

Four Ways to Avoid Disappointment & Frustration in Relationships

By Regina Cates Author of *Lead With Your Heart*



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Our greatest joy and deepest fulfillment in life comes from the relationships we have. While we want harmonious and fulfilling relationships, ideally with everyone, it is healthy and realistic to acknowledge that even in the best friendships and partnerships there will be challenges. And, it is truthful to admit we cannot have an agreeable and satisfying relationship with everyone.

For instance, you will not be peaceful if you attempt to establish a relationship with someone who has aspects of her or himself that go against your core beliefs and values. Maybe someone you know thinks it is okay to talk about you behind your back. You know gossip wounds hearts and causes relationships to fail. If you go against yourself and stoop to his or her level of behavior, and you accept gossiping is okay, you will become frustrated and disappointed with yourself. Eventually you will also be upset and dissatisfied by the person's lack of sensitivity to other people's feelings.

Moral conflict arises in relationships when there is empathetic incompatibility. Meaning, one person is more emotionally mature than the other. Such as in the case where you have the principled awareness to appreciate the pitfalls of gossip and the other person does not. Therefore, having shared moral values is paramount to establishing healthy relationships. When two people are mismatched on the fundamental values of trust, honesty, respect, and personal responsibility, the relationship cannot survive.

To help prevent the frustration and disappointment that arises from being mismatched in your relationships, first take time to really *know yourself*. Look at yourself honestly to determine your strengths and weaknesses. This is necessary because you may not have been taught how important respect, trust, honesty, and clear communication are to the success of relationships. And, if you were raised in an abusive or dishonest environment you may mistake abuse and dishonesty for love. Neither of these are behaviors of love so it is essential to know what motivates you and what wounds you need to heal in order to have successful and loving relationships.

Second, learn to appreciate the saying, "You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink," applies to each of us when it comes to whether or not we choose to change ourselves for the better. You wake up to what you need to change about yourself through the process of inner deliberation. Self-assessment is the way to discover negative behavior that is preventing you from creating the best life possible. This same process of wanting to discover limitations is necessary for the people you love. So it is important to let go of the idea *if I just love her (him) more, s(he) will change*.

Third, loving others does not mean you lose yourself in relationship. Relationships are meant to help you find out more about yourself, not give up who you are for another person. Avoid frustration by going into a relationship *wanting someone to live life with you, not for you*.

Fourth, know people will not respect you if you do not respect yourself. Part of self-respect is setting boundaries, to say no to things you are uncomfortable with. Being a doormat is not attractive, satisfying, or healthy. Going against what you know is true and right for you does not allow you to bring your best to the relationship. Realize it is healthy to *say no*.

In addition to going through the following four lessons, I encourage you to take time to honestly answer the questions I have included in the workbook. These are some of the same questions I answered to determine what I bring to a relationship, what I want other people to bring, and what I needed to change about my behavior so I am a good friend and partner.

Know Yourself

I was forty-eight years old before I found my right partner. It happened only after I stopped focusing on finding someone and started concentrating completely on being someone worth finding.

One of the best lessons I learned is how important it is to be the person you want to attract. By knowing yourself intimately and being honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses,

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you will know what values and behaviors you are comfortable with in another person.

This took me many years to figure out. I grew up on fairy tales, which led me to believe I would meet the perfect person of my dreams and we would ride off into the sunset and have the perfect life. Not true. It was after the hard breakup of my sixth relationship in a series of not good relationships when I started to really wonder what was wrong with me. At first I was focused on blaming other people. I came from a victim – why me – perspective. But after some inner reflection I realized I was the common denominator.

Those six people were not bad folks. Well, one was a thief and liar. But the other five were not horrible people who abused me or used me.

The truth is, I did not know myself. I was not honest with myself about my weaknesses and the negative behaviors I displayed that were fueled by anger and resentment over past abuse. I did not know what behaviors I really valued. I did not know how to say no. I was needy, did not communicate clearly, and was distant from my emotions. How in the world could I share the real me with other people if I did not know who the real me was?

Until the “I’m it” wake-up call, I had never considered what values, spiritual beliefs, and behaviors were important to me in my relationships. I did not realize the importance of needing to actually live these values for myself before I would find someone with the same values. To have any chance of creating the fulfilling, positive relationships I wanted, I first had to determine who I was, what I wanted in a partner or friend, and how I needed to behave in order to be a good friend and partner.

Who am I?

There was a time when I believed “who I am” was all the things I thought were wrong with me. One day I got fed up with constantly feeling inadequate. Over the next several weeks I made time each day to get quiet and honestly look at myself. I kept a running list of all that was going right with me. I was kind, loyal, generous, organized, determined, and hard-

working, and I loved animals and the natural world. And I had a growing list of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors I considered weaknesses.

Seriously thinking about all I was, the positive and negative, allowed me to identify behaviors and attitudes that needed change. Being insecure, closed, cautious, and emotionally unavailable permeated my relationships. My low self-esteem disconnected me from my feelings and did not allow me to communicate clearly. Codependent, I sought validation from the outside world. Unresolved issues of abandonment and unworthiness made me fear being alone. Setting healthy boundaries out of love and respect for myself was not part of my skill set.

I rushed from relationship to relationship, yet once in, I became distant, not wanting to be used or get hurt. While projecting my pain, negative thoughts, anger, and suspicions onto others, I also looked to other people to rescue me from a confusing and painful past.

The negative list was revealing, but instead of feeling saddened by the process of identifying my limiting beliefs and behaviors, I felt empowered. Having the courage to look at myself honestly generated a crucial to-do list so I could make myself into the friend and partner I wanted to be.

After completing my personal inventory, I also made a list of what I wanted in a relationship. Then I had to make certain the values and beliefs I identified were a genuine part of me. Why? Because, if I were dishonest, I would, and did, excuse the behavior of the liar and thief. Deep down, dishonesty went against the core values I wanted to live. So to be the real me, I had to start living as an honest person, not just telling myself I was honest when I really was not.

As I mentioned before, to create successful relationships we have to know what behaviors we value in another person. And, if those values are not displayed in our daily behavior then we have work to do on ourselves.

I wanted clear, open, and honest communication, so I focused on learning to be a good communicator.

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Since I desired someone who either had worked through or was actively addressing their limiting personal issues, I became devoted to healing my emotional wounds.

Desiring trust, forgiveness, and support, I became trustworthy, forgiving, and supportive. Wanting a responsible and dependable partner, and friends, I became accountable and reliable. I concentrated on growing my individuality and spirituality so I would be in the position to encourage and support the same in someone else. I wanted a respectful relationship, so I agreed to treat myself and other people with reverence.

Desiring kindness, honesty, and openness, I focused on being caring, truthful, and friendly. I wanted calm and became dedicated to maintaining a peaceful way of life. Enjoying play, I wanted someone who also made time for fun. Because I desired encouragement, I learned to support others. Desiring intimacy, I became emotionally available, to myself and to other people. Longing to share my dreams, concerns, and wants, I readily became a person who holds the aspirations, apprehension, and desires of others safely within my heart.

When I took time to identify what makes up a good partnership, I also realized the important role compatibility plays in finding a suitable companion. Knowing I wanted to be in a monogamous relationship allowed me to exclude those who practice infidelity. My love of animals and the natural world made me question the reality of having a good relationship with someone who disliked my furry friends. Valuing promptness and neatness, I stopped myself from getting involved with someone who was continuously late or who did not value personal hygiene and tidiness.

I have learned that one of our principal reasons for being alive is to learn to live with principles. When we live with integrity and responsibility we reduce conflict and stress in our relationships. Through the personal evaluation process, I realized to have the best life, we need to bring the best of ourselves to life. To be our best, it is necessary to assess our strengths and weaknesses.

Take time to determine which values (such as honesty, loyalty, compassion, promptness, cooperation, patience – think of as many as you can) are currently among your strengths; or, if absent, among your weaknesses. This is an opportunity to be completely honest and open with yourself.

After identifying your values, strengths, and limitations, spend time determining your objectives in a relationship. What is important to you in terms of finances, monogamy, pets, having children and how to raise them, spirituality, accumulation of things vs. positive memories, etc. The goal is to find a partner who shares your values. He puts the toilet seat down because he is courteous – which you value. She picks up her clothes because she is neat – which you value. He shares his thoughts and feelings with you because he values the intimacy that comes from clear and honest communication – which you value.

Your relationships will not be successful if you try to mold someone into the person you want her or him to be. Look for someone who already embodies the values you hold dear. Then you will be able to weather any relationship storm, because trust, respect, and clear communication are the foundation upon which you create a better life together than you would on your own.

Let Go of the Idea If I Just Love More, S(He) Will Change

Many years ago, I entered into a relationship with an alcoholic. I did not acknowledge the condition in the beginning, but over time it became impossible for me to ignore, as the incidents of intoxication began to add up.

After each occurrence there was an apology, a request for forgiveness, and a promise it would not happen again. No matter how much I wanted the drinking to stop, it did not. No matter how much I prayed for follow-through on the promises to seek help, there was none. For too long I chose to believe what was promised. I clung to a fantasy of what I thought the relationship could be, rather than accept the repeated actions of abuse as proof of what was actually true about this person.

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I know what it is like to harbor feelings of powerlessness, disappointment, stress, and resentment that results from holding on to a fantasy of what you want someone to be rather than accepting the truth of who she or he really is. One of the truths of life is that consistent actions are proof of who someone is.

People we care about often make bad choices. Sometimes the choices they make land them in jail, or addicted, bankrupt, in a bad relationship, or in a seemingly never-ending pit of despair. No amount of love for another person can change him or her. Regardless what negative choices other people make, we do not help by suffering with them, enabling them, or trying to fix something for them we cannot.

I know how it feels to have people I care about (family and friends) choose to stay in abusive relationships or hurt themselves and others. From the outside looking in, those of us who know love does not abuse, use, control, or prevent someone from interacting with his or her family and other people, the view is clear. Those who abuse themselves and others may comprehend, intellectually, their behavior is wrong, and in some cases illegal and immoral. But they do not realize it with emotional maturity, which would enable the sensitivity of their heart to overrule the rationalizations of their egocentric mind and control their behavior.

When people are cut off from the emotional responsibility of their heart, ego takes over, with endless justifications for negative, thoughtless, and self-centered behavior. No matter how much you love someone, without emotional awareness gained through candid self-assessment, he or she will continue believing the limiting excuses of his or her mind: *It is too hard, I just cannot do it, I do not have time, I am weak, I have tried and failed, it's easier said than done, I am poor, I am physically impaired, how I behave is part of my culture and beyond my control.* Feeling unworthy, or thinking we are unable to actually make beneficial changes to ourselves, is a lie of our mind. To change ourselves for the better, we have to change our thinking. You cannot change someone's thinking. The person must choose to change it for themselves.

Just because you have faith, pray, have a dream, or deep desire for someone to wake up and transform into the person you want him or her to be, does not mean what you want will miraculously come true. Believing what people say while ignoring their opposite behavior is not loving yourself or them. People can and do say anything. Especially when they want to continue getting their way or when they resist boundaries. I know from years of experience and working with countless numbers of folks, people do not change because we want them to. Our love does not magically create change in others.

No matter how much you cherish the idea of who you think someone can be, what his or her potential is, he or she must choose to be his or her best self. Your love will not stop the person from being abusive, drinking, having affairs, cutting him or herself, overspending, doing drugs, or behaving irresponsibly. No matter how much we love someone, our caring and affection are not powerful enough to make another person wake up to the way he or she is behaving or allowing himself or herself to be mistreated. The only love powerful enough to get someone to walk away from abuse, make a behavioral change, or end their fear or self-loathing is self-love. Let me repeat. The only love powerful enough to motivate someone to change anything about themselves is self-love.

I know this is the opposite of the fairy-tale love we may have been taught: If you just love someone enough, he or she will open and want to heal. The fairy tale is, your love has the power to transform other people. Well yes, love does have the power to transform, but it can transform only ourselves, when we love ourselves.

I wish just loving people would get them to wake up. But love is caring and affection expressed through positive actions. People who abuse themselves or others are not expressing self-love. So while we love people with our patience, understanding, cooperation, support, and encouragement, these actions are not going to make them change negative behavior. The only power we have is to be a positive example of what self-love looks like. We can mirror a healthy life filled

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with self-respect and control, but other people have to look within to see what about their behavior is preventing them from happiness, self-respect, and self-control. They have to want to change.

And they have to take the consistent actions to bring about self-change. Our love can only support them once they make the decision for themselves. Our love can only set boundaries when it becomes evident others are continuing down a self-destructive path and trying to drag us down with them.

Too often we believe because people are family or close friends, we have to hang in there, allowing them to dump their anger, self-centeredness, and emotional immaturity onto us. We feel this is how we love them. Not rocking the boat is our duty. But these ideas of love are inaccurate.

Tolerating bad behavior is the same as saying it is acceptable. Allowing unacceptable behavior is neither being loved nor loving others. Paying the rent for a drug-addicted child who is doing nothing to change is enabling the self-abuse to continue. Bailing out an irresponsible relative or friend from repeated financial crises is neither love nor loving. It is enabling the bad behavior to continue.

Enabling is not love. It is ego's desire to control, to change another, to get the person to wake up to how they are behaving, disguised as love.

One way to avoid disappointment and frustration in relationships is to say enough is enough. Saying no is one of the tough actions of love, because there is a perception those who live a heart-centered life are submissive and must turn the other cheek, regardless of how we are treated. While patience, cooperation, forgiveness, and peacefulness are a few of the behaviors of living aligned with heart, so is setting boundaries. Over the course of my life, I have set countless boundaries with family and friends. I learned loving people is not about allowing them to abuse us.

Love always seeks to bring about a higher, wiser level of awareness than what created the negative situation in the first place. Saying no is challenging,

because boundaries shine a light on wounded, negative dynamics and bad behavior. But to love both ourselves and other people, we must accept the truth, if we do not establish limits on unacceptable behavior, then we are permitting those who treat us badly to continue to do so.

If you are currently in an abusive situation, you must set a boundary with people who mistreat you. Choose to respect yourself and walk away, if necessary. Love yourself by being honest with yourself about the behavior of others. Love yourself by letting go of the false hope if you love someone enough, then he or she will change. Love yourself by making the positive changes necessary to stop allowing yourself to be mistreated, used, abused, or lied to.

Be an example of what healthy self-love looks like. Realize healthy relationships are built by healthy people. Accept the reality people must love themselves enough to take the actions necessary to change.

Self-love will bring the most powerful motivation for you to change. Even if the one change you make is letting go of the fantasy, if you only love more, she or he will change.

Want Someone to Live Life with You, Not for You

At this time in my life, I spend much time alone and love each minute of me-time. Periods of solitude are healthy. I engage with myself, support myself, have established intimacy with myself – which means I know me inside and out and am comfortable with who I am.

I am most creative when I am alone. I healed an abusive past by being alone. Solitude allows me to honestly look within.

There was a time I spent most of my time alone and hated it. And there were good reasons why I felt lonely even when I was surrounded by other people. I felt lonely because I told myself I was lonely.

I know it sounds too simple, but our thoughts create our behavior. I was completely focused on

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the huge chasm between my desire to hang out with people and the reality, which was my lack of social interactions. Even though I wanted to be around other people, panic set in each time I had to go to a party or be in a social setting. I felt lonely because I did not initiate conversation. I was uncomfortable talking to others and tended to retreat into a corner to be alone. I waited for other people to approach me.

The lack of self-confidence to initiate conversation caused me to go inside my head. My mind made up all sorts of untrue things, like people were judging me. I felt I was an outsider, I just did not fit in. I felt no one understood me. I felt separate from other people and disconnected from life.

It is not surprising I felt this way because as a child, I created an entire fantasy world with imaginary friends. It was easier and more comfortable being alone with my made-up friends. They did not judge me, ridicule me, or pick on me. They did not bully me or yell. In my fantasy world I was strong, independent, likeable, outgoing, and popular – all of the things I was not in real life.

I wanted to be more like my fantasy self, surrounded by people who made me feel good about myself. Back then I did not realize other people could not make me feel anything. How I felt about myself had to come from within me for it to be real and for me to trust it. People could boost me up, validate me, and compliment me, but I never believed them. The compliments of other people did not feel real until I first knew in my heart their observations of me were true.

One of the most important aspects for us to accept about loneliness is we are never alone. We always have ourselves which means there is a big difference between being lonely and being alone.

For me, accepting I could be my own best friend, biggest fan, most trusted and supportive confidant, opened the door to my being okay alone. You see, we close our heart when we feel lonely. We get depressed. We go inside to hide. But hiding ourselves away distances us from our heart – the feeling being – the soul we are. Feeling lonely

causes our mind and its negative and limiting thoughts to take over. Soon we are swimming in a murky pond filled with anger and feelings of being separate from, rather than being a wonderful part of everything alive.

I stopped being lonely when I became okay being alone. Which required me to go inward to address and heal the causes of my shyness, and feelings of unworthiness by taking action in two specific ways.

First, I did my own kind of therapy. I was lonely because I told myself I was lonely. I had done so for years without once questioning why I was telling myself I was lonely. So I started unraveling my muddled mind by making a list of everything I was fearful of with regards to being alone, to having friends, a life partner, public speaking, conversations with strangers. The goal was to identify what thoughts were driving my loneliness, such as “You’ll never fit in,” or “You’re not good enough,” or “Why would anyone like you?”

Who says? Where did the negative thoughts come from? Finding the source of why I did not feel worthy of friends and being the belle of the ball was less important to me than identifying the thoughts I had been playing in my mind for so long. *You’re not likeable. You don’t have anything important to say. No one is interested in you. People are judging you. You’re an outsider and just don’t fit in. You’ll never fit in.* Wow, what horrible things to think about myself. And most importantly, they were not true.

Somewhere in my early life these kinds of thoughts had begun taking over. Maybe people said them to me. Or maybe I had created all of them in my mind. Over time, playing the same negative, self-loathing tapes caused an awful lack of self-confidence and feelings of unworthiness, which resulted in isolating myself, which then caused my feelings of loneliness.

Regardless where the negative, “You’re not good enough and will never fit in” thoughts came from, real healing came when I realized all of the thoughts driving my feelings of inadequacy – the reasons for my social isolation and feeling lonely – were not true. Since I felt lonely because I was telling myself I

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was lonely, I was believing my thoughts rather than confronting them to change them.

The second step I took was doing things for myself to make me feel good about me. Isolation only fed the negative thoughts of being lonely. So I began doing positive things to build myself up. I began exercising, joined a gym, ate healthfully, took long walks alone in nature, and spent lots of time with my pets. When I felt more confident, I joined a bowling team. I began volunteering for an AIDS organization. I signed up to be a stage manager for a local theater/music group.

Being with other people helped me develop my communication skills and feelings of making a contribution, which resulted in being connected to who I was. By putting myself out there, I was connecting to my heart, the inner workings of Regina. By relating to myself in positive ways, I finally ended the negative mind chatter of, "You're not good enough and You're so lonely." Mastering my negative "You're lonely" thoughts opened the door for me to learn how to see myself as I really was, not who I had been telling myself I was.

Today I can honestly say I have not felt lonely in many years. I do not feel lonely because I am very okay being with myself. I now understand me – what I like and what I am working on within myself. I know what I value and work each day to be an honest, kind, compassionate, and joyful person. I seek my own counsel as my own best friend. I like myself because I like my behavior, thoughts, words, and attitudes.

This is important because one of the big reasons I did not like myself in the past is I did not behave like the person I kept telling myself I was. There was a huge disconnect between who I really was (how I talked and behaved) and the fantasy of who I told myself I was. When I began actually being the responsible person I told myself I was, the expanse between the true Regina and fake Regina disappeared. Owning my behavior, striving to be my best, learning from my mistakes, and being my own best friend allowed me to like myself. I no longer cared if I fit into anyone's idea of who I should be. I became confident to the point I can talk to anyone in any social setting.

It took work to get to the point where I do not feel lonely. I had to face my fear of putting myself out there. I had to change things about myself I did not like. I had to care enough about me to stay true to myself rather than pleasing others. I had to be comfortable with being by myself.

There is no reason to feel lonely. You always have you. Focus on being your own best friend. You will stop being lonely when you become okay being alone.

Say No Up Front to Save Your Relationships

I asked someone I know for help to get a package to someone she knows. Before asking her, I repeatedly assured her she could say no to my request. I told her it would be absolutely okay for her to refuse to help. But without one bit of hesitation, she said yes and seemed excited.

In our initial conversation, I let her know my request was time sensitive. I needed the item delivered to the person she knew within a week, to give the person time to respond to me before an approaching deadline. She assured me she would get the task done within a few days.

After a week without any news, I wrote her an email to see about the progress. She replied she had been busy and was working on it. After another week without any communication from her, I wrote again, and she assured me her schedule was now free. Two weeks in and the deadline was rapidly advancing.

After another week without any word, time was running out, so I contacted her again. In response, I got an angry email saying she would not help. She reprimanded me for not respecting her boundaries. Needless to say, I was shocked. No matter how many times I had told her to say no if she did not want to follow through on my behalf, she never once set a boundary of any kind. In each communication, she assured me she would help. Now she was angry at herself for not saying no up front and she took that upset out on me. The truth is she never intended to follow through, but rather than say no up front, she continued to tell me yes. An aversion to being candid in our relationship won out.

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Healthy relationships are founded on mutual respect and trust. Being respected and trusted comes from being open and honest. We establish trust when we say no to requests we do not want to fulfill.

Often we do not say no because we fear being disliked. So we say yes, without considering if we really want to do what is being asked of us. When we go against the promises we make, we get angry. Often we take anger out on the person we made the promise to. The anger is really at ourselves for not doing what we said we would. We are angry because we did not say no up front.

We go against ourselves when we overrule what we know is best for us in favor of satisfying others, fitting in, not making waves, or wanting to be liked. Going against what is true for us results in regret, disappointment, and suffering.

No matter how uncomfortable being true to yourself may be, there is nothing as satisfying as the self-love and self-respect that comes from honoring your own values. Often staying true to you requires overruling your mind when it says you have to do something for someone even when it does not feel right.

The woman's intuition told her she should say no to my request. I know this because in later communication, she shared it never felt right. But even knowing she would feel uncomfortable approaching her friend on my behalf, she overruled her intuitive guidance. She did not want to let me down. But, I was let down when she continued to say yes while never intending to follow through.

She was torn between being true to what she really wanted to do – saying no to me – and not wanting to disappoint me. Refusing to say no up front, she ended up not only going against her better judgment, the intuitive guidance of what was right for her, but she went against me, too. I trusted her to keep her word. So in essence she lied to me from the very beginning.

You and I get intuitive, what-is-right-to-do messages all the time. Sometimes a mysterious awareness helps us avoid doing something we feel

is not in our best interest, such as cosigning a loan for an irresponsible relative (or anyone). Or perhaps it is to say no to going out with someone who is handsome but entirely self-absorbed. Maybe we need to refuse a job offer even though we need the work, because something does not feel right about the situation. It is our intuition that prompts us to go back to the grocery store counter where we absentmindedly left our car keys.

Each of us has access to this wise guidance inside us. To benefit from its direction, we must learn to trust that our intuitive wisdom is more accurate than the information offered by our often biased and self-centered mind.

It is okay to ask people for help. And it is okay to say no. In fact, it is much better to say no than to say yes and not follow through.

Be a true friend to yourself by courageously saying no to anything you are not comfortable doing. Listen to your heart/soul/intuitive knowing. If you want to do something, it will feel light, right, and comfortable. If you do not want to do something, it will feel heavy, wrong, and uncomfortable.

Respect yourself and other people enough to be honest up front. Positive, lasting relationships are the ones where it is absolutely okay to say no and it is okay to be told no.

Regina



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By

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Author of Lead With Your Heart

Four Ways to Avoid Disappointment & Frustration in Relationships **Workbook**



In my first book, *Lead with Your Heart*, there is a chapter titled "Ask Yourself Hard Questions." To create the very best relationships possible, take the time necessary to honestly answer the questions below. Along with the ones posed at the end of each chapter in *Lead with Your Heart*, the following questions will help uncover what strengths you currently bring to your relationships and what areas need improvement.

Remember, the quality of relationships you establish in life depends on the quality of the relationship you have with yourself first. Invest in yourself and do the work necessary. When you know who you are, what you like, and what you do not like, then you will be able to identify the same values and behaviors in other people, so you can avoid as much frustration and disappointment as possible in your relationships.

1. From this list of honorable values, circle the top ten must-have behaviors you want in your friends, children, spouse, or a partner.

Accepting	Honest
Attentive	Kind
Committed	Loyal
Compassionate	Nurturing
Cooperative	Patient
Devoted	Peaceful
Empathetic	Respectful
Encouraging	Responsible
Enduring	Sensitive
Faithful	Supportive
Forgiving	Tender
Giving	Truthful
Grateful	Understanding

2. Are the values you want in other people already a consistent part of your everyday behavior? If you chose "patient," are you someone who is consistently patient?

3. Identify what values in question one are not currently part of your everyday way of being in the world.

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4. Make a list of circumstances where you can begin practicing the values you identify as needing work. For example, patience – traffic jam, long lines, etc.

5. Describe the process that leads to trusting your decisions.

6. List ways you enjoy time alone.

7. What is your definition of success?

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8. Explain how important spirituality is to you.

9. Define love.

10. Explain what type of relationship you have/had with your parents.

11. Growing up, did you feel accepted, supported, and cared for by your parents? List why or why not.

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12. List what fears haunt you.

13. Explain why you fear what you fear.

14. Is it easy for you to say no? If not, why not.

15. Describe how important it is for people to like you.

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16. List ten unacceptable behaviors in any relationship.

17. Describe a time when you allowed yourself to be treated badly.

18. List five ways you treat yourself respectfully.

19. Describe what you do when you get angry.

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20. Explain how you are financially responsible.

21. Does it hurt your feelings if someone does not compliment you? Why?

22. What are five strengths you bring to your relationships?

23. Describe the ways you support yourself.

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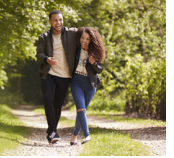
24. Do you like to learn new things about yourself, other people, the natural world, etc.?

25. Describe how it feels to learn new things.

26. What is your idea of a successful relationship? Be specific in what behaviors you feel contribute to an ideal relationship.

27. What are your passions/hobbies? (Animals, helping others, painting, reading, gardening, etc.)

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28. Do you share your home with pets? If so, list five ways you benefit from having companion animals.

29. List five ways you are making yourself a better person.

30. What are the ten most important things you are demonstrating for your children or other people about how to have good friendships and relationships?

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31. Although each of these is important in a successful relationship, circle the 10 that are most important to you.

Time	Education Level	Trust	Financial Compatibility
Open Communication	Emotional Maturity	Devotion	Physical Activity
Honesty	Personal Responsibility	Healthy Boundaries	Rest
Trust	Empathy	Individuality	Ambition
Shared Interests	Patience	Respect	Sex
Spirituality	Forgiveness	Kindness	Friendship
Alone Time		Shared Goals	

32. Describe someone you know who has the partnership, marriage, or friendship you desire to have. What makes her/his relationship work? What about her or him as an individual do you admire?

33. What are three things you learned about yourself from your last relationship breakup or ending of a friendship?

34. What are three things you learned about the other person?

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35. Think about what you want to accomplish within the next:

Year

Two Years

Five Years

Ten Years

36. List the ways you are neat, organized, and clean. Or the ways you are not.

37. Describe a situation in which you were jealous and how jealousy made you feel.

38. Describe why you consider yourself a contented person. If you don't, why not?

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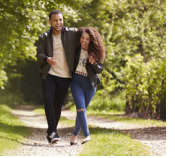
39. How do you feel about sharing your feelings and thoughts with others? If this is hard, why? What fears arise?

40. List three ways you currently give back to help others.

41. How important are the environment and natural world to you?

42. Do you like to go out and party? Or are you a homebody? Or a combination?

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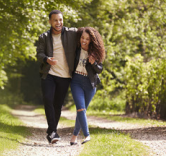
43. What is your favorite music, food, color, flavor of ice cream, time of day, television program?

44. Are you uncomfortable when other people cry? Are you comfortable expressing emotion?

45. Are you a cat or dog person? Or fish, hamster, or bird person? Why?

46. Are you a morning person or do you function better at night?

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47. Do you read novels or nonfiction? Mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, self-help books?

48. What is your favorite time of year?

49. Describe why regular health, dental, and eye examinations are important.

50. How many hours per week do you spend working? How many hours per week do you spend in non-work activities?

51. What is your favorite way to relax?

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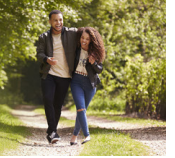
52. Are you comfortable with silence? If not, why not?

53. Do you control technology or does it control you? For instance, do you reach for the cell phone before getting out of bed or insist on taking a call or returning a text when you are with other people?

54. Are you comfortable saying no to things you do not want to do sexually?

55. Describe your ideal retirement?

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56. What is your ideal vacation?

57. Do you prefer to live in the city or country or suburb?

58. Do you prefer traditional or modern architecture?

59. How many foreign countries have you visited?

60. Do you pay off credit cards each month or carry over a balance?

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61. What is your FICO credit score? How important is financial responsibility to you?

62. Do you have a Will, Power of Attorney, Medical Directive, and life insurance? If not, why not?

63. What are the most important things you want to accomplish in life?

64. Explain what loyalty means to you. Describe how you are a loyal person?

65. What is your position on monogamy in relationship?
