**Relationship Smarts PLUS 4.0**

13 LESSONS FOR TEENS ABOUT LOVE AND ROMANCE
BY MARLINE E. PEARSON, M.A.

**Relationship Smarts PLUS** is a lively, 13-lesson, evidence-based relationship skills curriculum for young teens. This curriculum embodies an innovative approach that addresses positive youth development, life skills, healthy relationships, dating violence, and pregnancy prevention. These goals, typically addressed in separate programs, are integrated and embedded into one comprehensive healthy relationship skills program.

**Relationship Smarts PLUS** builds assets and strengthens protective factors. It appeals to teenagers’ aspirations, rather than merely emphasizing what they must avoid. It empowers youth with skills needed to form and maintain healthy relationships, make wise sexual choices, and work toward their goals.

All youth, regardless of sexual orientation, have attractions, emotions, and desires for healthy relationships. All youth benefit from sexual delay and risk avoidance. All youth need skills and knowledge to navigate their relationships and make wise sexual decisions. This is an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum.

To order or for more information:
www.DibbleInstitute.org
PO Box 7881 • Berkeley, CA 94707-0881
800.695.7975 • relationshipskills@dibbleinstitute.org
Table of Contents

Introduction to Relationship Smarts PLUS ................... iii
Instructor Tips ................................................................ vi

Lesson 1: Who Am I and Where Am I Going? ....... 1
  • Possible Selves Tree
  • My Friends and My Future
  • Being Yourself: Dealing with Pressure Situations

Lesson 2: Maturity Issues and What I Value ....... 17
  • The Four Dimensions of Maturity
  • Maturity—Where Are You?
  • Clarifying Values
  • What’s Important to Me?

Lesson 3: Attractions and Infatuation .............. 33
  • Test Your Love Smarts
  • Relationship Pyramid
  • The Chemistry of Attraction

Lesson 4: Principles of Smart Relationships ...... 55
  • Smart or Not-So-Smart?
  • Seven Principles of Smart Relationships
  • Seven Questions to Ask
  • Three Sides of Love

Lesson 5: Is It a Healthy Relationship? .......... 75
  • How Can You Tell?
  • Unmet Needs and Unhealthy Relationships
  • Having Fun
  • Tips for Teens

Lesson 6: Breaking Up and Dating Violence ...... 91
  • Breaking Up
  • Early Warnings and Red Flags
  • Types of Intimate Partner Violence and Warning Signs
  • Sexual Assault
  • Harm to Children
  • Draw the Line of Respect

Lesson 7: Decide, Don’t Slide! ....................... 119
  • Healthy Selves—Healthy Relationships
  • The High-Risk Sliding Approach
  • The Success Sequence
  • The Low-Risk Deciding Approach
  • Brief Review
  • Decide, Don’t Slide!

Lesson 8: Communication and Healthy Relationships ......... 143
  • Communication Patterns Learned in Family
  • Patterns that Harm Relationships
  • Angry Brains and the Power of Time Outs
  • The Speaker Listener Technique—When Talking is Difficult

Lesson 9: Communication Challenges and More Skills ............... 167
  • Complain and Raise Issues Effectively
  • Hidden Issues Under Arguments
  • A Problem-Solving Model
  • Taking Care of Relationships
  • A Brief Review

Lesson 10: Sexual Decision-Making .............. 187
  • Sex and Sliding
  • The Six Parts of Intimacy
  • Understanding Sexual Regrets
  • Risky Situations for Sex
  • Know Your Personal Line

Lesson 11: Pregnancy, STIs and HIV ............ 209
  • Test Your Knowledge
  • STIs and HIV Are for Real
  • Alcohol and Drugs—Increasing the Risks
  • Pressure Situations, Refusal Skills & Exit Strategies
  • My Personal Plan

Lesson 12: Unplanned Pregnancy through the Eyes of a Child ............. 241
  • What a Child Wants
  • What about Fathers?
  • What the Music Says
  • Child Speak—Brighter Futures
  • The Success Sequence

Lesson 13: Teens, Technology and Social Media .... 267
  • What’s Real?
  • Constantly Connected—For Better and Worse
  • Romantic Relationships and Social Media
  • Sexting, Cyberbullying, and Porn
  • Personal Policies on Social Media
  • Planning for Success

Appendix: Review and Assessment .................. 297
About the Author .................................................. 319
Acknowledgements ............................................... 320
Colored Activity Cards

SKU TITLE RETAIL
RQ+4.0 Instructor’s Manual $399
  • 13 Lesson Plans
  • 1 Student Workbook
  • 4 posters
  • Activity Cards
  • Reproducible handouts

RQ+4.0-S10 10 Student Workbooks $95
  • 2-5 packs - $90/pack
  • 6+ packs - $85/pack

Sample Lesson from Relationship Smarts PLUS 4.0
www.DibbleInstitute.org
Is It a Healthy Relationship?

Overview

This lesson offers guidance on how to tell if a relationship is healthy. Utilizing a clear three-question framework that defines six types of relationships, participants will create sculptures to analyze what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like in the real world. The goal is for participants to deepen their awareness and to develop a language for discussing and asserting expectations for healthy relationships. A self-assessment exercise in the workbook helps participants examine their own relationships.

The lesson also points out that unmet needs can sometimes lie behind unhealthy relationships. It reinforces an earlier lesson, which emphasized that healthy relationships start with the individual taking his or her own growth and development seriously.

The importance of fun in keeping healthy relationships alive and well will also be explored. Youth will be encouraged to generate a list of fun activities to do with friends or partners.

Goals

- Analyze the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Develop a language for discussing healthy relationships and asserting one’s expectations.
- Assess a relationship using a three-question framework.
- Generate a list of fun activities for relationships.

Lesson at a Glance

5.1 How Can You Tell? (35 minutes)
Activities: Relationship Sculptures; Words that Tell; Assessing Relationships

5.2 Unmet Needs and Unhealthy Relationships (20 minutes)
Activity: Read Aloud, Brad’s Story; Unmet Needs Scenarios

5.3 Having Fun (5 minutes)
Activity: Fun Brainstorm

5.4 Tips for Teens (5–10 minutes)
Parent-Teen Connection
Materials Checklist

Resources Found at End of Lesson:
5d. 12 Tips for Teens handout
5e. Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships handout (Optional; duplicate, one per person.)

Activity Cards Located in Back of the Manual:
5a. Six Types of Relationships Activity Cards—class set (Locate colored cards in back of manual.) Cut six cards.
5b. Healthy or Unhealthy Flash Cards (Locate colored cards in back of manual.) Cut cards.
5c. Unmet Needs Activity Cards (Locate colored cards in back of manual.) Cut cards.

Workbook:
• Is It a Healthy Relationship? (pgs. 12–13)

Materials:
• Sculpting materials
  ◦ Play-Doh: six containers (more if tiny ones)
  ◦ Pipe cleaners
  ◦ Popsicle/craft sticks
  ◦ Miniature marshmallows or sugar spice drop candy
  ◦ Toothpicks
• Flip chart or board
• 4x6 index cards (one per teen)
• Music and equipment to play

Downloadable Resources Located at DibbleInstitute.org/rq3downloads
• Lesson 5 PowerPoint Presentation
• Duplicate masters for handouts and activity cards

Preparation

☐ Read through the lesson to be familiar with the three-question guide utilized for gauging the health of relationships.

☐ Preview the Lesson 5 PowerPoint Presentation—especially to see pictures and descriptions of sculptures constructed by past groups.

☐ Locate colored Six Types of Relationships Activity Cards (Resource 5a) in the back of the manual. Cut out cards.
☐ Gather sculpting materials. (Materials are reusable.)

☐ Locate the colored Healthy or Unhealthy Flash Cards (Resource 5b) in the back of the manual. Cut out cards.

☐ Review the workbook application Is It a Healthy Relationship? (pgs. 12–13).

☐ Review Unmet Needs Activity Cards, Resource 5c. Select the ones you’ll use. If short on time, you can have the entire group brainstorm advice for one or two of the scenarios.

☐ Review and then duplicate 12 Tips for Teens handout (Resource 5d).

☐ Optional: Duplicate Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships handout (Resource 5e).

☐ Choose a song to play before class begins and as students enter. Consider playing music while they do the sculptures. Any music works.
5.1 How Can You Tell?

This section offers teens a clear, three-question framework to determine whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. A fun sculpting activity based on these three questions will help participants explore more deeply what a healthy relationship is and what it is not. The sculpting activity, along with a brief “words that tell” activity, enhance language skills for discussing healthy relationships. Finally, participants use a self-assessment exercise to analyze a relationship. (PP)

Begin this section with these points:

❖ Today we’ll explore the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships more deeply.

❖ Sometimes the differences may not be clear. If you haven’t seen many good models of healthy relationships, it would be hard to know if it is healthy or unhealthy.

❖ So, how can one tell if a relationship is healthy and worth staying in?

❖ There are three questions you can ask to determine if a relationship is healthy. The three questions are simple, but important, and have to be answered honestly. If you do, you will know if the relationship is healthy or not. These questions can apply to romantic relationships and friendships.

(PP) Use the PowerPoint slides or write the following on a flip chart/board:

### How Does It Feel? 3 Questions to Ask

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNHEALTHY</th>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditional?</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling? Disrespectful?</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Status, Sex, Material stuff?</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Announce they will now do a fun activity to explore six different types of relationships. The six types of relationships are Conditional; Unconditional; Controlling or Disrespectful; Respectful, Equal and Supportive; Mostly about Status, Sex, Material Stuff; and Attraction on Many Levels.

Divide participants into six groups and distribute one of the Six Types of Relationships Activity Cards (Resource 5a) to each group. Each card describes one of the relationship types listed on the slide. Have sculpting supplies in a central area or put into six bags beforehand. If you have a very small group, three groups can do two sculptures—one for each of the contrasting relationship types.

Directions:
- Each group has a card that describes one of the six types of relationships. Three are healthy and three are unhealthy, corresponding to the three questions.
- One person in each group will read the card aloud and then discuss:
  - Have any of you ever seen a relationship like this? What kind of behaviors would you see in this type of relationship?
  - What is it like/would it be like to be around this couple?
  - If you were in that type of relationship, how would it feel?
- After a short discussion, get materials (Play-Doh, pipe cleaners, craft sticks, toothpicks, and spice drops or mini marshmallows) and make a sculpture that represents that relationship.
- As an example, I’ll read one of the cards. (Read aloud the card titled “Mostly about Status, Sex, or Material Stuff.”)
- Here’s an example of what one group made for their sculpture. Read the bullets on the slide.

(PP) Put the directions slide up. Remind them to discuss the questions first before beginning their sculpture.
- Have fun. This isn’t about great art or making things look real. Use your imagination. Think about symbols and images.

Let them know they will have 8–10 minutes max to work. Play music while they work. Call a five-minute and then a one-minute warning to keep them on track.
Processing the activity:

When finished, the entire group should get up from their seats and travel from sculpture to sculpture.

1. Before each small group presents their sculpture, ask others to try to interpret what they see. Start by asking if it looks healthy or unhealthy. See what others come up with.

2. Then, have the group interpret their sculpture and describe how its features represent that kind of relationship. Be sure they identify the type they have (i.e. bolded title on their card).

3. Finally, ask for a member of the group to read their card aloud to the whole class. This way everyone gets the benefit of hearing the descriptions for each type.

4. Use their interpretations of their sculptures as a springboard for discussion. As you go from group to group, here are some discussion extenders after each group has presented their sculpture:
   ❖ Without naming names, have any of you seen a relationship like that in real life? Or in a movie?
     Note: Anyone from the larger group can chime in, not just that group.
   ❖ How does or would it feel to be in that type of relationship? Can you think of a popular song that captures the feelings?
   ❖ What is it like (or what would it be like) to be around a couple in that type of relationship? If healthy, how would it influence you or impact you? If unhealthy, what would you do?

When you get to Controlling/Disrespectful, be sure to add these points:

❖ Controlling relationships evolve into abusive ones. Everyone should be on the lookout for danger signs or red flags if a relationship feels controlling or disrespectful in any way.

❖ It is not okay for a boyfriend or girlfriend to make you feel bad, call you names, put you down, or disrespect you. A healthy relationship means the other person makes you feel good about who you are. We’ll be talking more in a later lesson about dating violence.

When the discussion is finished ask each group to jot down interpretations of their sculptures. Ask them to briefly describe what the symbols or scene represent. As they are doing this, go around and take a photograph of each sculpture. Include the group’s brief description of their sculpture and a copy of the corresponding Six Types of Relationships activity card by each photo. Consider printing the photos of their sculptures (in color) and making a large poster for public display. Give it a title, such as, “Is it a Healthy Relationship?” Include the group’s brief description of their sculpture and a copy of the corresponding Six Types of Relationships activity card by each photo. Post it in your room or a public place to serve as an important reminder and to honor their work and creativity. Note: You can also insert these photos into your PowerPoint slide show.
The goal of this brief activity is to continue to build vocabulary for talking about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Shuffle the colored Healthy or Unhealthy Flash Cards (Resource 5b) found in the back of the manual. Take only two to three minutes. (PP)

❖ I’m holding a stack of cards with a word on each one.

❖ As I say the word, and hold up the card, I’d like you to shout out if you think it goes in the healthy or unhealthy relationship pile.

Ask participants to locate Is It a Healthy Relationship? on workbook pages 12–13. Introduce:

❖ In this exercise you will have the opportunity to assess a relationship.

❖ Assess the relationship of someone you know well, like a friend or adult couple.

❖ If you have a girlfriend or boyfriend, assess your own relationship, or a past one.

❖ Either way, it will offer you insights and help you think more about the behaviors that represent a healthy relationship.

(PP) Instruct participants to read the introduction and then to notice the three continuums (scales) after each set of questions. After reading each set of questions, they are to mark an “X” on each scale to indicate where the relationship falls (or fell) in that category. After they finish the assessment, instruct them to describe three behaviors in the workbook that are personally important and which place a relationship firmly in the healthy zone. Note: The assessment can be assigned as homework to save time.
5.2 Unmet Needs and Unhealthy Relationships

This section begins with a very brief presentation describing four basic human needs and how these needs, if they are not met in healthy ways, can lead to poor relationship and sexual choices. Introduce with the following points:

❖ There are a number of reasons and pressures that help explain why some people engage in risky behavior and find themselves in an unhealthy relationship.

❖ Some people may have unmet needs. Let’s take a look at the kind of unmet needs that might lie behind unhealthy relationships.

❖ First let’s establish that everyone is born with four basic human needs.

Note: Instructor can draw a circle divided into four quadrants labeled as listed below to aid this mini-presentation or use the PowerPoint provided: (PP)

1. Physical Needs: We all have a basic human need for positive, physical touch. For example, babies who are neglected — not cuddled and held — can become sick and fail to grow. We don’t outgrow our need for physical touch and physical affection. A hand on the shoulder, a hug, a shoulder massage, a kiss from your mom, and the physical affection of romantic love are all ways we meet our basic need for physical touch.

2. Emotional Needs: Everyone wants to feel loved, and everyone has a need for security. We all need to know that someone is there to love us, no matter what. Another way of saying this is that everyone has a need for unconditional love from family, friends, or other caring adults.

3. Mental Needs: This need is about how you see yourself and how you want others to think about you. Most of us care about what others think of us and we want others to see us in a positive light. We all want to count, to be noticed, to be somebody. We all have a basic need for acceptance and respect.

4. Social Needs: This need involves a desire to belong. Everyone wants to feel that he or she belongs. Everybody wants to belong to a family and to fit with friends. Eventually, most people want to belong to a romantic love relationship.

❖ We all have these needs. But, some people may not have had these basic needs met within their families, nor with their friends.
Unmet needs can motivate people to try to get these needs met in unhealthy ways. It’s natural to try to get these basic needs met.

- For example, a teen who feels abandoned or neglected by a parent might seek to meet the emotional need for love and security in unwise and hasty relationship choices. It is like the saying, “Looking for love in all the wrong places.”

- Sometimes, to get acceptance or approval from other people—to satisfy mental needs—a person might do things to win acceptance, recognition, or to look good. But these may be behaviors that break the law or get them in trouble.

- At times, a person might go along with the group to fit in or engage in certain behaviors to meet the social need to belong. But they aren’t being true to themselves. They are just desperately trying to fit in.

- Sadly, some kids have been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by those who are supposed to love and protect them. As a teenager, he or she may have a hard time knowing if a relationship is healthy or if a person is safe.

The main point for our discussion today is that people can get involved in unhealthy relationships or friendships in order to get these needs met. The needs are normal and real. But, some of those relationships and behaviors can have real risks.

**READ ALOUD**

**Brad’s Story**

Read aloud the very short, but engaging, Brad’s Story. It is a short reflection by a 20-year-old male looking back on how he tried to meet his unmet needs with girls who, in turn, had their own unmet needs. (PP)

I would like to read a quote from a 20-year-old guy named Brad:

**Brad—Looking Back...** I’m in a relationship right now that is probably the best one I’ve had so far. I’ve had a lot of messed-up relationships in the past. Before asking Chelsea out, I had taken off a couple of years from girls—from dating—to re-examine my priorities and to focus on my goals. I think that this extended period of reflection helped me recognize the reasons I became attracted to certain types of girls. It helped me figure out what good traits I wanted in women. Before re-examining my priorities, I would exclusively pick girls who appeared promiscuous and troubled, just like me. I had lots of baggage myself—some of it related to the fact I moved seven times as a kid and had to deal with my mom’s abusive boyfriends.

Anyway, with all my previous relationships, I believed that I was there for sex with a “throw-away” girl, and would have no trouble dropping her if the relationship got to be trouble or too taxing. What would
always happen is that I would feel like I had “fallen in love” with them, and they would manipulate me into a wretched lump—seeing they were better at the “mind games.” They were generally pretty troubled and had rough childhood experiences, including divorce and sexual abuse.

The promiscuity (my own and the girls I went for), I’m guessing, was a way to get attention. I picked up on this, not wanting to wait more than one date for the sex, and went for whichever girl seemed to be the fastest way to the bedroom. The sex—a contributing factor was our young, high school age—was almost always disappointing and extremely sketchy. Since I had no good experience to compare it to, I guess I was just there for the “points.” Happy, normal girls never really caught my eye. I assumed that they were boring, would not wear exciting underwear, and would want me to wait for sex. The memory of my old behavior makes me cringe nowadays… I’m doing things differently now—taking my time, working on being me, and looking for friends who are on a positive path.

Ask the group for their reactions. Add:

❖ This young guy has really given himself some time to reflect on his past. He’s taken a break from relationships to focus on his own development as a person.

❖ It’s made him a lot clearer in his head about what he really wants and what is really important to him.

**ACTIVITY**

**Additional Unmet Needs Scenarios**

(PP) Pass out one *Unmet Needs* scenario (Resource 5c) to each small group. Ask teens to read it and try to identify the need(s) behind the behavior described. Each group is to brainstorm what the teenager should do. See if they can come up with ways to get the need(s) met in safer and healthier ways.

After hearing from volunteers, conclude activity with these words:

❖ It is important to think deeply about your motivations for doing things. Think through what you really want and what behaviors will more likely help you achieve it.

❖ Be deliberate about your choices and think through the risks to your heart and to your health.

❖ Remember, social, emotional, and mental maturity take work on your part.

Announce to the group that if this discussion has raised issues anyone would like to talk about, you are available. Be sure to have appropriate referral resources. (Note: Lesson 6 will be dealing with the issue of difficult baggage from the past in an empowering way.)
5.3 Having Fun

In this very brief section, participants will learn that having fun and continuing to have fun is important to successful and healthy relationships. Participants will brainstorm and share ideas for fun. (PP)

Introduce the idea of why fun is so important to healthy relationships:

❖ Having fun, believe it or not, is very, very important to a satisfying, long-term relationship. Doing enjoyable things together helps two people feel connected to each other.

❖ Happy experiences create a positive bond, making it easier to tackle the problems of everyday life and cope with irritation and stress.

Explain what often happens to fun in long-term relationships or marriages:

❖ So, what happens to fun in a long-term relationship, marriage, or committed union? Most couples start with fun as part of the relationship. As life gets busy, couples often let time for fun slip away.

❖ It can be tough to find free time with work, school, and other responsibilities.

❖ When there is free time, it is easy to slide in to watching a lot of TV shows, playing computer games, or checking Facebook. A decision could be made to spend some of that precious time having fun with a partner, child, friends, or family.

❖ There is nothing bad about TV or computer games, or even Facebook; but, it can be awfully easy to make them the major things we do.

❖ Did you know research shows people are happiest when they are out doing things, spending time with others, or working on some hobby or interest?

❖ Those couples that make the effort to do fun things together, no matter how busy life gets, are rewarded. Over time, the couples that keep fun alive have more satisfying relationships.

❖ Research on happiness and fun also tells us it is important to do different things from time to time. A great idea is to try out new activities for keeping fun alive.

Flip chart paper, markers
Prizes/candy
4x6 index cards
Equipment to play music

5 minutes

Fun is important for relationships!

❖ Plan for fun—don’t get lazy.
❖ Mix it up. Do different things.
ACTIVITY
Fun Brainstorm

(PP) Divide into groups of three or four and announce there will be a three-minute competition with prizes. Each group is to brainstorm a list of ideas of fun things to do with a partner or friend according to two criteria: cost and time. Some ideas should be free, some should cost just a little, and others can cost more. Regarding time, some fun ideas should take less than a half hour, take an evening, all afternoon, the whole day, or longer. Tell them to mix it up and strive for variety, fun, and creativity. But, they all must come up with a few fun ideas that are free.

When time is up, give prizes/candy to the group with the longest list. Have each group read off their lists. As groups report their ideas for fun, instruct participants to jot down the ones they like (and their own ideas) on their index card. Suggest they tape the list in their locker or notebook to remind them of things to do for fun.

Ask the group if they want to vote on the list with the most creative or different ideas. Give that group prizes/candy. Suggest they tape the list on their refrigerator to remind them of a variety of things to do for fun.

Suggestion: Play Happy (Pharrell Williams), Girls Just Wanna Have Fun (Cindy Lauper), or a similar song while they brainstorm.
5.4 Tips for Teens

ACTIVITY

Tips for Teens Discussion

(PP) Distribute the 12 Tips for Teens handout (Resource 5d). Point out that these tips were gathered from conversations with older teens and young adults in their twenties and represent some of the things they wish they had known when they were younger. These tips touch on many of the key points from the lessons so far.

Ask the teens to read through the tips (in class or at home). To facilitate discussion (or even turn this into a short writing assignment), ask them to star three or four tips they feel could be most useful and explain why. Use as directed below for the Parent-Teen Connection activity.

Parent-Teen Connection

Have the teens take the 12 Tips for Teens handout (Resource 5d) home. They are to ask their parent or trusted adult to look over the list and star the four they think are most important and explain why. Teen and parent or trusted adult should compare and discuss why each chose the ones they did. In the next session, when they bring their connection sheet back, discuss their choices and how they differed or agreed with their parent’s or trusted adult’s top four.

Optional: Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships handout (Resource 5e). This is an optional handout for teens and can also be used as a Parent-Teen Connection activity. If the latter, teens are to ask their parent or trusted adult if they think these questions are good ones to ask in judging a relationship. They should also ask the parent or adult which question they feel is most important and whether they have another question to suggest.
**RESOURCES 5d**

12 Tips for Teens

1. Develop yourself, forge your own identity, and pursue your interests. In the long run, the best relationships are made of two people who have a positive sense of self and some direction in life. And, don’t ignore your friends after starting a romantic relationship.

2. Is this a good match? Is this someone you’d choose as a best friend? Do you have some common interests? Do you find him or her fun and interesting?

3. Remember the principles of smart relationships. Sometimes people lower their standards for how they should be treated just to hold on to a relationship. Some people try to change themselves or ignore value differences just to keep a relationship (Principles 2, 4, 7).


5. Don’t pressure someone or let someone pressure you in to sex.

6. Look for a person with character and integrity. Have a vision of the kind of relationship and partner you want, and let that vision guide your relationship choices.

7. Slow down your emotional desire to be in a serious relationship—to be part of an “us”—too soon. (Remember—those love chemicals can fool you!) Enjoy your teenage years—get to know and/or date a variety of people.

8. Don’t slide when it comes to relationships. Handle your attractions with your brain turned on and eyes wide open. Take your time.

9. Have a clear boundary—a stopping point in your mind—before you’re with a partner. It’s hard to stop after a certain point of physical affection. Talk about your sexual values and agree on boundaries sooner rather than later.

10. Remember that sex between a male and female can create a child. Ask yourself if you are ready (emotionally and financially) to commit to a future together. Children deserve committed parents who are ready and able to parent together. Even when pregnancy is not an issue in a relationship, the emotional and health risks of sex-too-soon can be high.

11. Good sex tends to go with good relationships that have matured. It takes self-development, growth, and maturity to have those kinds of relationships. They usually don’t happen until your twenties.

12. In order to have a great relationship someday, you need to figure out how to be yourself with a partner who is your equal and whom you find attractive in many ways—not just in a physical sense.

No matter what gender, identity, or sexual orientation, all of these tips apply to everyone.

Parent/Trusted Adult: Compare and discuss your top 3 or 4 with your teen’s top picks.

Signature ____________________________________________

Sample Lesson from Relationship Smarts PLUS 4.0
www.DibbleInstitute.org

Copyright 2018 Marline E. Pearson
Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships

- **Is It Conditional?** You worry about not being good enough. Your partner makes you feel little. You feel like you have to have a lot of money, or be or look a certain way, in order to keep his or her attention or love. You worry a lot about being dumped. You can’t be the real you. You have to wear a mask. There is little trust or security.

- **Controlling or Disrespectful?** One partner needs to be the “boss.” He or she ridicules the words and actions of the other and shows little interest in his or her feelings. The controlled person worries about upsetting his or her partner and often avoids saying or doing things. The controller does not support his or her partner, and in fact often tries to hold him or her back. One partner thinks he or she is entitled to express his or her anger in any way he or she chooses.

- **Mostly Physical or Material?** This relationship is either based almost exclusively on sex, status, or the material things one gets out of the relationship. Without one or more of these elements, there would not be much there. There is not a lot of fun or deeper getting-to-know-each-other.

- **Unconditional?** You both feel appreciated for who you really are. You don’t have to pretend or play games. You do not have to be perfect. You can tell each other about behaviors in each other that you don’t like. You support each other in making changes that you each decide to work on. You each show you genuinely care about the other.

- **Equal, Respectful, and Supportive?** Both partners treat each other well. Neither dominates or consistently gives in. Both partners feel respected. Each partner feels his or her thoughts, feelings, and needs are important to the other. They know differences and disagreements are inevitable in relationships and do not put each other down when these occur. Both partners feel encouraged by the other to develop and better him/herself.

- **Attraction on Many Levels?** This couple has chemistry, but they also enjoy talking and getting to know each other. They have fun doing things based on shared interests and are open to trying new activities that the other person values. They balance time together, apart, and with friends. This relationship is based on a lot more than looks, status, or material things.

**Parent or Trusted Adult:** Read the above and offer your reactions and ideas on what makes a healthy relationship and/or what signals an unhealthy relationship:

........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
Is It a Healthy Relationship?

Anyone can have doubts about his or her relationship. Is it worth it? Should I stay or should I go? What needs to change to continue?

A person can ask these three questions and it will tell them a lot. Focus on a specific relationship to assess. It can be a relationship of someone you know well—a friend or an adult. Or, you can assess a relationship you have now or had in the past.

Read the contrasting questions and then place an “X” on the scale line to indicate where the relationship is or was.

**Does it feel conditional?**
- Worries about not being good enough. Doesn’t feel free to be the real me.
- Feels the need to act, talk, or look a certain way or have money to get partners love.
- Afraid that partner might leave if they don’t do everything partner wants them to do.

**Or unconditional?**
- Partner admires and appreciates the real me. Doesn’t have to pretend to be perfect.
- Can rely on partner to be faithful.
- Partner shows that he or she really wants to be with me.
Does it feel controlling?
• Partner puts down and shows little interest in their opinions or feelings.
• He or she is made to feel stupid. Feels like she or he is walking on eggshells around partner.
• Seems super-jealous or checks up on partner 24/7. Fights get scary.

Or equal and supporting?
• Partner admires and appreciates the real me. Doesn’t have to pretend to be perfect.
• Can rely on partner to be faithful.
• Partner shows that he or she really wants to be with me.

Do you feel like it is mostly about, sex, or material things?
• Without sex there would not be much interest.
• Knows deep down that they are in the relationship because of the material stuff they get from partner.
• Is in the relationship because being seen with this person makes them feel they are worth more or more popular.

Or, like the attractions and interests are on many levels?
• Knows it is more than looks, body, or money that partner likes about them.
• Can talk about lots of stuff and have similar interests and values. Genuinely like each other’s personality and have fun together.
• Both want to do nice things for each other. It does not feel like one person is doing all the giving or all the work.

Describe three BEHAVIORS from a partner that are (or would be) important to you in a relationship. (For example: Listen to me, show you care about what I say, be faithful to me, surprise me with plans for fun adventures, etc.)
1. ........................................................................................................................................
   .......................................................................................................................................
2. ........................................................................................................................................
   .......................................................................................................................................
3. ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................