

healthy relationships

A healthy relationship with a friend (or with a boyfriend/girlfriend) has open and honest communication and an even playing field on which friends share power and control over decisions.

An unhealthy relationship has an imbalance in which one person tries to be in control and have power over the other through threats, emotional abuse, and physical abuse. At its most extreme, an unhealthy relationship can include name-calling and insults, withholding of money or other resources, threats to isolate a person from friends and family, pushing people around, violent acts, stalking, and physical injury.

A strong woman is someone who:

- Is willing and able to make decisions about her activities, her future and her family
- Speaks her mind in a relationship
- Refuses to do things that make her uncomfortable
- Expects people to treat her with respect and affection even when they are angry or disappointed
- Expects equal relationships where friends take turns giving and getting from each other
- Expects that any and all romantic behavior is consensual (that means both people agree it's what they really want to do), is based upon understanding consequences, and is based on a good relationship
- Knows that destructive relationships hurt her self-esteem and mental and physical well-being
- Knows that any violence is unacceptable





A strong man is someone who:

- Respects others and doesn't try to control them
- Participates in discussions and negotiations, and does not feel threatened when his friend voices opinions that are different from his own
- Compromises and realizes that he doesn't lose power or status if his way isn't followed
- Doesn't resort to threats, insults or violence to get his way
- Knows that "no" means no, and doesn't force sexual contact
- Can deal with feelings of anger and frustration without taking them out on somebody else
- Recognizes that he may be physically stronger than others, but doesn't use that strength to hurt
- Accepts an equal share of the responsibility for the work needed to keep a relationship healthy
- Knows that any violence is unacceptable

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