

Love in Action: Building Healthy Relationships

Edited J. McGuire/Nov. 10 2008

Few things in life are as important as building healthy relationships. But they take a great deal of work. It's not enough to simply love someone; you must love with purpose and intent. While healthy relationships take time and effort, the rewards are immeasurable. A quality relationship can strengthen a person spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically.

Relationships truly are love in action. While every relationship is different, healthy relationships tend to have these nine characteristics:

Shared Spirituality Couples seek and grow together believing there is a powerful source that has brought them together and works to keep them together. Partners should remain active in this triangular relationship.

Honest Communication Share through talking and listening. There is freedom in expressing thoughts, feelings and opinions. Your partner becomes the safe and trusted person to risk sharing.

Trust and Support Partners are committed to being there in good times and bad times.

Effort and Commitment Both partners are determined to work on the relationship and help it succeed.

Fidelity Healthy relationships occur when both partners protect the relationship by only being with each other emotionally and sexually.

Intimacy Intimacy is about sharing sex, romance, hopes and dreams,

Mutual Respect This is the basic ingredient that allows a couple to share love, resolve conflict, and believe in and bring out the best in each other.

Forgiveness Love keeps no record of wrongs. A couple can accept the imperfections of each other, letting go of grudges and working through problems by building on each other's strengths.

Empathy This means walking in each other's shoes and striving to gain understanding of the other person's viewpoint free of assumptions and judgment.