

Keywords for a Good Relationship



SAFETY EQUALITY RESPECT

Safety: To live safely with someone means keeping them safe from all insults, threats and violence, no matter what they do or say to us. A big ask? Yes, but we have to ask ourselves whether our non-violence is merely conditional on how others behave. Unless we commit to being safe to live with 'no matter what,' it means we are secretly keeping a reserve of abuse and violence up our sleeve (or in a dark corner of our mind) to bring out when we want to punish someone for doing whatever we don't like. Which attitude is more courageous and worthy of self-respect for us as men—being safe to live with no matter what, or keeping in reserve the right to punish by abuse or violence?

Equality: Can people who are not equally strong physically live safely together as true equals? What qualities in people make them deserving of equal status—some valuable qualities that men have, and some that women have? Given that men are about twice as strong as women (in hand and arm strength on the 'squeeze the scales' test) what needs to happen between them to preserve equality? How does the physically weaker person know that the stronger person is at all times going to maintain enough self-control to leave a tense situation and cool down when most tempted to lash out?

Respect: When we are angry, how do we still show respect to the person we disagree with? Can we remember in the heat of the moment the good things in our shared life and the other person's good qualities? Or, in our tunnel vision, do we block out the love and respect felt in the past? Do we need to take time out to calm down and remember these things? How do we ask for 'Time Out' respectfully, return respectfully, and talk respectfully?

"Working with passion and integrity to bring out the best in people"



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