



# Healthy Relationships 101

*Building Social and Emotional Intelligence*

**Guidebook for Teachers**

Developed by  
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The Relationship Foundation

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Non-Violent Communication material is based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg and used with permission from the Center for Nonviolent Communication.

More information can be found at:

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# INTRODUCTION

Learning about relationships is a lifelong task.

Healthy Relationships 101 is a simple, common-sense program designed to inform students how to establish healthy and meaningful relationships by examining cultural influences, individual perceptions and gender roles in modern society. We also explore the vocabulary and language used in relationships, as well as relationship models of the past and their influence today.

Until the twentieth century, marriages were often a business arrangement. From the dawn of civilization until roughly a century ago, having the freedom to choose one's life partner was relatively rare. Social circles were smaller, mobility was limited, and family and community often had a decisive role in choosing a partner. In Western culture today, we are now at liberty to determine with whom and how we have a relationship. In a sense we are pioneers in this new era of unique and evolving modern relationships.

Relationships affect everyone everywhere. Emotional upsets stemming from unhealthy relationships are known to have an impact on an individual's educational achievement, productivity, and health, as well as that of their friends and families.

The questions, assignments, and exercises for each of the relationship lessons are designed to promote inquiry as well as discussion. We provide a framework that teaches the basics of a healthy relationship that presents questions and information to encourage students to explore and discover their own personal values and beliefs.

Most of us have had no formal training on this important subject.

Family, friends, and social cues teach us about relationships. We learn about this vital component of life by observing others, as well as the portrayals of relationships we see in the media. There are no universally recognized guidelines for a healthy relationship and, in many ways, what we learn about this subject is haphazard.

We often hear people say, "I should know how to be in a relationship by now." Yet, how would anyone know how to be in a relationship when there is an element of confusion and no widely accepted standard?

How does one prepare for a vocation? By going to school and getting an education.  
How does one prepare for a relationship? That is the question this course addresses.

Through these lessons, the students will learn how to cultivate, nurture, and maintain a healthy, meaningful and fulfilling relationship and acquire the skills necessary to become a caring, compassionate, and compatible partner.

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## THE WORKBOOK

### LESSON 1

**3** DAYS

#### What is a Relationship?

- How we perceive and understand relationships
- Having a sense of purpose in life and how that impacts relationships
- Self-esteem and its role in relationships

**1**

*Explore how we perceive relationships and understand how they are defined within the context of our families, politics, and culture.*

### LESSON 2

**4** DAYS

#### History of Relationships/Defining Masculine and Feminine

- History of relationships from pre-recorded history to modern times
- Current conceptions of masculine and feminine
- History of relationships/sexism
- Women's Rights Movement

**7**

*Learn the history of relationship dynamics, explore the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and discuss stereotypes about gender roles.*

### LESSON 3

**2** DAYS

#### Conscious and Compassionate Communication

- Introducing the principles of Non-Violent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg
- Building awareness of how language creates separation or connection

**15**

*Introduce concepts of conscious thinking and the tenets of Non-Violent Communication (NVC).*

### LESSON 4

**1** DAY

#### Defining and Designing a Healthy Relationship (Wrap-Up)

- Potential for growth in healthy relationships

**19**

*Review how students can use what they have learned to develop their own models for healthy relationships.*

Each student should bring a notebook designated for this course to every class.

### **Notes on the text:**

Each lesson's supporting materials, visual aids, and articles directly follow the lesson.



**Purple notes** are instructions for the teacher.

**Green notes** are explanations of the lesson plans. They can be read directly or adapted for classroom use.

### **Notes on the timeframe:**

Any part of these lessons can be expanded into longer classroom sessions or even multiple days, weeks, or months, depending on the design of the class.

This curriculum is a blueprint that provides a basis from which teachers can plan a course of study. Originally designed as a two-week segment to be incorporated into a health education curriculum, the material contained within can be adapted to accommodate different schedules and time periods.



**THE WORKBOOK**

# LESSON 1 - 1



## What is a Relationship?

### Objective

Introduce students to relationship dynamics

### Critical Thinking

Students begin to define how they perceive relationships

### Supporting Materials

Homework: Relationship Questions handout

### Vocabulary and Terms

Trial and error

Emulating

Modeling

Exclusivity

#### Option 1: Do Now - Free write

(3 MINS.)

From your own experience and understanding, what is a relationship?

Collect the freewrites from students for further development during the course.

Students will answer this question again at the end of the course and then compare/contrast their answers.

#### Option 2: Do Now - Role play

(10 MINS.)

Have the students break into groups and assign each group the following scenario: You're meeting your partner for a movie, and he or she arrives late. Two groups will first portray a reactive response (verbally aggressive, judgmental, even punishing silence) and then a healthy, mature response (focused, inquiring what may have happened, etc.). Each group will select two people to perform their brief dialogue in front of the class and explain the significance of the different behaviors.

#### Introduction to Course Material

(5 MINS.)

◆ Definition of a relationship:

**In the simplest terms, a relationship is based on the desire of two people wanting to know each other, with the hope of forming a lasting bond.**

◆ Dynamics of a good relationship:

**The interactions, shared values and common interests that define healthy communication between partners in a relationship. These can include social, intellectual, political and spiritual exchanges.**

◆ How we use language in a relationship:

**There is no universal language or communication style that is widely recognized. In a fulfilling relationship, partners must learn how to communicate by establishing a shared vocabulary and language that cultivate an ongoing connection.**

◆ Perception of a relationship:

**Two people don't always have the same perception of their relationship. For example, people often assume their ongoing relationship is exclusive, even though the status of the relationship has never been discussed explicitly. This can lead to conflict, because exclusivity is not always a sound assumption to make.**

(3 MINS.)

**Guiding Question**

What can you contribute to a relationship?

(This establishes that a relationship is give-and-take).

**Break Into Groups to Discuss Do Now (What is a relationship?) and Guiding Question**

(7 MINS.)

Teacher visits working groups.

**Classroom Discussion**

Enter responses on the blackboard

(10 MINS.)

- ◆ What have students learned from others in the Break-out Groups?
- ◆ What words come to mind when you think about being in a relationship?
- ◆ Who are your relationship role models?

**Teacher Introduces New Content**

(12 MINS.)

- ◆ Generally speaking, what are the two things that most significantly impact one's life after graduating high school? **(Answer: work and relationships).**
  - ◆ We spend 12 years in school preparing for a career.
  - ◆ How much time do we spend preparing for a relationship?
  - ◆ We naturally learn about relationships through our home environments, the media, and our culture.
  - ◆ Many people emulate the models of relationships they observe early on.
  - ◆ As we mature, much of what we learn about relationships is through trial and error.
  - ◆ How does the way our culture, particularly the media, portray, celebrate, or denigrate relationships?
  - ◆ Can this lead to cynical thinking about relationships?

**Introduce Content for Next Class and Explain the Homework Assignment**

(2 MINS.)

- ◆ Perception of a happy relationship - what is happy vs. fulfilling, happy vs. healthy, etc?
- ◆ Purpose, natural talents, mission, vision, direction.

**Homework**

Writing: Spend no longer than 3 minutes on each question

1. What is love?
2. What does it mean to be "in love"?
3. What is romance?
4. What is intimacy?
5. What are boundaries?
6. What is commitment?
7. What are trust, fidelity, and loyalty?
8. What is a healthy relationship?
9. What does it mean to be responsible in a relationship?

**Optional Additional Questions for Homework:**

1. What is accountability?
2. What is chemistry/attraction/polarity?
3. What is a dysfunctional relationship? What is a functional relationship?
4. What is emotionally available? What is emotionally mature?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is love?

2. What does it mean to be “in love?”

3. What is romance?

4. What is intimacy?

5. What are boundaries?

6. What is commitment?

7. What are trust, fidelity, and loyalty?

8. What is a healthy relationship?

9. What does it mean to be responsible in a relationship?

## LESSON 1 - 2

### What is a Relationship?



#### Objective

Examining student responses from Day 1 Homework  
Introduce the concept/importance of self-love

#### Critical Thinking

Examine individuality versus co-dependency  
Unwrapping the myth of the word 'happy'

#### Supporting Materials

Visual aids: Advertisements with happy people  
Homework: Values and Purpose handout

#### Vocabulary and Terms

Talent  
Purpose  
Vision  
Healthy Relationship  
Finding your calling

#### Do Now - Free Write

(3 MINS.)

Name your three favorite foods and your three favorite celebrities. Then name three couples that you perceive to be in good relationships and describe one of those relationships.

**People can generally quickly name favorite foods and celebrities, but healthy/good relationships are not so simple to identify.**

#### Break Into Groups – Discuss Do Now

(6 MINS.)

Why did they choose the relationship they did in the free write?  
If they couldn't name one, why?

**Teacher visits working groups.**

#### Homework Discussion (What is love? etc.)

(16 MINS.)

**Teacher calls on students to read responses.**

**Students hand in the homework after the discussion.**

**Teacher will use the responses to get a better sense of each student's conceptions and for topic development.**

#### Teacher Introduces New Content

(15 MINS.)

◆ The pressure of being happy: What does being 'healthy' and 'fulfilled' mean in contrast to being 'happy'?

◆ The trap of the word 'happy':

◆ The need to be constantly happy can lead to conflict ("He/She doesn't make me happy anymore.")

**We become accustomed to seeking happiness as a goal in work and relationships without consideration for overall satisfaction, which is very different from happiness.**

**We want so much to be happy in relationships that we often wind**

up blaming our partners when we are unhappy.

This can be avoided when two people in a relationship understand that life includes happy and sad, good days and bad days, ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies.

In other words, seeking continual happiness can bring about tremendous pressure, creating unrealistic expectations.

Teacher refers to visual aids of advertisements where everyone is smiling. When taking pictures, there is often a pressure to smile, even when smiling is not natural or authentic at that moment.

- ◆ The greatest fulfillment comes from yourself, rather than another person “making” you happy. No one can be there for you 24/7.

### **Introduce Content for Next Class and Explain Homework Assignment (2 MINS.)**

- ◆ Self-esteem
- ◆ Language and perception
- ◆ Co-dependent relationships
- ◆ Do you have a purpose, mission, or vision? If so, what is yours?

### **Homework**

Writing:

1. Write down three or more things you value about yourself that make you uniquely who you are.
2. What do you see as your greatest talent?
3. How does your talent give you a sense of purpose or a life mission?



## *Image commentary*

### **Lesson 1-2**

Many advertisements feature happy people in attempts to associate joy and pleasure with consumption, no matter how dull or detrimental the products. This reinforces the idea we hold in our culture that one must be striving for happiness at all times. The following pictures are examples of the pervasive images of happy people in advertising, even, ironically, a woman who is smoking a cigarette.

# DREAM BIG

XOXO  
*Kristi Yamaguchi*

Olympic Gold Medalist and  
Dancing with the Stars Champion



Kristi Yamaguchi knows what it takes to make dreams come true. And the bigger the dream, the more colorful your future!

Get big color for nails with salon-style **Nicole Nail Lacquer**. In dozens of fresh, vibrant, high-gloss shades.

**Nicole**  
by O·P·I

Check out our exclusive interview  
with Kristi at [www.nicolebyopi.com](http://www.nicolebyopi.com)

Nicole Nail Lacquer shade shown (and all Nicole) Respect the World  
CONTAINS NO DBP, TOLUENE, OR FORMALDEHYDE

800.241.8888 ©2009 OPI Products Inc.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at each other outdoors. The man is wearing a light green sweater over a white collared shirt and dark trousers. The woman is wearing a light-colored jacket. In the foreground, a large tweed bag with brown leather handles and trim sits on a grassy surface. The bag has a textured tweed pattern and a small metal clasp on the front pocket.

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EST. 1877

THE NEW TWEED COLLECTION  
EVOLUTION OF STYLE  
Available at [Hartmann.com](http://Hartmann.com)

Shop It!

# happy feet

Flats, wedges and pumps—  
we've got everything you'll  
need to put your best foot  
forward this season

BY MEGGAN CRUM

Suede and  
patent  
leather,  
Tod's, \$495;  
800-457-  
8637

Leather,  
Salvatore  
Ferragamo,  
\$300; 800-  
628-8966

*the  
bright  
flat*

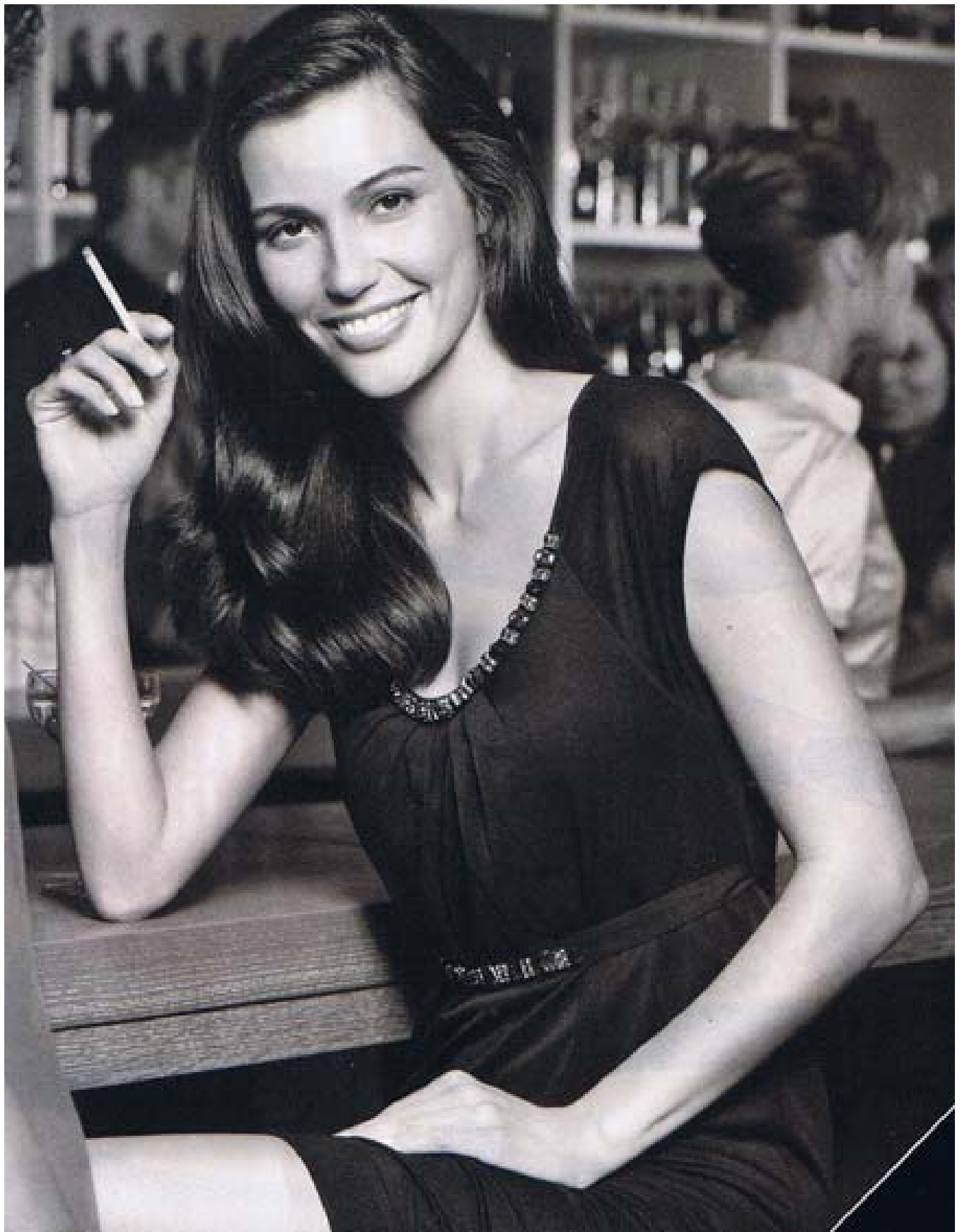
Freshen up with juicy  
hues and cutout  
details

Patent  
leather,  
Hermès,  
\$810; 800-  
471-4688

Patent leather,  
Sam Edelman, \$95;  
at Nordstrom

Patent leather,  
Olivia Morris, \$320;  
303-471-0811

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Write down three or more things that you value about yourself and that make you uniquely who you are.

2. What do you see as your greatest talent? Explain.

3. How does your talent give you a sense of purpose or a life mission?