

Love is ... ♥ Friendship ♥ Caring ♥ Honesty ♥ Trust ♥ Communication ♥ Respect ♥ Fun ♥ Commitment ♥ Compromise ♥ Recognizing Differences ♥ Openness ♥ Closeness ♥ Responsibility ♥ Understanding
Love isn't ... ♦ Jealousy ♦ Being Selfish ♦ Having to Prove Yourself ♦ Manipulation ♦ Dependency ♦ Anger ♦ Fear ♦ Having to Change Yourself ♦ Intimidation ♦ Pain ♦ Violence ♦ Obsession ♦ Cruelty

WHAT'S A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?



The lessons you learn in your teens about respect, healthy versus unhealthy relationships, and what's right or wrong will carry over into future relationships, so it's

important to recognize what a healthy relationship is. Check to see if the following 12 healthy qualities exist in yours:

Mutual respect

Respect means that each person values who the other is and understands the other person's boundaries.

Trust

Without trust, there's no way to have a healthy relationship.

Honesty

Always be honest. It builds trust and strengthens the relationship.

Compromise

Acknowledge different points of view and be willing to give and take when it's not important.

Individuality

Continue seeing your friends and doing the things you enjoy. Don't compromise who you are as an individual.

Good communication

Speak honestly and openly to avoid miscommunication.

Anger control

We all get angry, but how we express it can affect our relationships. Anger can be handled in healthy ways such as taking a deep breath, counting to 10, or calmly talking it out.

Problem solving

People in healthy relationships support one another in solving problems.

"Fighting" fair

Everyone argues, but those who are fair, stick to the subject, and avoid insults are more likely to come up with solutions and be in healthy relationships.

Understanding

Take a minute or two to understand what others might be feeling, and put yourself in their shoes.

Self-confidence

Having confidence in yourself shows that you're comfortable enough to allow others to express their opinions without forcing yours on them to win an argument.

Being a role model

By modeling what respect means, you'll be inspiring your boyfriend or girlfriend, your friends, and your family to model respect, too.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T for Teens

All people are equal, but each person is unique. That means that we should not only respect those around us, we should respect ourselves as well. Developing our own talents and working to continually mature into an ethical, caring person is the best way to be happy and confident. You'll be the type of person that people like to be around, because you'll truly like yourself!



How can you be an ethical person? Ethical people act on principle, not on impulse. *Here are a number of ethical norms in society that are accepted by virtually all people:*

1. **Honesty:** to be truthful, sincere, frank, candid; not to steal or cheat or act deviously.
2. **Integrity:** to be honorable, upright, courageous; act on one's convictions, follow one's principles AND not be two-faced, unscrupulous, or follow an ends justifies the means idea.
3. **Promise-keeping:** to be trustworthy, keep promises, fulfill commitments, follow the spirit and the letter of an agreement AND not be legalistic, rationalize, or make excuses for breaking commitments.
4. **Fidelity:** be faithful and loyal to family, friends, employers, teachers, country; do not tell information learned in confidence; avoid conflicts of interest.
5. **Fairness:** be fair and open-minded, be willing to admit mistakes; give equal treatment to others, and do not take advantage of another person's weaknesses or mistakes.
6. **Caring for others:** be caring, kind and compassionate, serve others, be generous, and help those in need.
7. **Respect for others:** demonstrate respect for human dignity, privacy, and the right for others to determine their future; be courteous, on time; don't embarrass or humiliate others.
8. **Responsible citizenship:** obey just laws (if a law is unjust, protest it); exercise all your rights and privileges; provide leadership when possible; be informed and make intelligent decisions.
9. **Pursuit of excellence:** pursue excellence in all you do (e.g., school, hobbies, friendships); be industrious, committed; perform to the highest of your ability.
10. **Accountability:** be responsible for your decisions, and look ahead to the consequences of your actions/inactions.

Developing these characteristics will help you become a mature, ethical person. And they'll help you have the confidence to demand that others treat you the way you deserve to be treated in order to have healthy relationships: with respect for your ideas, your values, and your uniqueness.

www.nwfs.org (Adapted)



RULES for the Big Dance

Deciding when you'll allow your children to date is never easy. Much of your decision will be dependent on whether or not your teen can be trusted to act responsibly. However, even the most responsible teen needs protection and coaching to successfully navigate the teenage pressures of the "big dance."

These are the rules we developed for our teen whom we felt had earned the privilege of attending important school dances by demonstrating responsibility. You'll want to personalize them to your own standards, but they can be a helpful place to begin.

1. "Two-Week" Rule

Boys must ask their date no later than two weeks before the dance.

2. "Buying Time" Rule

Girls do not have to accept or decline an invitation on the spot. They should thank the boy for asking, and let him know they'll get back to him with an answer the next day. This allows time for you to decide together if the date is a good idea.



3. "Choose Wisely" Rule

This rule was necessitated because of the trend to attend the dance with a large group. The larger a group, the more difficult it is to guarantee that everyone will have the same standards for the evening. Explain to your teen the need to think carefully before committing to attend the dance as part of a large group.

If your teen does go with a group, make sure s/he will be with friends who will not be drinking or using drugs. If your teen tries to defend a poor choice by saying, "But I won't be doing it," help them understand that if one person in the group is caught doing something wrong or illegal, the whole group - including your teen - will likely be guilty by association. Help your teen formulate a plan to take a stand if the group does start engaging in risky behaviors. Let her/him know that you'll be available to come and get her/him if they need you to.

4. "Meet and Greet" Rule

As parents, both of you should meet your teen's date well in advance of the dance, not just on the day of the event... again giving you time to explain your expectations for the date.

5. "Post-Dance Confirmation" Rule

If your teen is invited to an after-dance party or midnight breakfast, call to confirm with the other parents that a party is really taking place, where it will be held, and that there will be adult supervision.

6. "Midnight" Rule

We have found that requiring the teen to be home by midnight (unless attending an after-dance get together you've approved in advance) is wise.

7. "Tuck-In" Rule

No post-dance or overnight parties. Make sure your teen understands that they are expected to spend the night at home after the dance.

Here's the conversation one dad has with his daughter's date before they go out:

He first asks the boy, "What would you do if I gave you a million dollars?" The boy usually tells him how he would save, invest, or spend it. The father says, "What if I gave you one million dollars to take with you when you walk out the door tonight?" The boy then answers with how he would safeguard it.

"Well," the father continues, "our daughter is worth much more to us than a million dollars. We are entrusting you with her safety and care tonight. We want you to protect her and look out for her because she is priceless to us. If at any point during the night you feel as if you or she is in danger, call us and we'll be right there to help you. Understand?"

Of course, by now both the boy and daughter do understand... and that's the point.

Do you wait up for your teenager?

One mom slept on the couch until her kids got home... then, she'd give them a hug or kiss goodnight on the cheek. She did this to check for telltale signs of smoking or drinking. A dad kept an alarm clock set with the curfew time next to his bed. It was the teen's job to turn it off when he came in—before the alarm sounded—confirming to his father that he was home on time and all was well. These ideas may seem a little much, but if you've had teenagers, you know it's better to protect than neglect.

Mark Merrill on Family Minute at www.FamilyFirst.net