



Nurture Play Structure®

4 Measures of a Healthy Relationship

At all times it is important to assess the health of a relationship. Exploring the Nurture Play Structure (NPS) balance within a relationship is one way this can be done. Healthy relationships require a balance of Nurture, Play, and Structure to thrive. Through years of clinical observation, we have come to recognize 4 signs of a healthy relationship. Take a moment and reflect on your relationship. Where do you see signs of health? Where do you see the need for rebalancing?

Dreaming	
Partners that dream together envision a future together. Examples of dreaming may include planning for a vacation or retirement, looking forward to a date or intimacy, or flirting. Dreaming is a form of Play because dreaming invites excitement and joy. Dreaming with a partner communicates a shared desire for the continuation of the relationship and excitement to be together.	<u>Reflection Questions ~</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you dream with your partner? • What dreams for the future do you share? • What dreams differ? • Do you get excited when you talk with your partner about your vision for the future?
Repair	
Often partners measure the health of their relationship by the amount of time between disruptions. Or, they may consider the regularity of their physical intimacy as a sign of health. Unfortunately, each of these can also be a measure of performative behavior in a relationship. Thus, they are not accurate measures of health. All authentic relationships will involve some disruption. A measure of health in a relationship is better found in how partners repair their relationship. Healthy repair involves a resolution of joy for all partners. Healthy repair means partners are able to come to an	<u>Reflection Questions ~</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you and your partner(s) resolve disruptions in your relationship? • Do you come to a place of peacefulness and joy? Or, does someone compromise, which is really conflict avoidance? • Does the resolution involve blending, where each partner feels they have enough joy in the resolution?

understanding and return to peacefulness (see below) and joy in the relationship.	
Peacefulness	
In healthy relationships there is generally a sense of peacefulness. Peacefulness only arises from authenticity, vulnerability, and bridging. Often, partners confuse peacefulness with “keeping the peace.” Keeping the peace is performative, invites anxiety, and is another form of conflict avoidance and “crossing the bridge.” Partners in healthy relationships strive for peace, rather than keeping the peace.	<p><u>Reflection Questions ~</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your relationship feel peaceful? • Are there times you “keep the peace”? • Do you more often feel like your authentic self or a performative version of yourself when interacting with your partner? • If you do not feel a sense of peace in your relationship, what changes could you make that would invite peace?
Partnering	
In healthy relationships there is a sense of partnering. Partnering includes mutual decision making, bridging, and seeking shared joy. In unhealthy relationships, we more often find parenting. In parenting relationships one partner may seek permission from the other partner(s). Or one partner may feel that they are required to give or deny permission to their partner(s). Parenting in relationships develops an imbalance in power that leads to performative behavior, limits intimacy, and creates anxiety. Partnering, on the other hand, invites a sharing of power, increased intimacy, and lowers anxiety.	<p><u>Reflection Questions ~</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you feel that you need to seek permission from your partner(s)? • How often do you feel that you have to grant or deny permission to your partner(s)? • Do you feel parented in your relationship? • Do you see your partner(s) as childish? • Are you able to bridge and blend in your relationship? • Do you find you can be authentic and “partner” in your relationship?