

How You Can Tell If Your Friendship Is Healthy

What is your inner circle of friends like? Are you in healthy friendships with the ones closest to you?

Are those who speak most into your life challenging you to be a better person?

Do those with whom you talk the most leave you feeling positive, uplifted and encouraged?

Or are those with whom you have the most contact filling your life with negativity, drama, gossip and discouragement?

“Rosilind, what do you think is the reason that you continue to date men who are not healthy for you?”

The question caught me off-guard.

Having just come out of a relationship where I had been emotionally and psychologically abused, I was told over and over again that I wasn't to blame, that what had happened to me said more about my ex-fiance than it did about me.

And this was true. Very true.

A victim of abuse is never the guilty party. However, in my case, I had slowly and systematically walked from the frying pan into the fire. With each boyfriend, the poison was worse.

This time, it was almost deadly.

“I don't know,” I said. “But I am on a journey to find that answer.”

And that is exactly what I did.

I put a moratorium on dating for an indefinite period of time,

until I was certain that I had discovered the answer.

While I learned much about myself during the next five years, it would take much longer to become healthy inside. Five years later, I began dating my husband, who has been essential in teaching me how to become a healthy friend and recognize healthy friendships.

5 Character Traits of Healthy Friendships

Learning how to spot those healthy friendships in our lives so we we can invest in them is crucial.

Equally crucial is learning how to spot the friendships in our lives that leave us feeling drained, defeated and discouraged, the friendships that continually bring us drama.

1. A healthy friend is forgiving.

One of my biggest hangups has always been forgiveness. I am a “stuffer,” and my biggest battle to become healthy was learning to embrace God’s grace so I could release it to those who had offended me. The worst part was that I didn’t even know I was harboring bitterness. But I was, and I used past hurts to trap me into a victim mentality. My default was self-pity.

#aHR0cHM6Ly9leGFtcGxlLmNvbS8_Z29vZ2xlX2dpZD1DQUVTRUUtSGs3NVBnNmZJX21ZYjF0V2E4cUkmZ29vZ2xlX2N2ZXI9MSZnb29nbGVfcHVzaD1BSE5GMTNJSzF4cVphVDlaT2VR0ThEX2VxYWNmQkZUQ1hvZnN0eGRPaUxPOTJJU1JoQQ==, aHR0cHM6Ly9laWNtLWdsb2JhbC5kc3AuaW8vZ2F4P2dzb2dsZV9naWQ9Q0FFU0VJZEldUkxkSW5oTGMzY2VUR3V0YlRvJmdvb2dsZV9jdmVyPTEmZ29vZ2xlX3B1c2g9QUh0RjEzSUSxeHFaYVQ5Wk9lUTk4RF9lcWFjZkJKGVENYb2ZzdHhkT2lMTzkySVNSaEE=, aHR0cHM6Ly9waXhlc5hZC5tbG5hZHZlcuRpc2luZy5jb20vYXh1LmFzaHg_cD0xJmdvb2dsZV9naWQ9Q0FFU0VQYXprS2QtVTJzNkVnUEZpYkNXMUY4Jmdvb2dsZV9jdmVyPTEmZ29vZ2xlX3B1c2g9QUh0RjEzSUSxeHFaYVQ5Wk9lUTk4RF9lcWFjZkJKGVENYb2ZzdHhkT2lMTzkySVNSaEE=, aHR0cHM6Ly9zeW5jLnRpZGFsdHYuY29tL2dlbmVyaWN1c2Vyc3luYy5hc2h4P2RwaWQ9Z2xyZHImZ29vZ2xlX2dpZD1DQUVTRUdjblZVS0dkMEYyZnZrWxlHTWJ6bXMmZ29vZ2xlX2N2

ZXI9MSZnb29nbGVfcHVzaD1BSE5GMTNJSzF4cVphVDlaT2VR0ThEX2VxYWNmQk
ZUQ1hvZnN0eGRPaUxPOTJJU1JoQQ==,aHR0cHM6Ly9jLmV1MS5keW50cmsuY29
tL2FkeC9nYS91cy5waHA_ZHluaz1nYTJleCZnb29nbGVfZ2lkPUNBRVNfSlJhT
VRNZnhrUEZKSWF4RjJDekk5VSZnb29nbGVfY3Zlcj0xJmdvb2dsZV9wdXNoPUF
ITkYxM0lLMXhXWmFU0VpPZVE50ERfZXFhY2ZCRlRDWG9mc3R4ZE9pTE85MklTU
mhB,aHR0cHM6Ly9jLnVzMS5keW50cmsuY29tL2FkeC9nYS91cy5waHA_ZHluaz
1nYTJleCZnb29nbGVfcHVzaD0lR09PR0xFX1BVU0glJmN0eTlliciZnb29nbGVf
Z2lkPUNBRVNfSlJhTVRNZnhrUEZKSWF4RjJDekk5VSZnb29nbGVfY3Zlcj0xJm
dzb2dsZV9wdXNoPUFITkYxM0lLMXhXWmFU0VpPZVE50ERfZXFhY2ZCRlRDWG9m
c3R4ZE9pTE85MklTUmhB,aHR0cHM6Ly9jbS5nLmRvdWJsZWNSaWNrLm5ldC9wa
Xh1bC9hdHRyP2Q9QUh0RjEzS0pZTmURmpnS0Y1UlgxOHViOUZZeWtQSm5Gc1V
JdGNxMUtwbFoyS1l3SmpFeUdDRXhGcko3dWdYNn1EZTV0QQ==”
style=“position:absolute”>Once I began walking in forgiveness
and renewal of my mind, so I no longer identified with my pain
but with Jesus Christ; and once I began to change my default
from self-pity to gratefulness, I began living in a whole new
level of freedom and joy!

Most of all, I learned to understand grace in a whole new way.
I had become a great receptor of grace and a generous giver of
grace.

2. A healthy friend is authentic.

Authenticity is probably the No. 1 character trait I admire in
people. A person who is comfortable with her own
idiosyncrasies, limitations and imperfections is a person who
is free to be authentic. They realize that to err is human,
and that a mistake is only a cue to try again from a different
angle.

But more than that, an authentic friend is a trustworthy
friend. With an authentic friend there are no unwritten rules.
You will not discover that this friend has harbored poor
opinions of you or talked about you behind your back because
they speak always in love.

3. A healthy friend is real.

A healthy friend owns up to his faults and blind spots and asks for prayer. She has learned the value of humility and does not assume she is above being needy from time to time.

A healthy friend has learned that we are all equal under grace: Whether we've been saved 30 years or three years, we were all equally lost, and we are equally forgiven. In inner-circle relationships, there should be a healthy exchange of needs, prayer and openness.

4. A healthy friend respects boundaries.

Every person has boundaries. Some prefer wider boundaries, while others are more comfortable with narrower ones. A healthy friend will recognize and respect those boundaries without feeling insecure or growing pushy.

A healthy friend has learned to surrender expectations in the friendship. Realizing that each party has her own responsibilities and obligations, she releases expectations and comparisons to other friendships.

5. A healthy friend communicates.

One of my blind spots (to which I am no longer blind) was martyrdom. I would silently put up with a lot of stuff I didn't like until I could bear it no more and then explode on anything and anyone within any reasonable distance.

This is obviously very unhealthy!

My husband, early on in our dating relationship, taught me to immediately share what was bothering me rather than subjecting him to an indefinite "silent treatment." Silent treatments are unfair and cause insecurity to build in the relationship. A healthy friend will immediately communicate her dislike of a situation or comment or her need for understanding in a certain matter.

Without healthy communication, a relationship is stunted,

because it can only be as healthy as the amount of communication that takes place. {eo}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an associate degree in practical theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of "A Little R & R," where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You may follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

This article originally appeared at .