

The Relationship that Works



My relationship is possibly functional if:

- Problems can be discussed, and discussion brings change.
- I can use nonviolent communication in the relationship.
- We both put the same amount of energy in solving problems.
- I can express my feelings freely.
- My partner acknowledges my success with happiness and support.
- We both have a chance to change and grow in the relationship.
- My partner encourages my growth. As time goes by, my life feels fuller.
- As time goes by, I feel stronger.
- If I want to leave, I can go freely.

My relationship is dysfunctional if:

- Problems cannot be discussed.
- Problems can be discussed, but eventually nothing changes.
- I cannot use nonviolent communication.

My relationship is abusive if:

- My partner reacts with accusations, trivialization or anger to my happiness or success.
- My partner is rude or cruel to me when we are alone or in company.
- My partner often looks through me: s/he treats me as if I'm not there, does not talk to me, or does not answer when I ask a question.
- Only my partner can change and grow – I cannot.
- My life becomes narrower and narrower; my friends, my relatives, my abilities, my old hobbies, my dreams and desires slowly disappear.
- I feel weak and helpless.
- When I want to leave, I cannot go freely. My partner blackmails me with his/her emotions, illness, the children, or threatens to commit suicide or kill me if I “walk out on him/her”.
- There is a possibility or direct threat of violence in the relationship.
- My partner sometimes hits me, or forces me (either overtly or covertly) to have sex with him/her.

Further reading:

Anne Dickson: *A Woman in Your Own Right*

Patricia Evans: *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*

Marshall B. Rosenberg: *Nonviolent Communication... A Language of Compassion*

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