

## 7 Top Signs of a Healthy Relationship

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Hopefully, you and your significant other are treating each other well. Not sure if that's the case? Take a step back from the dizzying sensation of being swept off your feet and think about whether your relationship has these seven qualities:

1. **Mutual respect.** Does he or she get how cool you are and why? (Watch out if the answer to the first part is yes but only because you're acting like someone you're not!) The key is that your BF or GF is into you for who you are — for your great sense of humor, your love of reality TV, etc. Does your partner listen when you say you're not comfortable doing something and then back off right away? Respect in a relationship means that each person values who the other is and understands — and would never challenge — the other person's boundaries.

2. **Trust.** You're talking with a guy from French class and your boyfriend walks by. Does he completely lose his cool or keep walking because he knows you'd never cheat on him? It's OK to get a little jealous sometimes — jealousy is a natural emotion. But how a person reacts when feeling jealous is what matters. There's no way you can have a healthy relationship if you don't trust each other.

3. **Support.** It's not just in bad times that your partner should support you. Some people are great when your whole world is falling apart but can't take being there when things are going right (and vice versa). In a healthy relationship, your significant other is there with a shoulder to cry on when you find out your parents are getting divorced and to celebrate with you when you get the lead in a play.

4. **Honesty.** This one goes hand-in-hand with trust because it's tough to trust someone when one of you isn't being honest. Have you ever caught your girlfriend in a major lie? Like she told you that she had to work on Friday night but it turned out she was at the movies with her friends? The next time she says she has to work, you'll have a lot more trouble believing her and the trust will be on shaky ground.

5. **Fairness/equality.** You need to have give-and-take in your relationship, too. Do you take turns choosing which new movie to see? As a couple, do you hang out with your partner's friends as often as you hang out with yours? It's not like you have to keep a running count and make sure things are exactly even, of course. But you'll know if it isn't a pretty fair balance. Things get bad really fast when a relationship turns into a power struggle, with one person fighting to get his or her way all the time.

6. **Separate identities.** In a healthy relationship, everyone needs to make compromises. But that doesn't mean you should feel like you're losing out on being yourself. When you started going out, you both had your own lives (families, friends, interests, hobbies, etc.) and that shouldn't change. Neither of you should have to pretend to like something you don't, or give up seeing your friends, or drop out of

activities you love. And you also should feel free to keep developing new talents or interests, making new friends, and moving forward.

7. **Good communication.** You've probably heard lots of stuff about how men and women don't seem to speak the same language. We all know how many different meanings the little phrase "no, nothing's wrong" can have, depending on who's saying it! But what's important is to ask if you're not sure what he or she means, and speak honestly and openly so that the miscommunication is avoided in the first place. Never keep a feeling bottled up because you're afraid it's not what your BF or GF wants to hear or because you worry about sounding silly. And if you need some time to think something through before you're ready to talk about it, the right person will give you some space to do that if you ask for it.