

Healthy & Deadly Relationship Habits

“Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest of human beings infinite spaces continue, a wonderful living side by side can grow, if they succeed in loving the distance between them which makes it possible for each to see the other whole against the sky.”

~ Rainer Maria Rilke



Seven Deadly Habits

Avoid using the DEADLY HABITS...

1. *Criticizing*
2. *Blaming*
3. *Complaining*
4. *Nagging*
5. *Threatening*
6. *Punishing*
7. *Bribing or Rewarding to Control*

Notice how these are framed as verbs – actions we choose to control another’s behavior (external control).



Seven Healthy Habits

Substitute the CARING HABITS...

1. *Listening*
2. *Supporting*
3. *Encouraging*
4. *Respecting*
5. *Trusting*
6. *Accepting*
7. *Negotiating Differences (ALWAYS!)*

Self-Examination...

*If I do or say _____, will it bring us **closer together** or push us **farther apart**?*

More on the Seven Caring Habits...

- 1. Supporting** ~ Do I support people for who they are – their true selves? Do I support them in pursuing **their** dreams, goals, and aspirations? **Forms of Support** can be: physical as in providing or literally being present and/or being mentally and emotionally present.
- 2. Encouraging** ~ can simply be acting as a “cheer leader” when others begin to doubt themselves or get discouraged. It is reminding your partner of strengths, positive qualities, or previous successes. Encouragement must be real in order to be effective.
- 3. Listening** ~ the greatest gift one can receive is to know he/she has been heard, understood, and taken seriously. True listening means setting aside one’s cherished beliefs and opinions in order to be fully present and hear another person. This requires a spirit of openness to hearing another position, view, opinion, even a way of being.
- 4. Accepting** ~ Feeling completely accepted “warts and all” by another person leads to a sense of validation. The therapeutic term is “unconditional positive regard.” This does not mean accepting unacceptable behaviors or treatment, but accepting and loving the person, seeing them as worthy of love.
- 5. Trusting** ~ Trust goes both ways opening oneself up to trust and choosing to be a person worthy of trust.
- 6. Respecting** ~ Healthy and loving relationships are built on a foundation of mutual respect. Such respect is the fruit of treating others with dignity, affirming worth, and respecting boundaries and limitations.
- 7. Negotiating Differences** ~ Compromise and balance are vital elements of all relationships. Mature relationships recognize that both partners cannot have all their needs met at the same time. This requires open discussion on what each member is willing and unwilling to compromise.