



Quiz: How healthy is your relationship?

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Both partners are on equal ground in healthy relationships. In unhealthy relationships, power and control dominate, often leading to domestic or sexual violence. The following questions represent key areas of a relationship.

Ask yourself, do you and your partner:

- Seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict? Accept change? Remain willing to compromise?
- Talk and act so you both feel genuinely safe and comfortable expressing yourselves and doing things?
- Listen nonjudgmentally? Stay emotionally affirming and understanding of one another? Value one another's opinions?
- Support each other's life goals? Respect each other's right to feelings, friends, activities and opinions?
- Accept responsibility for yourselves?
- Admit when you are wrong?
- Communicate openly and truthfully?
- Share parental responsibilities fairly? Provide nonviolent and respectful role models for your children?
- Mutually agree on a fair distribution of household chores? Make family decisions together?
- Make decisions about money together and both benefit from the financial arrangements?

A "yes" to a question indicates that area of your relationship is healthy. A "no" indicates an imbalance of power. If this is the case in your relationship, raise the issue with your partner and offer suggestions for alternative ways you can improve it together.

Look for help from therapists in private practice with good experience in marital/couples counseling or, perhaps, from a religious leader you trust and who respects the notion of equality in relationships.

If you find you are answering "no" to the majority of these questions, be aware that safety may be an issue.

Approach your partner with your concerns only if it is safe for you to do so.

If you are concerned for your safety, call the 24-hour Confidential Crisis Hotline, YWCA Domestic Violence Services, (616) 451-2744. Also, the YWCA strongly recommends against going to counseling with your partner if there is violence in the relationship.

- Provided by the YWCA West Central Michigan based on The Equality Wheel from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, Minn.

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