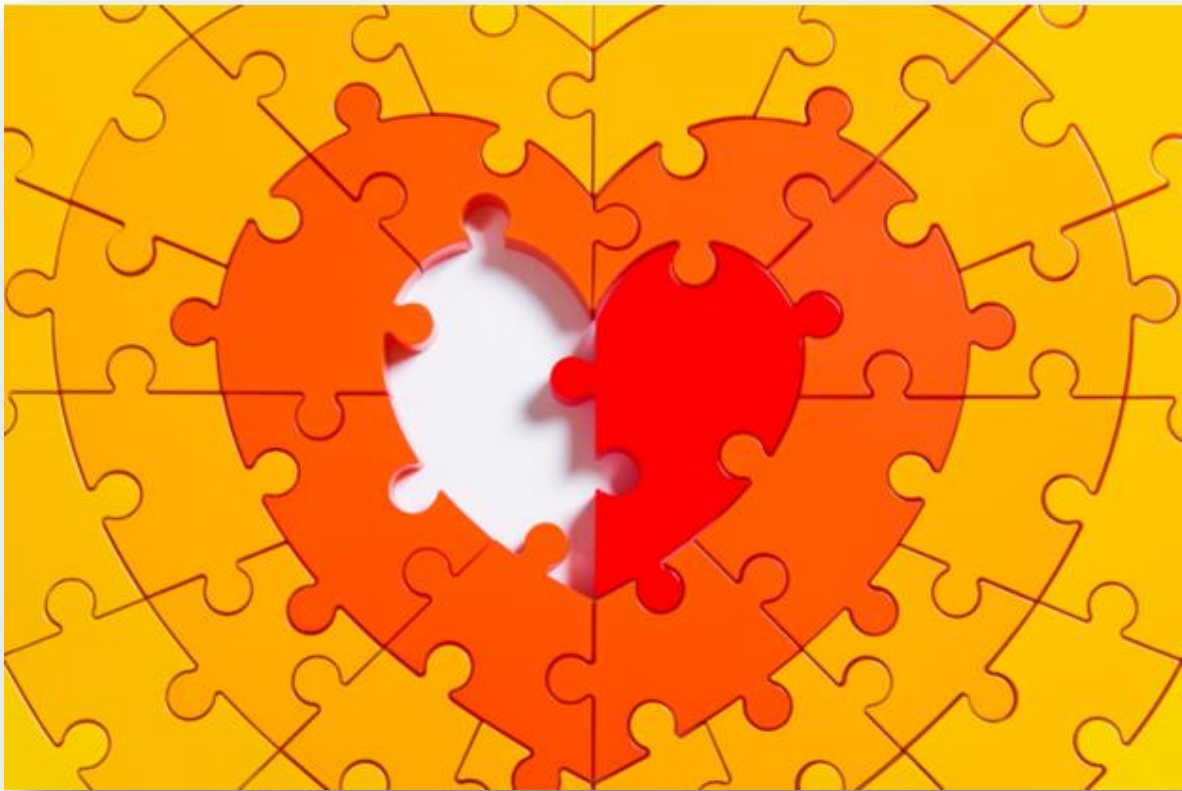


Ready For Love?

The 10 Signs of Relationship Readiness



By James L. Jeffley

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Dedication

I dedicate this guide to all those seeking “connection.”

May we all find what we’re looking for.

Introduction

I authored a book this year called [*"The 7 Love Levels: How to Get Hired for the Right Relationship."*](#)

My premise for that book is that maybe we should start thinking of relationships like getting hired for a job? Think about it: we need to have skills, education, experience, and other necessary qualifications to be considered for the job we want. We then have to compete with dozens (or more) candidates for the **one** job. Relationships are the same.

Almost everyone has some minimal criteria for who they'll consider for a romantic or life partner, like looks, age, height, weight, education, income, etc. Based on that initial assessment, we invite them for an "interview"—a first date. If all goes well, we invite them for a second and third interview (2nd and 3rd dates). At some point, if we "click," we "hire" them—aka invite them into a relationship, just like getting a job.

And, just like a job, you can be "fired" from that relationship at any time, for any reason—often without warning.

In fact, **60% of couples break up within the first six months** of dating, with communication issues being one of the leading causes. Studies show that **65% of relationships fail due to poor communication**—whether it's not listening, feeling unappreciated, or misunderstanding each other([Fling or Love](#))([DoULike](#)). Emotional readiness also plays a significant role, as unresolved personal issues or emotional immaturity often lead to early breakups.

This leads me to the premise of this guide:

One of the biggest reasons most relationships fail is that people are not ready for relationships in the first place. Just as you wouldn't (shouldn't) apply for a job without being properly qualified, you shouldn't enter a relationship without being **relationship-ready**. In this guide, we'll explore the **10 signs of relationship readiness**, helping you evaluate whether you're truly prepared to build a lasting connection.

Sign One: Self-Awareness



“No, sometimes it’s *you*.”

1. Definition

Self-awareness is the ability to understand your own emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and how they influence your interactions with others. It’s about recognizing your strengths, weaknesses, triggers, and patterns, and understanding how these factors impact your relationships.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Self-awareness is fundamental to building a healthy relationship because it enables you to manage your emotions, communicate effectively, and avoid projecting unresolved issues onto your partner. For example, someone who is self-aware can recognize when they’re upset and take a moment to reflect before reacting, leading to healthier, more constructive communication. Without self-awareness, people may unintentionally repeat harmful patterns or react defensively, which can lead to conflict and emotional disconnect.

3. What the Research Shows

A study by the Gottman Institute found that **emotional awareness and self-regulation are two key predictors of relationship success**. In fact, couples who score higher in emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, report greater satisfaction and longevity in their relationships ([DoUlike](#))([Psychology Today](#)).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Self-Awareness:** A person with high self-awareness recognizes their emotions and takes responsibility for them. For example, during an argument, they might say, “I’m feeling frustrated because I didn’t feel heard,” instead of blaming their partner.
 - **Unhealthy Self-Awareness:** Someone with low self-awareness may be quick to blame others for their feelings, acting out without understanding their own triggers. For example, they might lash out with, “You always make me feel this way!” without taking time to explore their own emotions.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Do I understand the emotions I feel during conflicts, and can I identify what triggers those feelings?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Can I pause and reflect on my emotions before reacting in conversations? Do I recognize patterns in my responses to certain situations?*
-

6. How to Improve Self-Awareness

- **Journal Your Emotions:** Start a practice of journaling daily to track your emotions, what triggered them, and how you responded. Over time, this helps you notice patterns.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Engage in mindfulness meditation to become more present and observant of your thoughts and feelings. This can help you slow down reactions and reflect on emotions before acting.
- **Seek Feedback:** Ask close friends or a coach to give you honest feedback on how you handle emotions in relationships. They might help you identify blind spots.
- **Therapy or Coaching:** If you're struggling to develop self-awareness, working with a therapist or coach can be highly beneficial in uncovering deeper patterns and gaining clarity.

Sign Two: Emotional Intelligence



“If only these two could get along.”

1. Definition

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your own emotions, while also recognizing and influencing the emotions of others. It encompasses self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, which allow you to navigate interpersonal relationships with greater ease and awareness.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Emotional intelligence is one of the most critical factors in successful relationships. It allows you to communicate effectively, empathize with your partner, and manage conflicts in a calm and constructive way. Individuals with high emotional intelligence can process their feelings, respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively, and support their partner’s emotional needs. Without emotional intelligence, relationships are more prone to misunderstandings, emotional disconnect, and unresolved conflicts, which can lead to long-term dissatisfaction.

3. What the Research Shows

Studies show that couples who score higher in emotional intelligence have significantly more satisfying relationships. Research from the Gottman Institute demonstrates that **emotional intelligence is a key predictor of long-term relationship success**. In fact, emotionally intelligent partners are better at resolving conflicts, expressing empathy, and fostering emotional intimacy, which helps reduce the likelihood of relationship breakdown (Marriage.com)(Psychology Today).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Emotional Intelligence:** A person with high EI listens actively to their partner during an argument, acknowledging their feelings and responding calmly, even when emotions are running high.
 - **Unhealthy Emotional Intelligence:** A person with low EI reacts impulsively during conflicts, becoming defensive or dismissive of their partner's feelings, leading to unresolved issues and increased tension.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- **Reflection Question:** *Am I able to stay calm during conflicts and empathize with my partner's feelings, even when I'm upset?*
 - **Checklist Prompt:** *Do I take the time to reflect on my own emotions before responding in a disagreement? Am I able to acknowledge my partner's perspective, even when I don't agree?*
-

6. How to Improve Emotional Intelligence

- **Practice Active Listening:** During conversations, focus entirely on what your partner is saying without planning your response. Reflect back what they said to show understanding.
- **Develop Empathy:** Put yourself in your partner's shoes and imagine how they feel. Acknowledge their emotions, even if you don't agree with them.
- **Pause Before Reacting:** When emotions run high, take a moment to pause, breathe, and reflect before responding. This helps you avoid reacting impulsively.
- **Learn Emotional Regulation Techniques:** Techniques like mindfulness, journaling, and therapy can help you manage your emotions more effectively and stay grounded during conflicts.
- **Seek Professional Help:** Working with a coach or therapist can help you develop better emotional regulation and interpersonal skills.

Sign Three: Healing from the Past



“Who hurt you?”

1. Definition

Healing from the past refers to the process of addressing and resolving emotional wounds, traumas, or unresolved issues from previous relationships or life experiences. It’s about letting go of past hurt, forgiving where necessary, and moving forward without carrying emotional baggage into new relationships.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Unresolved emotional wounds from the past can create emotional barriers in current or future relationships. Without healing, old traumas can resurface, leading to trust issues, fear of intimacy, or projecting past hurts onto a new partner. Healing allows you to engage in a relationship from a place of emotional clarity and openness, leading to healthier, more fulfilling connections. On the other hand, failing to heal can result in patterns of emotional withdrawal, defensiveness, or even repeated toxic dynamics.

3. What the Research Shows

Studies on relationship patterns show that **people who have unresolved trauma or emotional wounds from past relationships are more likely to struggle with trust, communication, and emotional regulation in future relationships**. Research published in *Psychology Today* highlights that unresolved past emotional trauma is a significant factor in many relationship breakdowns, as it can lead to repeated negative patterns ([Psychology Today](#)).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Healing:** A person who has healed from the past recognizes their emotional wounds and actively works to manage their triggers. They are able to enter new relationships with trust and vulnerability, having let go of resentment or fear.
 - **Unhealthy Healing:** Someone who hasn't healed might be triggered easily by reminders of past relationships, projecting those old hurts onto their current partner. They may also struggle with trust or fear intimacy due to unresolved trauma.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- **Reflection Question:** *Have I fully processed and healed from my past relationships, or do old wounds still affect how I respond to my current or future partner?*
 - **Checklist Prompt:** *Do I find myself bringing up past relationship issues or feeling triggered by small things in my current relationship?*
-

6. How to Improve Healing from the Past

- **Reflect on Past Relationships:** Journal or reflect on your past relationships, noting patterns, emotional triggers, and unresolved feelings. This can help you identify areas that need healing.
- **Seek Closure:** If possible, find ways to gain emotional closure—whether through self-reflection, therapy, or even conversations with past partners.
- **Practice Forgiveness:** Forgiving yourself and others is a powerful tool in healing. Letting go of grudges or resentment helps release emotional baggage.
- **Engage in Therapy or Counseling:** Working with a therapist can help you process past traumas or emotional wounds that may still be affecting your current emotional health.
- **Build Healthy Coping Mechanisms:** Replace unhealthy coping mechanisms like avoidance or repression with healthier strategies like mindfulness, exercise, or creative expression to process difficult emotions.

Sign Four: Communication Skills



“You talkin’ to me?”

1. Definition

Communication skills refer to the ability to effectively exchange information, emotions, and ideas with another person. It involves both speaking and listening, understanding non-verbal cues, and being able to express oneself clearly and empathetically. In the context of relationships, communication skills help partners understand each other’s needs and resolve conflicts constructively.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Good communication is the backbone of any successful relationship. It allows partners to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns openly, fostering trust and intimacy. When communication breaks down, misunderstandings, assumptions, and unresolved conflicts can build up, leading to frustration, resentment, and emotional distance. Partners who communicate effectively can navigate disagreements with empathy and understanding, leading to healthier, more supportive relationships.

3. What the Research Shows

According to research by The Gottman Institute, **communication problems are one of the top reasons for relationship dissatisfaction and divorce**. In fact, studies show that **69% of marital conflicts are based on ongoing issues that can be better managed through clear, open communication**([Marriage.com](https://www.marriage.com))([Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com)). Improving communication skills can significantly enhance relationship satisfaction and reduce conflicts.

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Communication:** A person who communicates effectively listens actively, speaks clearly, and shows empathy when responding to their partner's emotions and concerns. They can express their own feelings without blaming or attacking.
 - **Unhealthy Communication:** A person with poor communication skills might interrupt their partner, react defensively, or use sarcasm and blame during conflicts. They might avoid difficult conversations, leading to unresolved issues that build tension.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- **Reflection Question:** *Do I feel comfortable sharing my feelings and thoughts with my partner, and do I actively listen when they share theirs?*
 - **Checklist Prompt:** *Do I find myself frequently interrupting or reacting defensively during conversations with my partner? Am I able to express my needs without blaming or attacking?*
-

6. How to Improve Communication Skills

- **Practice Active Listening:** Focus on truly hearing what your partner is saying, without planning your response while they're speaking. Paraphrase what they said to ensure you understood correctly.
- **Use "I" Statements:** When expressing your feelings, use "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, say, "I feel upset when..." instead of "You always make me upset."
- **Stay Calm During Disagreements:** If emotions run high, take a break to cool down before continuing the conversation. This will help avoid saying things in the heat of the moment that you might regret.
- **Non-Verbal Communication:** Pay attention to your body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. These cues can affect how your message is received.
- **Learn Conflict Resolution Techniques:** Understanding how to resolve disagreements constructively is a key part of effective communication. Practice finding solutions together instead of trying to "win" the argument.

Sign Five: Healthy Boundaries



“I won’t go for that.”

1. Definition

Healthy boundaries are the limits you establish in relationships to protect your emotional, physical, and mental well-being. They allow you to maintain your individuality while in a relationship and ensure that both partners respect each other’s needs, space, and personal values. Boundaries clarify what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a relationship.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries is crucial for a balanced and respectful relationship. Clear boundaries help prevent feelings of resentment, protect against emotional burnout, and create a foundation of mutual respect. Without boundaries, partners may feel overwhelmed, manipulated, or unappreciated. On the flip side, rigid boundaries can create distance, so balance is key. Healthy boundaries foster trust, safety, and emotional intimacy, ensuring that each person feels respected and valued.

3. What the Research Shows

Research highlights that **couples who respect each other’s boundaries report higher levels of relationship satisfaction and emotional well-being**. Studies published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* show that **healthy boundaries contribute to more secure attachment styles and reduce relationship conflict**([Psychology Today](#))([Marriage.com](#)). Establishing clear boundaries early in the relationship can prevent many common relationship issues.

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Boundaries:** A person with healthy boundaries knows when to say “no” without guilt and communicates their needs clearly. They respect their partner’s autonomy and ensure that both partners feel emotionally safe.
 - **Unhealthy Boundaries:** Someone with unhealthy boundaries may either avoid setting boundaries (leading to emotional exhaustion or resentment) or set excessively rigid boundaries (which can lead to emotional distancing or a lack of intimacy). They may feel obligated to say “yes” to avoid conflict, even when it compromises their well-being.
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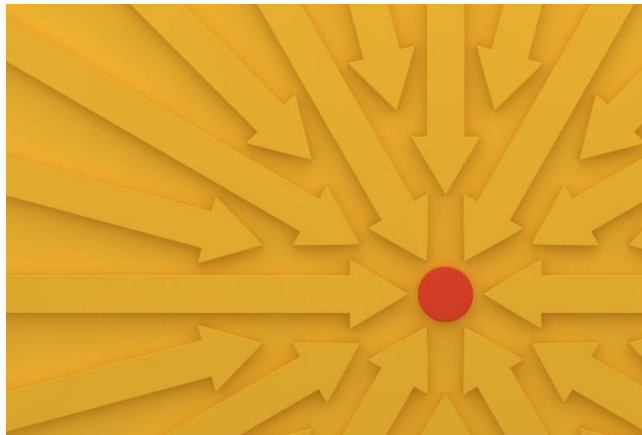
5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Am I able to say “no” when I need to without feeling guilty, and do I respect my partner’s personal boundaries?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Do I feel overwhelmed or resentful in my relationship because I’m not setting clear boundaries? Am I comfortable discussing my needs and limits with my partner?*
-

6. How to Improve Healthy Boundaries

- **Identify Your Limits:** Reflect on what makes you uncomfortable in a relationship—whether it’s how much time you spend together, how you communicate, or how you handle conflicts. Be clear on your own boundaries.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Express your boundaries to your partner in a straightforward but respectful way. Make sure they understand what is important to you and why.
- **Respect Your Partner’s Boundaries:** Ask your partner about their needs and limits, and make sure you respect them just as you expect your own boundaries to be respected.
- **Practice Saying No:** If you find it difficult to say no, practice with small requests and work your way up. Over time, saying no will become easier and more natural.
- **Reevaluate Boundaries Over Time:** Relationships evolve, and so do boundaries. Check in with your partner periodically to reassess and adjust boundaries as needed.
- **Seek Support:** If boundary-setting is difficult, consider working with a therapist or relationship coach to build the skills needed to create and maintain healthy boundaries.

Sign Six: Clear Values and Goals



“Tell me what you want – what you really, really want!”

1. Definition

Clear values and goals refer to having a well-defined understanding of what you believe in, what matters most to you, and what you want to achieve in life and relationships. Values are your core beliefs or principles, such as honesty, loyalty, or independence. Goals are your long-term aspirations, such as having a family, building a career, or traveling the world. In relationships, clarity in values and goals ensures that you and your partner are aligned on important life directions.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Shared values and aligned goals are fundamental for long-term relationship success. When partners are clear about their individual values and goals, they can better understand if they are compatible with each other. Discrepancies in values, such as how to handle finances or raise children, can lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. Conversely, when both partners have aligned goals and respect each other’s values, they can build a more harmonious and fulfilling relationship.

Without clarity in values and goals, relationships may drift aimlessly, leading to miscommunication, unmet expectations, or resentment.

3. What the Research Shows

Research shows that **couples who have shared values and common life goals report higher levels of relationship satisfaction and stability**. According to a study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, **couples with aligned long-term goals experience less conflict and more collaborative decision-making**, leading to a stronger partnership ([DoULike](#))([Psychology Today](#)).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Values and Goals:** A person with clear values and goals knows what they want out of life and relationships and communicates that to their partner. They seek alignment with their partner in key areas, such as family, career, and personal development, while respecting differences.
 - **Unhealthy Values and Goals:** Someone without clarity on their values and goals may struggle to make decisions about the relationship or frequently change their mind. This uncertainty can lead to frustration and confusion, as well as misaligned expectations with their partner.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Do I have a clear understanding of my core values, and are my relationship goals aligned with those values?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Have I shared my long-term goals with my partner, and do we have similar visions for the future?*
-

6. How to Improve Clarity in Values and Goals

- **Identify Your Core Values:** Spend time reflecting on what matters most to you in life. Ask yourself questions like, *What are my non-negotiables?* or *What principles guide my decisions?*
- **Set Personal and Relationship Goals:** Write down your long-term personal and relationship goals. Be specific—do you want children? How do you envision your career? Where do you want to live? Sharing this with your partner can help you identify alignment.
- **Communicate with Your Partner:** Share your values and goals openly with your partner and encourage them to do the same. Discuss areas where you align and where you differ to foster understanding and compromise.
- **Reevaluate Over Time:** Goals and values can evolve as you grow. Make it a habit to revisit this conversation with your partner periodically to ensure you're still aligned and can adjust if needed.
- **Seek Guidance if Needed:** If you're unsure about your values or goals, consider working with a coach, counselor, or mentor to gain clarity and direction.

Sign Seven: Win/Win Problem-Solving



“I love it when WE win!”

1. Definition

Win/Win problem solving is an approach to resolving conflicts where both parties collaborate to find solutions that benefit both sides. Rather than compromising where one or both partners feel like they are losing something, Win/Win focuses on mutual gains and creating outcomes that satisfy the needs of both individuals. It’s a cooperative approach that prioritizes the relationship and finding solutions where both partners “win.”

2. How It Affects Relationships

Win/Win problem solving is vital for maintaining harmony and fostering a supportive partnership. It encourages open communication and collaboration rather than fostering resentment or power imbalances that can arise from "winning" or "losing" during conflicts. When both partners feel like their needs are heard and met, it strengthens the relationship and builds trust. On the other hand, if one partner consistently "loses," feelings of bitterness or disconnection can develop over time, eroding the relationship.

3. What the Research Shows

Research on conflict resolution shows that **couples who engage in cooperative problem-solving approaches, like Win/Win, experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction**. According to a study published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, **constructive conflict resolution, including collaboration, is strongly associated with long-term relationship stability** (Marriage.com)(Psychology Today).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

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- **Healthy Win/Win Problem Solving:** A couple practicing Win/Win listens to each other's needs, brainstorms solutions, and finds a middle ground where both feel satisfied. For example, they might say, "How can we both get what we need in this situation?"
 - **Unhealthy Problem Solving:** An unhealthy dynamic involves one partner dominating the conversation or decision-making, with the other feeling sidelined or unimportant. This can lead to a win/lose or lose/lose situation, where no one's needs are truly met, and resentment builds.
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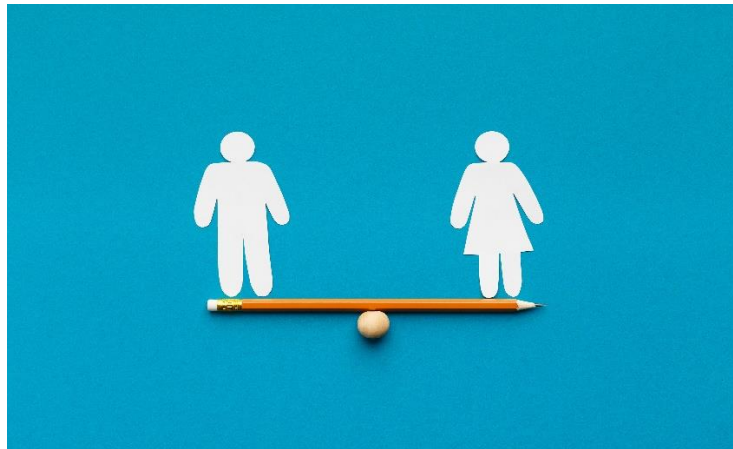
5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- **Reflection Question:** *When conflicts arise, do I work with my partner to find solutions that work for both of us, or do I tend to dominate or withdraw?*
 - **Checklist Prompt:** *Do I feel like my partner's needs are valued as much as my own when we resolve conflicts? Are we both satisfied with the outcomes of our problem-solving efforts?*
-

6. How to Improve Win/Win Problem Solving

- **Focus on Collaboration:** Shift your mindset from "me vs. you" to "us vs. the problem." Work together to solve the issue rather than seeing it as a competition.
- **Identify Both Needs:** Before jumping to solutions, ensure that both partners' needs and concerns are understood. Ask, *What do we both need in this situation?*
- **Brainstorm Multiple Solutions:** Don't settle on the first idea that comes to mind. Brainstorm multiple options that could work for both partners and choose the one that benefits both the most.
- **Use Active Listening:** Truly listen to your partner's needs without interrupting or planning your rebuttal. Make sure both partners feel heard.
- **Stay Open to Compromise:** While Win/Win focuses on both partners winning, it's important to remain flexible and creative in finding solutions that work for both. Sometimes it means giving a little but gaining in other ways.
- **Seek Outside Help if Needed:** If problem-solving continues to be a challenge, consider working with a coach or counselor to develop better conflict resolution skills together.

Sign Eight: Self-Sufficiency



“I don’t *need* you – I **want** you.”

1. Definition

Self-sufficiency is the ability to be emotionally and financially independent, meaning you can take care of your own needs without relying on a partner. In relationships, self-sufficiency allows both individuals to contribute equally without one person feeling dependent on the other for their sense of identity, happiness, or financial security. It ensures that each person brings their whole self to the relationship rather than relying on the relationship to complete them.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Self-sufficiency in relationships creates a sense of balance and mutual respect. Partners who are self-sufficient are able to enter the relationship from a place of confidence and security, rather than seeking validation or support from the other person. This leads to a healthier, more balanced dynamic where each person can grow individually while still supporting the relationship. On the other hand, a lack of self-sufficiency can lead to dependency, resentment, and imbalance, as one partner may feel burdened by the other's emotional or financial needs.

3. What the Research Shows

Studies on relationship dynamics show that **individuals who maintain self-sufficiency tend to experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction**. Research published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* found that **emotional independence helps prevent codependency and promotes healthier, more stable relationships** ([DoUlike](#))([Psychology Today](#)). Financial independence also plays a key role in reducing conflict related to money, one of the top reasons for relationship stress.

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Self-Sufficiency:** A person who is self-sufficient feels confident in their own emotional and financial stability. They enjoy spending time with their partner but are equally comfortable being on their own, pursuing their own interests, and maintaining their personal identity.
 - **Unhealthy Self-Sufficiency:** A person who lacks self-sufficiency may rely on their partner for emotional validation or financial support, which can create an imbalanced relationship. They may feel anxious or insecure without their partner's constant reassurance or presence.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Do I feel emotionally and financially secure on my own, or do I rely on my partner for my sense of happiness and stability?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Can I enjoy time apart from my partner and pursue my own interests, or do I feel anxious when we're not together?*
-

6. How to Improve Self-Sufficiency

- **Build Emotional Independence:** Focus on cultivating a strong sense of self. Engage in activities that fulfill you and contribute to your personal growth outside of the relationship.
- **Develop Financial Independence:** Work toward achieving financial security by managing your finances independently, whether it's through budgeting, saving, or pursuing additional income sources.
- **Set Personal Goals:** Create personal goals outside of the relationship—whether they're related to career, hobbies, or self-improvement. Having something to work toward individually can enhance your sense of fulfillment.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Make time for self-care and self-reflection to nurture your emotional well-being. This will help you feel more centered and secure in who you are, regardless of your relationship status.
- **Communicate Your Needs:** If you notice patterns of dependency in your relationship, communicate openly with your partner about the importance of both of you maintaining independence while still supporting each other.

Sign Nine: Confidence & Self-Worth



“I got this.”

1. Definition

Confidence and self-worth refer to the belief in your own value and abilities. Confidence is having trust in your skills, decisions, and actions, while self-worth is the internal sense of being inherently valuable, regardless of external validation or approval. In relationships, confidence allows you to express your needs and desires openly, while self-worth ensures that you don't settle for less than you deserve.

2. How It Affects Relationships

Confidence and self-worth are critical for maintaining healthy relationships. When you have a strong sense of self-worth, you enter relationships from a place of security rather than seeking validation or approval from your partner. This prevents unhealthy dynamics such as dependence, insecurity, or clinginess. Confidence allows you to communicate openly, handle conflicts, and stand up for yourself when necessary. In contrast, a lack of confidence or self-worth can lead to self-doubt, jealousy, and difficulty trusting your partner.

3. What the Research Shows

Research highlights that **individuals with high self-worth are more likely to experience secure, fulfilling relationships**. Studies from the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* show that **self-esteem is strongly correlated with relationship satisfaction**. High self-esteem helps partners maintain emotional independence, communicate effectively, and avoid falling into codependent patterns ([DoUlike](#))([Psychology Today](#)).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

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- **Healthy Confidence and Self-Worth:** A person with healthy self-worth feels secure in who they are and what they bring to the relationship. They don't need constant reassurance from their partner and can handle constructive feedback without feeling attacked.
 - **Unhealthy Confidence and Self-Worth:** Someone with low self-worth may feel insecure, constantly seeking validation from their partner. They might have difficulty accepting compliments or may fear abandonment, leading to jealousy or controlling behavior.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Do I believe I am worthy of love and respect, and do I feel secure in who I am without needing constant reassurance from my partner?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Do I trust my own abilities and decisions in the relationship, or do I often second-guess myself and seek external validation?*
-

6. How to Improve Confidence and Self-Worth

- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Treat yourself with the kindness and understanding you would offer to a friend. Recognize your own worth even when things don't go as planned.
- **Affirm Your Strengths:** Make a list of your strengths and accomplishments, and regularly remind yourself of them. Focus on your successes, no matter how small.
- **Challenge Negative Thoughts:** If you notice negative self-talk, challenge it by asking if it's rational or based on fear. Replace it with positive, affirming thoughts.
- **Surround Yourself with Supportive People:** Spend time with people who uplift and support you. Avoid relationships (romantic or otherwise) that drain your confidence or make you question your worth.
- **Take Risks and Celebrate Wins:** Push yourself to try new things and celebrate both your efforts and achievements. This builds confidence over time.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** If you're struggling with self-worth, therapy or coaching can provide valuable tools to build a stronger sense of confidence.

Sign Ten: Commitment to Growth:



“I’m going places!”

1. Definition

Commitment to growth refers to a person’s willingness and dedication to continuously improve themselves and evolve, both individually and within a relationship. In a relationship context, it means striving for personal development, improving communication, emotional intelligence, and working together with your partner to enhance the quality and strength of your bond.

2. How It Affects Relationships

A commitment to growth is essential for any long-term relationship. Relationships thrive when both partners are open to evolving—personally and as a couple. This growth mindset allows both individuals to adapt to challenges, embrace change, and continuously strive to improve themselves and the relationship. Without this commitment, relationships can become stagnant, leading to frustration, dissatisfaction, and eventual emotional disconnect. When both partners are dedicated to growing together, they are more likely to overcome obstacles, deepen their connection, and sustain a fulfilling, long-lasting relationship.

3. What the Research Shows

Research shows that **couples who embrace personal and relational growth are more likely to experience long-term relationship satisfaction**. Studies published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* reveal that **partners who engage in personal development and joint growth report higher relationship quality and fewer conflicts**. In contrast, individuals who resist change and growth are more prone to dissatisfaction and emotional withdrawal ([DoULike](#)) ([Psychology Today](#)).

4. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Version

- **Healthy Commitment to Growth:** A person who is committed to growth is open to learning from mistakes, willing to make changes for the better, and actively seeks ways to improve both themselves and the relationship. They embrace challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as threats.
 - **Unhealthy Commitment to Growth:** Someone who is not committed to growth may resist feedback, avoid self-reflection, and become defensive or stagnant when faced with challenges. They may expect their partner to change while remaining unwilling to work on themselves, leading to relationship stagnation and dissatisfaction.
-

5. How to Assess Yourself in This Area

- Reflection Question: *Am I open to personal growth and willing to adapt and evolve within my relationship, even when it's uncomfortable?*
 - Checklist Prompt: *Do I regularly reflect on my personal and relationship goals, and am I actively working to improve myself and my partnership?*
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6. How to Improve Commitment to Growth

- **Set Personal and Relationship Goals:** Regularly set both personal and relationship goals. These could include improving communication skills, enhancing emotional intelligence, or developing new habits that benefit the relationship.
- **Embrace Feedback:** Be open to constructive feedback from your partner. Instead of becoming defensive, use it as an opportunity to reflect and grow.
- **Engage in Self-Reflection:** Regularly take time to reflect on your actions, decisions, and their impact on your partner and relationship. Journaling or meditation can help in this process.
- **Invest in Learning:** Consider reading books, attending workshops, or seeking coaching focused on relationship development and personal growth.
- **Celebrate Growth Together:** Recognize and celebrate your personal and relationship milestones. Acknowledging progress helps reinforce a commitment to continual improvement.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** If you and your partner are struggling to grow together, consider couples' counseling or coaching to help navigate challenges and develop growth strategies.

Final Thoughts: The Journey Toward Relationship Readiness

The goal of this guide is not perfection—none of us will ever score a perfect “10” in every area. Instead, the purpose is to cultivate **awareness** of where we currently stand in these 10 key areas of relationship readiness and to identify where growth is needed. Being relationship-ready is an ongoing process of self-discovery, development, and commitment to growth.

Working on areas like communication, emotional intelligence, or self-sufficiency is not just about preparing for your next relationship; it’s about improving your relationship with yourself. This personal growth can help you recognize potential relationship “mismatches” early on, making it easier to seek out relationships that align with your values and goals. Remember, while you may be ready for love, your potential partner may not be—and that’s okay. Readiness is not about guarantees or fairy-tale endings. Life doesn’t promise a “happily ever after,” but by doing this work, you can better navigate the complexities of relationships with greater self-awareness and confidence.

If you’re currently in a relationship and facing challenges, focusing on improving these areas can be a great step toward strengthening your bond. However, if your struggles are deeper or persist, you may benefit from seeking professional guidance through counseling or therapy.

This guide is not a substitute for professional advice—it’s a tool to help you identify and reflect on areas for growth. We’re simply offering **suggestions** for places to look and things to work on so that you can be more prepared for love. Wherever you are on your journey, we wish you all the best in finding meaningful, fulfilling relationships that align with the person you are becoming.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Now that you’ve explored the **10 Signs of Relationship Readiness**, it’s time to find out where you stand. Take our **free Relationship Readiness Balance Wheel Assessment** to get a clear picture of your strengths and identify areas for growth. The assessment will help you reflect on how ready you are for a healthy, fulfilling relationship.

Once you’ve completed the assessment, you’ll receive personalized insights and recommendations to guide your journey. Whether you’re looking to fine-tune your readiness, explore deeper self-development through coaching, or dive into our books for practical advice, there are resources available to support your growth.

- **Take the Free Assessment Now** [[Link to the assessment](#)]
- [Explore Our Books](#) for more in-depth guidance on getting relationship-ready.
- [Book a Coaching Session](#) to receive tailored, one-on-one support in any of the areas you’d like to improve.

Remember, this is your journey—one step at a time, one discovery at a time. We’re here to help you along the way!