

# CREATING SAFETY IN RELATIONSHIPS

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The first step in building a conscious, fun and intimate relationship is to create an atmosphere of safety. Only when we feel safe are we able to risk making the changes in our behavior that are necessary to create a truly satisfying relationship. The first step towards creating safety for ourselves is to create safety for our partners. Following the simple guidelines below are a good way to build a safe and loving relationship.

## Behaviors to Avoid

1. Sarcasm
2. Shame
3. Blame
4. Ignoring someone - "the silent treatment"
5. Being the expert; taking an "I know better" attitude
6. Dragging in past conflicts or events
7. Name -calling
8. Character put-downs "You're such a..."
9. Using questions to attack or criticize ("How many times have I told you to...")
10. Criticism
11. Holding grudges
12. Involving others in your disagreements (friends, parents)
13. Cursing
14. Exaggerating and generalizing ("you always; you never")
15. Threats
16. Slamming doors, throwing things, slamming down or disconnecting phones
17. Violence towards people or property

18. Threats of separation or divorce
19. Being wishy-washy - beating around the bush
20. Refusing to discuss an issue (stonewalling)

### **Good Habits to Practice**

1. Remember that we each see the world through different eyes
2. Ask for a specific time to discuss difficult or painful topics
3. State your concern briefly and clearly
4. Use "I" statements
5. Keep to one issue at a time
6. Make limited, realistic requests
7. Listen carefully to the other person's point of view and let them know that their reality makes sense to you
8. Give fair consideration to the other person's requests - stretch yourself!
9. Always remember how precious the relationship is to you - this is someone you love!

Good relationships are woven one strand at a time: by choosing to appreciate rather than criticize, by opting to listen and respond rather than ignore or turn away, and by focusing on that which is positive and supportive. When you are angry or hurt, take time alone to nurture and support yourself. Good relationships aren't about being perfect – they are about trusting each other and choosing, each and every day to act from a place of love and hope. The rest is easy.