

Love is a powerful feeling. There are many kinds of love, such as loving your family, friends, or a romantic partner. Real love is about caring. Romantic love is about commitment and trust and not just physical attraction. Commitment means that you want to have a serious relationship and be there for the other person in the future. Trust means that you want to share and help each other.

Lust is not the same as love. Lust is feeling physically aroused and attracted to someone. Romantic love does not always mean sex. If sex is part of your relationship it should be something that you want to do, and not done to "prove" anything. The words "You would do it if you loved me!" are a warning sign in any relationship.

What is a healthy relationship?

- Real love lets you be you. The person you love helps you feel good about yourself. You can be true to yourself and your values and know that they will understand.
- You have common interests and are honest with each other. You are more yourself when with your partner than you are with anybody else.
- You are able to express your true feelings even if they sometimes cause conflict. Speaking up, finding out what's wrong, and then making a decision you both can live with about what to do are signs of a healthy relationship.
- You trust that neither of you will hurt each other on purpose or harm the relationship. Physical or emotional abuse are not love. Real love helps you feel happy, secure, and appreciated for just who you are.
- You do not expect the other person to be the solution to all of your problems. You do expect the other person to care about you and support you.
- You spend time with each other's families and friends. Your partner never asks you to choose between him/her and your loyalties to your family and friends.

What is an unhealthy relationship?

There are several signs that you are in an unhealthy relationship:

- Your partner wants you to give up your friends or stop doing things that you enjoy.
- Your partner never lets you be alone or with another person. He or she is jealous and does not trust you.
- You feel forced to do things you do not want to do. Abuse is the attempt by one person to control another using fear, violence, or intimidation. Abuse is not just physical. It may also be sexual or psychological.

If you can't love someone without feeling afraid, it's time to get out of the relationship. When a love relationship ends, it is common to feel loss and sadness. Most people find another love relationship, as they learn more about themselves and others. If you or someone you know is coping with a loss of love or is in an unhealthy relationship, talk to friends, family members, or a counselor for support and help.