**What Makes a Healthy Relationship?**

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In my practice I’m often asked the following question: “Does anyone have a healthy and happy relationship?” With all the stories of break-ups, separations and divorces in the media, our families and friend groups, one might wonder if there are any satisfying, long-term relationships out there.

The answer, of course, is ‘yes.’ Many couples are still wonderfully and willingly attached. Although there are no perfect unions, there are lots of relationships that are very healthy….which is why the people involved are very happy. Below is a list of some of the most important factors affecting a couple’s health and happiness.  Take a look and remember, we’re all on a journey and working to improve ourselves individually.  Our relationships take more than just a bit of effort, and by working together the rewards can be everlasting love and happiness.

1.       Each person having a healthy self-esteem

2.       Using only words of affirmation, not devaluation

3.       Mutual transparency and vulnerability

4.       Both parties are able to give and receive equally

5.       Freedom to ask each other what you want

6.       Absence of any violence or abuse

7.       Allowing and encouraging growth

8.       Equality of power within the partnership

9.       Established inter-dependence rather than co-dependence

10.   The ability to safely express feelings to each other

11.   No manipulation or attempts to control one another

12.   Comfortably experiencing times of togetherness and separateness

13.   An openness to change and explore new things together

14.   Physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional intimacy

15.   Joyfully  accepting an exclusive commitment

How does your relationship stack up based upon these 15 factors?