

Identifying Healthy and Unhealthy Friendships

Our relationships with friends grow and evolve over time. While they typically get stronger and deeper, they can also become damaging and unhealthy.

In this exercise, we look at signs of healthy versus unhealthy friendships.

Use it to identify the relationships you should continue to nurture and those you should step back from.

Friendship Inventory:

1. List the friendships you've maintained for several years that you feel impact your life

	Friend's Name
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	

2. For each friend listed, consider the following statements. Check the ones that apply to each relationship.

Signs of a Healthy Friendship:	A	B	C	D	E
Encourages your growth.					
Offers mutual support.					
Benefits both parties.					
Adapts over time.					
Mutual understanding of support needs.					
Welcomes boundary setting.					
Accepts you as you are.					
Respects your quirks.					
Open to discussing feelings.					

Signs of an Unhealthy Friendship:	A	B	C	D	E
Feels competitive.					
Brings out negative behaviors.					
Leaves you feeling drained.					
Involves public embarrassment.					
Lacks common interests.					
Shares your secrets without consent.					
Feels one-sided.					
Struggles with conflict resolution.					
Disrespects your boundaries.					
Feels overly dependent or codependent.					

3. Based on the checklists above, categorize your friendships as healthy or unhealthy.

Healthy Friendships:

List the friendships that exhibit the positive characteristics mentioned.

Unhealthy Friendships:

List the friendships that exhibit one or more of the negative characteristics.

Once completed, determine which friendships you should continue to nurture and which you may need to step back from.

References

- Tawwab, N. G. (2021). Set boundaries workbook: Practical exercises for understanding your needs and setting healthy limits. Little Brown Book Group.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton, PhD.