

Prescription for Healthy Relationships

Human beings have an inherent need to develop meaningful relationships. We all want to share our goals, ideas, joys, sorrows, desires, affection and experiences with someone else. However, we all fall short at times in handling the mechanics of them. There are times when we need to "doctor" up or even perform "surgery" on some of our relationships.

Do you experience any of the following symptoms in any of your relationships?

- ? Frequent arguments
- ? Low energy conversations
- ? Apathy regarding the relationship
- ? Lack of interaction/no desire for proximity
- ? Continuously looking for "something better"

We go to the doctor for regular checkups, but how often do we check the health of our relationships? Just like your physical health, positive relationships-whether they are romantic, social or professional-require maintenance. Good relationships don't just "happen." Just as our physical bodies get sick from time to time, most relationships go through periods of "illness" as well. Fortunately, with proper treatment, these relationships can "recover" and thrive.

Being constantly on guard for symptoms of illness within your relationships will help keep them healthy and prosperous. People who have healthy relationships are happier and less stressed.

If you answered "yes" to any of the above symptoms, you might be in an unhealthy relationship. If so, here are some possible "remedies":

Regular check-ups - to determine the overall health of your relationship, it is important to regularly communicate with your partner, friend, relative or associate to determine how they are feeling about the relationship. Set a regular period, depending on the relationship - monthly, quarterly, etc. to get together for the sole purpose of assessing the relationship.

Relationship checklist/chart - discuss what is working and what is not working in your relationship. Work on the issues and revisit them to see if the "stats" have improved at the next check-in.

"Weigh in" on your relationship - each of you should share your feelings with the other person. Be open and honest about what you are experiencing and listen carefully to his or her concerns.

Take the "temperature" of your relationships. Is it running hot or cold? Do you still enjoy each others' company and/or benefit from the association. Is it moving in a positive direction?

Measure the "pulse"? Is it strong or weak? Is the bond between you growing stronger or weaker from one check-in to the next?

Use the correct prescription - know the right dosage of love and caring to share with that person, remembering that the prescription will be unique for each individual.

Know yourself - just as you pay attention to your body's signals when it is experiencing injury or illness, know your personal reactions to the situations you encounter in your relationships and how those situations affect you. Know your "numbers" and how to read your results.

Read the warning signs/symptoms - as indicated above, watch for "key indications" that might indicate that there is a malignancy in your relationship.

Here are some of the "vital signs" of a healthy relationship:

- ? Built on respect, trust and caring
- ? Allows each person to be an individual and to grow personally
- ? Allows for differences of opinion and interests
- ? Apologizes, talks things out and moves on
- ? Knows how to respect each others' "space"
- ? Enjoys each other's company

- ? Benefits from each other's opinions
- ? Supports each other's goals
- ? Contains open communication and sharing of thoughts and ideas as well as active listening
- ? Establishes boundaries that the other knows not to cross
- ? Has common interests, but also values differences
- ? Picks their battles by determining what is really important and what issues are not worth arguing about and works on one issue at a time.
- ? Comfortable saying "no" when necessary
- ? Expresses appreciation for each other to reaffirm respect and affection

In a healthy relationship, you should not be afraid to speak your mind. No type of relationship should cause you to compromise or doubt who you are. People who have your best interests at heart will never ask you to be someone you are not or to compromise what you believe in. Before being open with anyone else, you must first be honest with yourself about who you are, what you are seeking from another person and what you are willing to give.

Remember, healthy relationships are not built overnight. It takes time, energy and commitment to develop any type of relationship, whether with business associates, family, friends or a romantic partner. So, be happy; be healthy; be whole. Here is to a healthier you!

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About the Author

Talayah G. Stovall is an author and motivational speaker. Her book, *Crossing the Threshold: Opening Your Door to Successful Relationships*, and eBook, *150 Important Questions You Should Ask Before You Say "I Do"* are available on her website, along with free articles: <http://www.talayahstovall.com>.