

Setting boundaries and respect

Humans are social beings and thrive on healthy and respectful relationships, be they with friends, family, or romantic partners. Cultivating healthy relationships doesn't just happen – they require hard work to build and maintain. The foundations of healthy relationships are good communication, trust, clear boundaries and respect



Set clear boundaries

Boundaries are not walls designed to block people out. Rather, they are healthy lines that define your requirements and desires within a relationship.

Setting boundaries is not only outlining what you don't like or won't tolerate, but also what you do like. For example, you may set a boundary in a romantic relationship that you value your alone time and would like a certain amount of time each week just for yourself.

Communicate your boundaries clearly and respectfully, and be prepared to enforce them when necessary.

Discuss your expectations and limitations honestly and listen to, and respect, the other person's needs as well.



Communication is key

Two-way communication is crucial in every relationship. Communicating your thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully is just as important as actively listening and understanding the other person.

Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is simply listen however it's important to remember that there is a difference between listening to understand versus listening to respond. Listen actively – give your full attention (put your phone down!), show genuine interest in the other person's thoughts and feelings and avoid interrupting.

When you are communicating, remember to be respectful. Talk about how behaviours and actions of the other person make you feel rather than using sweeping statements and making accusations about their personality. For example, "I feel upset and frustrated when my feelings aren't heard", rather than "you don't care about my feelings".



Don't hold a grudge

No one is perfect. We all make mistakes, and relationships are bound to experience a few bumps along the road. Be kind, learn to forgive yourself and others, and focus on moving forward. Holding a grudge about something that has happened in the past will not improve your future happiness. Instead, re-frame misunderstandings and mistakes and use them as learning opportunities to strengthen your communication and understanding.

Building strong relationships takes time and effort. Be patient, consistent, and always willing to learn. By setting healthy boundaries and communicating respectfully, you can create connections that are enriching, supportive, and built to last.

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