

I Don't Feel Respected in My Relationships

Objective

To identify ways to increase your self-respect and improve your relationships.

You Should Know

Sometimes relationships feel one-sided, like you are doing all the work, or you are the only one who cares. You may hang on too tightly to your partner, afraid you will be abandoned. People in your life might criticize or humiliate you. You might frequently reach out to friends for validation, reassurance, or praise. Or you might stop talking to a family member after your feelings are hurt.

Which of the following statements describes you? Check all that apply.

- Other people often take me for granted.
- I worry constantly that my partner/friend/family member doesn't care about me.
- I feel threatened when my partner/friend/family member spends time with other people.
- It is difficult for me to express myself.
- I am afraid to make other people angry at me.
- People I care about do not listen to me; I rarely feel "heard."
- I will do almost anything to avoid a confrontation.
- It is very important for me to get approval from others.
- I sometimes act "fake" so other people will like me.
- People describe me as overly sensitive or dramatic, or as taking things out of context.
- When I am alone, I feel empty and worthless.
- I never think I am good enough.
- I would rather be in a bad relationship than be alone.
- I tend to push people away when they get too close.
- I am terrified of being hurt.

Review the statements you have checked off and write down your thoughts about the ones that concern you the most.

What to Do Having relationships with mutual respect means that both people ask for what they want, need, and deserve.

The letters F – A – S – T are an easy way to remember the rules for respecting yourself and others:

F: Be **f**air in your interactions with others to get your needs met. Avoid taking advantage of other people.

A: **A**pologize when necessary, but avoid apologizing for the way you feel. No need to say sorry when there is nothing to apologize for!

S: **S**tick to your values. Do not compromise your morals and values in order to be accepted by other people, or to gain affection.

T: Be **T**ruthful. Avoid lying, acting helpless, or exaggerating.

Now, ask someone you trust to role play with you. Think of situations when you felt uncomfortable or disrespected, and then incorporate one or more of the **FAST** techniques. Use the following chart to track what happens.

Which of the FAST techniques was most difficult for you? Explain.

What can you do the next time you are faced with a challenging situation? Which FAST technique(s) will you most likely use?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
