

# Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendships

by Dr. Jane Bluestein and Eric Katz, MSAC

Do you have friends who leave you feeling happy and uplifted? Or do you feel drained, agitated, angry, or resentful when you've spent time with certain people? Use the following list to compare and evaluate the friendships you have in your life:

Healthy friendships are not one-sided. Both people benefit from knowing each other.  
In unhealthy friendships, one person always seems to give a lot more than the other.

Healthy friendships are based on mutual respect.  
In unhealthy friendships, people ridicule one another, gossip or spread rumors,  
or act mean to one another.

Healthy friendships allow each other to grow and change.  
Unhealthy friendships are threatened when one person grows or changes.

Healthy friendships are not possessive.  
Unhealthy friendships are threatened by other people.  
Healthy friendships nourish you and add to your life.  
Unhealthy friendships leave you feeling empty and drained.

Healthy friendships accept you for who you are.  
Unhealthy friendships require you to act the way someone else wants you to be  
in order to be accepted.

Healthy friendships allow you to have your feelings.  
Unhealthy friendships only accept certain feelings.

Healthy friendships respect differences.  
Unhealthy friendships demand conformity.

Healthy friendships are safe and secure.  
In unhealthy friendships, trusts are broken, secrets are shared, and confidentiality is betrayed.

In healthy friendships, both people are committed to the friendship.  
In unhealthy friendships, only one is.

Healthy friendships are not about power or status. Unhealthy friendships look to take advantage of  
another person's social standing in order to improve their own.

Think of your friends and the people you know. Then go through the list above. Count the number of times you would put "Healthy" next to their names. Take a look at your role as a friend. In what ways are you a healthy friend? In what ways are you an unhealthy friend?

*Think about someone in your life who leaves an open space for you to be yourself. No one is more valuable. I would rather have a pillar of trust in my life than a pillar of strength.*

—Deepak Chopra

Excerpt adapted from *High School's Not Forever* by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. and Eric Katz, M.S.A.C. (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2007), 63-64. Included in *The Perfection Deception* by Dr. Jane Bluestein (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2015), 231-232.