excellent

4. How often do you wish you hadn’t gotten in this relationship?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Never  Average  Very Often

5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Hardly at all  Average  Completely

6. How much do you love your partner?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Not much  Average  Very much

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

   A  B  C  D  E

   Very few  Average  Very many

Scoring:

Items 1-6:  A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5
Items 4 & 7: A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1
A total score of 7 indicates low satisfaction, and a score of 35 indicates high satisfaction. If you scored in the 7-14 range, you might want to consider consulting a counselor about your relationship.

Ingredients of a Loving Relationship

Enhancing Qualities:
1. Communication
2. Affection
3. Compassion/Forgiveness
4. Honesty
5. Acceptance
6. Dependability
7. Sense of humor
8. Romance
9. Patience
10. Freedom

Take Time to Reflect.....
How does your relationship match these qualities?

A Few Key Tips

* Be friends with one another.
* Make sure you make some time for yourselves as individuals, as well as a couple.
* Learn how to listen to each other.
* Avoid playing games. Be honest and be genuine.
* Help your partner through problems, but don’t take them on as your own.
* Learn from your mistakes. Welcome your partner’s point of view on the things that go wrong.
* Never idealize your partner. They can’t always live up to your expectations.
* Express your appreciation for each other daily, at many times, and in many ways.
* Increase tenderness and intimacy; remember that sex is only one part of love.
* Strive for mutually acceptable solutions to problems; compromise and negotiation can work wonders.

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