

Is Your Relationship a Good One?

Is Your Relationship R.I.P.E.?

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Whether you've been together for years or only been dating for several months and everything is going well, be upfront. No more game-playing. Late one night over a hotdog and some sweet potato fries, your guy-friend tilts his head and leans forward. *So, what exactly are you looking for in a relationship right now?*

You don't want to scare him off this early. *My career takes so much time right now. I'm not interested in a serious one. I just wanna have fun.*

Yeah, me too, he replies.

A week goes by and you wonder why he hasn't texted much or called. Among your female friends, you talk freely about desired qualities you desire, such as intelligence, a sense of humor, financial stability, kindness, and more. Instead of being coy, tell your date, *I want a R.I.P.E. Relationship.*

R.I.P.E. Is an acronym used to illustrate what a good, seasoned connection is all about:

R	=	Respectful
I	=	Intimate
P	=	Passionate
E	=	Emotionally-Supportive



Like a fine wine, a healthy relationship can be cultivated. A Cabernet, for example, takes its sweet time to be ready for consumption. Likewise, true companionship matures after a reasonable interlude. (Yes, love at first sight may happen occasionally; but let's be real here, ladies, it doesn't usually happen overnight.) More and more, individuals are trying to discover what they did wrong in their last relationship. They don't want to blow it with their current mate. Get a grip! Be authentic. If someone doesn't like it, move on to someone else who does. Don't waste precious time by chasing a pipe dream.

A Substantial Relationship must be R.I.P.E.!

R: If there isn't mutual respect, you can kiss your connection goodbye. When that goes, so goes the love. Piece by piece, the passion is chipped away as well. An artist of sculptor creates something out of nothing. While we all lose our cool sometime, we don't want to live with criticism, verbal abuse or negativity as a steady diet.

An abuser, whether verbal or otherwise, is someone who has low self-esteem or some other psychological issues going on, like an Adult Child of an Alcoholic (ACA), for example. He will do the opposite of an artist. We can't know someone's motivation or intention, but we can feel the consequences. A disrespectful man chooses to attempt to make nothing out of something, namely you. Don't buy into his poppycock. Like sculptured flakes that fall to the floor, man relationships become shredded, after months or even years of disrespect, leaving battered egos and shattered dreams in its wake.

To gain self-esteem, you must first respect yourself. Like Eleanor Roosevelt once said, and I'm paraphrasing here, *Someone can't insult you unless you give them permission.* Another popular version of this is:



Practice being respectful of other people every day, all day long. If you disagree, politely explain why you think the way you do. Tell a story that reflects your views without name-calling. In a nutshell, this means following four guidelines:

- 1) Ask questions about your companion's day. Discover his thoughts, beliefs, feelings and impressions of life in general or about a specific topic.
- 2) Listen to your boyfriend. You don't have to agree with him, just understand what he's saying and accept his point of view. Why makes him tick? What events in his past make him think and act the way he does?
- 3) Express your own needs and desires. Use simple phrases. Be firm without sounding demanding. Be in tune with what makes you tick.
- 4) Be emotionally honest. Ladies, be done with the mind-games you played in high school. You're grown up now. If you become too passive, he may step all over you (figuratively speaking). On the other hand, if you're too aggressive, you become an oppressive presence or worse. Neither makes for long-term bonding. Above anything, sustained mutual respect is essential in a healthy relationship.

Intimacy = Honesty + Humor + Communication

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I Intimacy is a complex subject. *Consciously or unconsciously, most of us seek a partner with the same capacity for intimacy, says clinical psychologist, Dr. Carolyn Goodrich of Oklahoma City. A partner with greater intimacy scares us; one with too little bores us.*

What exactly is the delicate balance of intimacy. My guess is that it involves trust, humor, and communication. Without these three (3) elements, the connection cannot survive very long. True intimacy is only possible between trusting individuals; and trust evolves over a period of time. Without assurance of your mate's faithfulness, you can never have real peace of mind. (Unless you have an open marriage or partnership.)

Humor plays a vital role as well. Remember, never take yourself too seriously. Adopt a playful mindset and life becomes your playground. More important, humor is a frame of mind. Your wit and banter should be free-flowing and easy to do with someone you love. If it's forced, then reconsider why you're in the relationship in the first place. That's just too much work as far as I'm concerned.

The other ingredient is good communication. As in most things, having bonafide rapport is the key to success. Know what you want from a relationship, then develop the skills to ask for it. Listen to your partner and respond to his needs the best you can. Specific requests paired with a genuine attitude and positive phrasing usually gets the right results. In short, the quality of your communication calibrates the quality of your intimacy.

PASSION = Heart felt Words & Deeds

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P: Healthy men are emotionally supportive by nature. Nurturing men don't have to be carbon copies of women. They're not. Don't expect your mate to replace your female network. Instead, let him add texture to your support system. A loving partner bolsters your confidence when you need it. They celebrate your victories and are there to pick you up when you fail. Compassion, in some cases, can be re-learned by men.

Resourceful women work through a majority of their problems by themselves or with the help of other females. Once put in proper perspective, we realize that many upsetting situations are petty in retrospect. So, please, ladies. Don't bother your boyfriend about every single little concern you experience. It's tiresome. Then he's less likely to listen to the big issues you face. Like crying *Wolf* too often, nobody will listen to you when the Wolf comes a knocking at your door. A well-balanced man is ultimately attracted to a solid, self-secure woman.

Dr. Carolyn Goodrich explains, *A couple's level of commitment parallels their ability to support one another throughout the ups and downs of life.* A relationship to unfold naturally. Commitment has to ripen in its own good time. High self-esteem is the foundation of understanding and accepting commitment in any relationship. Discovering your best self means you have to try different things to find out what you could be good at. Then put in the hours it takes to become proficient at something, anything. Become an expert if you're willing to put in the 10,000 hours it takes to become an Outlier, as described by Malcolm Gladwell in his book titled, *The Outliers*.

Out of emotional desperation, some women tend to rush a good thing. Others put up barriers because of the fear of intimacy, fear of rejection, fear of vulnerability, and/or fear of abandonment. Replace these fears with affirmations, which is simply constructive, positive statements such as, *I am peaceful, patient, confident, and strong.* It's easy to find thousands of these online. But the best affirmations are the ones you make up for yourself. *I attract the right man, at the right time, in the right place. We love and respect each other.*

When support is chronically one-sided, the connection is doomed for failure. Honest people admit it, then move on to find a partner who offers mutual Respect, Intimacy, Passion, and Emotional support. Cultivate your own RIPE relationship and experience lifelong companionship!