

Principles of *Smart Relationships*

1. Seek a good match. Look for common interests: Do you have some similar interests? What activities do you enjoy together? Do you have similar attitudes about life, priorities, and future goals? Do you enjoy talking together? Do you find each other interesting? Are you roughly matched in energy levels? Do your differences work together?

2. Pay attention to values: Are the values and beliefs you hold most dearly shared or respected by your partner? Consider religious, spiritual, political, and moral values. Other important values are children, family, parental, and financial responsibility. Are your values about sex, drugs, alcohol, faithfulness, and commitment in sync?

3. Don't try to change the other person into someone he or she is not: If you go into a relationship thinking you can change the person into the type of person you desire, you will be disappointed. Do not be so desperate to be in a relationship that you fool yourself about who this person really is. Support others in making positive changes, but do not think you can do it for them. Ask yourself if you genuinely like his or her personality and character.

4. Don't try to change yourself just to get someone's love: Be true to yourself. Don't try to pretend or become what you think the other person wants. Be the real you and look for people who appreciate you. Remember, nobody is perfect. Recognize and build upon your strengths. Work to make the changes that you have identified.

5. Expect good communication and do not run from conflict: Explore your differences and pay attention to how you both deal with conflicts. Evaluate how well you communicate and handle anger. Are you both willing to learn and improve communication skills if necessary? How you communicate and handle conflicts says a lot about your future happiness in this relationship.

6. Don't play games, pressure, or use someone: Do not manipulate, pressure, or use a power advantage to get someone to do something. A worthy and equal relationship is not one based on games, pretenses, manipulations, or pressure.

7. Expect respect—have standards: Have a standard for how you will be spoken to and treated. Expect respect. Do not tolerate disrespectful or abusive behavior! No relationship is better than a destructive relationship, where you are forced to compromise your dignity. Remember, it not only hurts you, but it can hurt your child (now or a future child).

Trusted Adult: Discuss which you feel are most important. Offer your wisdom.

SIGNATURE:.....