

Musings of Valentine's Day

As Valentine's Day approaches, some individuals reflect on the questions: "Why am I alone?" "Why can't I make a relationship work?"

Many people compose intricate lists of "the perfect companion." They rattle off all the qualities that they want in a person. Although unfortunately, many times these characteristics are superficial ones. Common themes are: what one should look like, how much money one should make, and what ones' hobbies should be. The substance of a person is often overlooked. Maybe a better approach is to define what you can bring to a relationship.

If you want a healthy connection with someone, ask yourself these questions: "What kind of a relationship do I feel I deserve?" "Why would someone want to be with me?" "What do I need to work on to be the best I can be?"

Important aspects of a healthy relationship include good communication, honesty and trustworthiness, and fighting fair.

Communication

"Do I speak to people with respect?" "Do I allow people to have a different opinion?" "Do I say what I mean and mean what I say, or do I expect others to read my mind?" "Do I feel comfortable being vulnerable by sharing my feelings?" "Do I understand that sarcasm is dirty fighting and that being sarcastic will push others away from me instead of toward me?" "Do I know how to apologize when I am wrong?"

Honesty and trustworthiness

"Can I be trusted?" "Do I keep my friends' secrets safe, or do I gossip?" "Am I a straight-shooter, or do I exaggerate?" "Am I frank, or do I tell people what I think they want to hear?" "When I say I am going to do something do I follow-through?"

Resolving conflict

Do I know how to "fight fair?" Do I make 'I' statements, or do I say, "you need to..." Do I keep to the issues at hand, resist sarcasm and refrain from saying things I will later regret?

It is important to define the qualities that you are looking for in a companion that will contribute positively to a relationship. If you are clear about what you want and work on the qualities listed above, then you are well on your way to having a great relationship. Remember, you are looking for a person to compliment who you are. You are looking for a person who believes the best in you, has your back, and wants to spend time with you. You are looking for someone who respects who you are and what you are passionate about.

There are many books that can assist you in learning how to love yourself and a relationship counselor can teach you good communication skills. Then, maybe next Valentine's Day, you will be sharing it with someone very special.

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