Let's Talk: How healthy is your relationship?

Presenter – Kristina Giubileo, Clinical Counselor

Hi everyone, my name is Tina. Let's talk about relationships today particularly evaluating the health of your relationships. As a marriage and family therapist over the past 10 years, I've worked with a lot of folks in a lot of different relationships, some healthy, rewarding, fulfilling, others unfortunately not as healthy, fulfilling, toxic, and at times even dangerous.

Connection matters

As humans, relationships are a vital part of our life. We're social beings, we're hardwired to desire connection. I often say as humans we are not good islands. We need that connection, we need that network around us to support us.

Healthy relationships can improve wellbeing

Not all relationships are created equal though. Healthy relationships can improve our wellbeing physically, mentally, spiritually. It can also improve our mood, leading us to feel happier, more enjoyable in life. It can also improve our self-esteem, our confidence, our value, our worth, how we feel about ourselves. Unhealthy relationships alternatively can hurt all of those areas, can be toxic, and even dangerous at times.

Traits of healthy relationships

So in thinking about your relationships, when we think about healthy relationships, we often see a level of mutual respect, trust, and honesty, the ability to be yourself, be comfortable with your own beliefs, and not having to endorse beliefs that don't feel congruent with who you are. You feel supported in that relationship, and most importantly you can have fun, enjoyment, you're laughing, you're smiling, you're enjoying your time with that other person.

Traits of unhealthy relationships

Alternatively in unhealthy relationships a person often feels unappreciated, even exploited. You might find yourself feeling that doing more than the other person to sustain that relationship. You

might also find that you're feeling hurt or angry, or you're not able to truly be yourself in that relationship.

Take a look at your relationships

So now what? I want you to take a step back and look at your relationships. Look at the healthy relationships and the ones that you might want to improve. For relationships in your life that are healthy, great! Make sure that you are nurturing and taking care of those relationships. Remember the phrase, be a friend to have a friend.

Boundaries for unhealthy relationships

If you look at your relationships and you see some that might be unhealthy, take a step back. I want you to think about those relationships and possibly setting some different boundaries or limits in those relationships, particularly some relationships that you might want to remove in your life but you can't such as those family relationships, relationship with coworkers, or co-parenting with an ex. It's important to figure out the relationship changes you want to make with the boundaries and the limits. Sit down and try to talk it out. Try to work it out with them and see what changes you can decide upon. And it's important to be very concrete about what changes you're looking for in the relationship. If you try those things and unfortunately they don't work, you might want to consider ending the relationship and using the time and energy you were putting forth in that relationship into other more healthier relationships that you want to improve and sustain.

An important part of life

Relationships, when healthy and carefully chosen, can be a very fulfilling part of your life.

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