

## 50-Question Keeper List / Healthy Relationship Checklist

The questions that follow include several predictors of healthy relationships, and of potential harmful ones.

The original checklist was designed for dating relationships. I made changes for gender inclusiveness, and encourage a broader view where appropriate, to include social relationships and workplace relationships, also. The intent is behavior awareness—especially of the good healthy-relationship-building kind, and also of behaviors to be wary of. Keep the list for reference when you need it; and mostly, pay attention to your *feelings* (even if they seem to make no logical sense), and be aware. Your happiness and well-being are IMPORTANT and matter.

### Questions to Ask Yourself About a Relationship

(Adapted from [Getting Free: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships](#), Ginny NiCarthy, the Seal Press, 1982; additions and adaptations by Anne Wondra.)

Question	YES	NO
1. Can you state particular characteristics of this person that you love?		
2. Can you give examples of them? (List at least 3.)		
3. How many essential characteristics of your “ideal partner” does this person have?		
4. Does this individual accept your right to decide if you’ll use birth control?		
5. Does he/she think it’s a wife and mother’s right to decide whether to work outside the home at a paid job?		
6. Is he/she willing to have you spend time along, even if they’d like to be with you?		
7. Is your partner glad you have other friends? Other interests?		
8. Is this person pleased at your accomplishments and ambitions?		
9. Does he/she think women can and should be as wise, worldly, confident, strong, decisive, and independent as men?		
10. Does she/he sometimes ask your opinion?		
11. Does she/he both talk and listen?		
12. Does this person tell you when their feelings are hurt?		
13. Does he/she think it’s okay for men to show they’re weak or vulnerable and to cry sometimes—aside from right after she/he’s abused you?		
14. Is he/she able to express affection? (Aside from the times he/she is sorry for abusing you when he/she wants something, or when you’re having sex)		
15. Are there some special traits about women that he admires? ...about men that she admires?		
16. Does he like and admire his mother or sister? Does she like and admire her father or brother?		
17. Does she/he have good friends?		
18. Does he/she have interests besides you?		
<b>Totals</b>		
19. When angry, does this person break or throw things?		
20. Does this person lose his/her temper over small things, especially when he/she doesn’t perform as well as he/she would like?		

21. Does this person ask you about other relationships in your past?		
22. Does your partner want to know where you've been when you've been out?		
23. If you stay out late, does this person insist on an explanation?		
24. Does this individual believe that they should make the important decisions?		
25. Does she/he think there are any circumstances in which it's okay for a partner to hit another (for example, if "their partner" is with someone else)?		
26. Is he/she jealous of your friends or relatives?		
27. Does he/she think you're with someone else if you're not home when they call?		
28. Does this person think you're going to "cheat" on them when you talk to another person or dance with an old friend?		
29. Does he/she think men should earn more than women? Or that he/she should earn more than you?		
30. Does he especially want boy babies and associate fathering boys with masculinity?		
31. Does this person think you have enough education, even though you want to go to school?		
32. Does he/she get angry if meals are late, or the food isn't just right?		
33. Does this person have the traits that often 'hook' you into involvements with abusive individuals?		
34. When she/he's hurt, does she/he get angry instead?		
35. Does he/she silently sulk when angry?		
36. Does this person drink or take drugs almost every day or go on periodic binges?		
37. Does this person ridicule you for being stupid or for characteristics that are "typical of women"? ...or for characteristics that are "typical of men"?		
38. Do you like yourself less than usual when you've been with this person?		
39. Has this person spent time in jail?		
40. Was this person abused as a child?		
41. Does he/she sometimes put you on a pedestal, saying they don't deserve you?		
42. Are there some qualities you especially like about yourself that this person disapproves of or ridicules?		
43. Has this person been in fistfights or hit others he/she's been involved with in the past?		
44. When you've acted independently, has he/she sometimes called you names?		
<b>Totals</b>		
45. Do your friends leave or avoid associating with you when you're with this person?		
46. Has anyone expressed concern about how this person treats you or speaks to you?		

47. Do you feel free, trusted, and happy in this relationship?		
48. Is there anything you are <i>uneasy</i> about with respect to this person?		
49. Can you talk to this person comfortably, about anything?		
50. Do you have someone else to talk to, a friend or confidant, who loves you, has known you for a long time, whose insights, observations, and opinions you respect? (Sometimes we are too close to see clearly or objectively.)		
<b>Totals</b>		

**Scoring:**

If you have many 'no' answers for 1-18, if you haven't many answers to question 3, or have many 'yes' answers for 19-44, the person is likely to be abusive, and or not healthy to your happiness and well-being.

If you have many 'yes' answers for 1-18, several answers to question 3, and many 'no' answers for 19-44, the relationship is more likely to be a healthy adult relationship.

Questions 45-50 are additional conversation questions and considerations regarding this person and your relationship.

*More than any other decision we make, our choice of an intimate partner is the one that will most significantly impact our daily life enjoyment!* - Anne Wondra

\* If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy or dangerous relationship, help and more information is available through The Women's Center web site [www.twcwaukesha.org](http://www.twcwaukesha.org), your local domestic violence resource center, or by calling 2-1-1 for a 24-hour help line.

**Healthy Relationships – And those that are not:**

**Healthy relationships** are based on trust and deep mutual respect for oneself and the other person. Healthy relationships bring out the best in people and allow one another to grow and become the best person they can be—even if it means *letting go* or a change in the structure of the relationship.

Unfortunately, not all relationships are healthy and happy ones. **Some are dangerous.** And it's good to know telltale clues.

Behavior patterns that are red-flag danger warnings are or can lead to a legal and social term called *abuse...or harassment* in a workplace setting. Often, one or both parties have been a victim of this behavior, and/or are themselves an active abuser. Statistically most abusers are male; not all. Some women have abusive traits also.

**For clarification, the law recognizes at least five (5) different types of *abuse*:**

**1. Verbal Abuse:**

- Constant verbal badgering, *harassment*.

**2. Mental / Emotional / Psychological Abuse:**

- Uses a lot of 'mind games'
- Threats, often to harm someone or something you care about (a family member, your reputation, future career opportunities, et cetera) unless you cooperate. *Secrecy*, silence, not telling anybody, is often part of the deal.
- Makes you look like a fool in front of others; public humiliation
- Flaunts their accomplishments with someone else (to 'rub' it in)

**3. Physical Abuse:**

- Black eyes, bruises, burns, stab wounds, gunshot
- People die because of abuse (at least 4 every day)
- 'The Burning Bed' was very accurate

**4. Sexual Abuse:**

- Date rape
- Marital rape (Yes, there is such a thing!)
- Incest
- Abused individuals are often very isolated, very sheltered, protective of the abuser

**5. Destruction of a Person's Belongings:**

- The intent is always to hurt.

**Indicators, Predictors, and Red Flags:**

- Jealousy and possessiveness do not mean love or respect.
  - Participants in **healthy relationships** trust and respect one another and their relationship; they are not jealous or possessive of one another.
- Abuse is a learned behavior; it is not a disease. And it is not acceptable behavior.
  - Persons who grow up in abusive environments often view abusive behavior as *normal*, thereby continuing the behavior patterns into adulthood.
- IT IS NEVER OKAY TO ABUSE ANOTHER—any kind of abuse!

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