



4 Measures of a Healthy Relationship

A Therapeutic Model developed by Phillip Bass of Trinitas Services

Reflect. Healthy relationships require a balance of Nurture, Play, and Structure to thrive. Through years of clinical observation, four signs of a healthy relationship have emerged. Reflect on your relationship: where do you see signs of health, and where might there be a need for rebalancing?

Dreaming

Dreaming is when partners hold a **shared dream of the future—one they are both in—that excites them.** It may look like planning a vacation or retirement, looking forward to a date or intimacy, or flirting. Dreaming is a form of **Play**: it invites excitement and joy, and communicates a shared desire to continue the relationship.

Reflection Questions

- Do you dream with your partner?
- What dreams for the future do you share? What dreams differ?
- Do you get excited talking about your vision for the future?

Repair

Partners often measure health by the time between disruptions or the regularity of intimacy—but these can be performative. All authentic relationships involve some disruption; health is better measured by how partners **repair**. Healthy repair resolves to peacefulness and shared joy for all partners.

Reflection Questions

- How do you and your partner(s) resolve disruptions?
- Do you reach peacefulness and joy, or does someone compromise?
- Does the resolution involve blending, where each feels enough joy?

Peacefulness

Healthy relationships generally carry a sense of peacefulness, which arises only from authenticity, vulnerability, and bridging. This differs from “keeping the peace,” which is performative, invites anxiety, and is a form of conflict avoidance. Partners strive **for** peace rather than to keep it.

Reflection Questions

- Does your relationship feel peaceful?
- Are there times you “keep the peace”?
- Do you feel more like your authentic self, or a performative version?
- If peace is missing, what changes could invite it?

Partnering

Healthy relationships involve **partnering**—mutual decision making, bridging, and seeking shared joy. Unhealthy ones drift toward parenting, where one partner seeks or grants permission. Parenting creates a power imbalance, limits intimacy, and raises anxiety; partnering shares power and lowers it.

Reflection Questions

- How often do you seek permission from your partner(s)?
- How often do you grant or deny permission to them?
- Do you feel parented, or see your partner(s) as childish?
- Can you bridge, blend, and be authentic together?

“We all want the freedom to be ourselves, yet we are most afraid of being ourselves.”

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