



The Relationship Bill of Rights

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You have very important rights in relationships. A healthy, loving relationship cannot exist unless these rights are honored and respected by both parties. Setting and maintaining clear relationship boundaries based on these rights is sometimes difficult and uncomfortable, especially if the boundaries in your childhood family and in other relationships were inappropriate or ambiguous. Practice will give you the self-confidence to claim your relationship rights even under difficult circumstances.

Your relationship rights include:

- the right to enjoy life to the fullest in a safe and non-abusive environment.
- the right to enjoy a healthy, loving relationship with someone who accepts you unconditionally.
- the right to live your life in a way that is healthy for you without waiting on someone to act healthy, get help or admit there is a problem.
- the right to all your feelings. You have the right to trust your feelings, intuition, and decision-making ability.
- the right to express your feelings in a manner that is appropriate and doesn't infringe upon the boundaries and rights of others. You have a right to expect others to express feelings in the same way and to stop anyone who expresses feelings to you in an unhealthy or unsafe way.
- the right to terminate conversations with others who put down, humiliate, manipulate or guilt you. You also have the right to exit any situation involving this type of behavior.
- the right to say "no" without feeling guilty when you are exposed to an unhealthy situation.
- the right to make mistakes and to be imperfect.
- the right to try out new ways of operating in relationships. You have the right to decide which strategies work for you and discard those that are ineffective.
- the right to examine the messages your family and others have given you. You have the right to accept healthy messages and reject or rewrite unhealthy ones.
- the right to refuse to engage in the unhealthy patterns of your family and others while affirming their appropriate and healthy behavior.
- the right to make decisions based on what you decide is best for you rather than what your family and others think is best.

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