An Invitation to Health: Build Your Future

DIANNE HALES

15TH EDITION
After studying the material in this chapter, you should be able to

- Identify skills that improve communication.
- Illustrate the gender differences in communication.
- Discuss the pros and cons of online social networks.
- Recount why students may have physical and mental health benefits when involved in intimate relationships.
- Discuss the science of love, including the psychological, anthropological, and biochemical views.
- Identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Recall the issues that couples, in long term relationships, may confront.
Andrea got her first cell phone when she was 8, signed up for e-mail when she was 11, went on Facebook at 13, started tweeting and posting YouTube videos at 16, and joined LinkedIn after getting her first summer job at 17. These days she G-chats, i-Chats, and Facebook chats (often all at the same time) and Skypes with friends.

Social Health

Wherever she goes, Andrea checks in with Four-square and posts photos on Flickr. Even in class she texts and sends BBMs (BlackBerry messages) and kik messages. With 800-plus Facebook friends and 500 Twitter followers, Andrea says she can’t imagine feeling lonely—as long as she doesn’t misplace her cell phone and its battery doesn’t die.

Is Andrea the poster child for social health in the twenty-first century? Or is her virtual socializing somehow undermining her overall well-being? Scientists who study relationships are just beginning to explore the impact of our digital world. Will 140-character tweets and “emoticons” replace conversation? Could online social networking make face-to-face friendships obsolete?

No one yet knows, but as much as technology may change our lives, one thing remains constant: We always have craved and always will crave human connection. As individuals and as part of society, we need to care about others and to know that others care about us, to feel for others and have others feel for us, to share what we know and to learn from what others know.

Your relationships with your family, friends, coworkers, and loved ones may amaze, irritate, exhilarate, frustrate, and delight you. They also may affect your health. As noted in Chapter 1, your ability to communicate, to develop satisfying relationships, and to live in harmony with others is an important dimension of health and wellness.

This chapter discusses the social needs we all share, the ways some of us respond to those needs, healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the possibilities that exist for coming together from our solitude to warm ourselves in each other’s glow.

The Social Dimension of Health

Social health refers to the ability to interact effectively with other people and with the social environment, to develop satisfying interpersonal relationships, and to fulfill social roles. Social health doesn’t necessarily mean joining organizations or mingling in large groups, but it does involve participating in your community, living in harmony with others, communicating clearly, and practicing healthy sexual behaviors (discussed in Chapter 9).
As huge epidemiological studies have demonstrated beyond any doubt, supportive relationships buffer us from stress, distress, and disease. People with close ties to others have stronger cardiovascular and immune systems, resist colds better, and are less vulnerable to serious illness and premature death.

Specific qualities in a relationship affect physical health, particularly social support. This term refers to the ways in which we provide information or assistance, show affection, comfort, and confide in others. As mounting evidence shows, people of all ages function best in socially supportive environments.

This is particularly true of college students, who report more stress and more physical symptoms when they feel a lack of family support. More than any other component of social support, a sense of belonging may have the greatest impact on college students’ health. Because college is a transition time, forming new attachments may be especially important—and beneficial to overall health.

Your social support network might consist of people you see almost every day, more casual acquaintances, and friends, followers, and bloggers you get to know online. (Social networking is covered later in this chapter.) Simply staying in touch and sharing each other’s lives bolster feelings of self-worth, security, and belonging.

Researchers also have been studying the concept of “social contagion,” the process by which friends, friends of friends, acquaintances, and others in our social circle influence our behavior and our health—both positively and negatively. By analyzing relationships among the 15,000 people followed over three generations in the Framingham heart study, researchers found that various health-related factors changed, not just individually over time, but among clusters of people.

The effect was most striking for obesity. When one participant became obese, his or her friends were more likely (by 57 percent) to become obese, too. Even if a friend of a friend gained weight, the risk of obesity rose about 10 percent. Smoking also spread socially. If one participant began smoking, his or her friends were 36 percent more likely to take up the habit. Similar patterns occurred with drinking, happiness, and loneliness.

“People are connected, and their health is connected,” the researchers concluded. Some have criticized the methods in this study, but most experts endorse the idea that people not only need but influence people. The reasons may include peer pressure or “mirror neurons” in the brain that automatically mimic what we see in the people around us.

According to social scientists, each of us is connected within three degrees (to a friend, a friend of a friend, and that friend’s friend) to more than 1,000 people. Think of this social web as an opportunity. By your good health behaviors you can, in theory, influence 1,000 individuals to become healthier, fitter, and happier.

Communicating and Relating

Healthy, mutually beneficial relationships add joy to our years and maybe even years to our life. Unhealthy or dysfunctional ones can be so toxic that they undermine health as well as happiness. By mastering skills to communicate more clearly and by being responsible and responsive in your interactions with others, you can cultivate what psychologist Daniel Goleman called “social intelligence” and create relationships worth cherishing.
Learning to Listen

Learning to listen and to send clear messages is the essence of good communication. The more effectively we communicate, the more likely we are to create good relationships built on honesty, understanding, and mutual trust. Such relationships can infuse our lives with a richness no solitary pleasure can match.

Communication stems from a desire to know and a decision to tell. The first step is learning how to listen. (See “Listen Up” on page 147 in *Labs for IPC*.) Then you mostly choose what information about yourself to disclose and what to keep private. But in opening up to others, you increase your own self-knowledge and understanding.

A great deal of daily communication focuses on facts: on the who, what, where, when, and how. Information is easy to convey and comprehend. Emotions are not. Some people have great difficulty saying “I appreciate you” or “I care about you,” even though they are genuinely appreciative and caring. Others find it hard to know what to say in response and how to accept such expressions of affection.

Some people feel that relationships shouldn’t require any effort, that there’s no need to talk of responsibility between people who care about each other. Yet responsibility is implicit in our dealings with anyone or anything we value—and what can be more valuable than those with whom we share our lives? Friendships and other intimate relationships always demand an emotional investment, but the rewards they yield are great.

Sometimes people convey strong emotions with a kiss or a hug, a pat or a punch, but such actions aren’t precise enough to communicate exact thoughts. Stalking out of a room and slamming the door may be clear signs of anger, but they don’t explain what caused the anger or suggest what to do about it. You must learn how to communicate all feelings clearly and appropriately if you hope to become truly close to another person.

As two people build a relationship, they must sharpen their communication skills so that they can discuss all the issues they may confront. They must learn how to communicate anger as well as affection, hurt as well as joy—and they must listen as carefully as they speak.

Listening involves more than waiting for the other person to stop talking. Listening is an active process of trying to understand the other person’s feelings and motivation. Effective listeners ask questions when they’re not sure they understand the other person and prompt the other person to continue.

Being Agreeable But Assertive

There’s an old saying that “nice guys finish last,” but, according to recent research, that’s not the case. Psychologists translate “niceness” into a personality trait called “agreeableness,” which includes being helpful, unselfish, generally trusting, considerate, cooperative, sympathetic, warm, and concerned for others. Among the benefits that agreeable people enjoy are strong relationships, less conflict, happy marriages, better job performance, healthier eating habits and behaviors, less stress, and fewer medical complaints.²

But agreeable people aren’t so “nice” that they are easily influenced or taken advantage of by others. In situations that call for it, they make their needs and desires clear by being assertive—but not aggressive.
Your Strategies for Change

How to Assert Yourself

• Use “I” statements to explain your feelings. This allows you to take ownership of your opinions and feelings without putting down others for how they feel and think.

• Listen to and acknowledge what the other person says. After you speak, find out if the other person understands your position. Ask how he or she feels about what you’ve said.

• Be direct and specific. Describe the problem as you see it, using neutral language rather than assigning blame. Also suggest a specific solution, but make it clear that you’d like the lines of communication and negotiation to remain open.

• Don’t think you have to be obnoxious in order to be assertive. It’s most effective to state your needs and preferences without any sarcasm or hostility.

Assertiveness doesn’t mean screaming or telling someone off. You can communicate your wishes calmly and clearly. Assertiveness is a behavior that respects your rights and the rights of other people even when you disagree.

You can change a situation you don’t like by communicating your feelings and thoughts in nonprovocative words, by focusing on specifics, and by making sure you’re talking with the person who is directly responsible.

How Men and Women Communicate

Gender differences in communication start early. By age 1, boys make less eye contact than girls and pay more attention to moving objects like cars than to human faces. Both mothers and fathers talk less about feelings (except anger) to sons than daughters, and boys’ vocabularies include fewer “feeling” words. In the playground, if not at home, boys learn to choke back tears and show no fear. Their faces—once as openly emotional as girls—become less expressive as they move through the elementary years.

As adults, men use fewer words and talk, at least in public, as a means of putting themselves in a one-up situation—unlike women, who talk to draw others closer. Even with friends, men mainly swap information as they talk shop, sports, cars, computers.

In studies of language, Deborah Tannen and other linguists have identified the following gender differences, which may be based on sex or gender roles:

Men:

• Speak more often and for longer periods in public.

• Interrupt more, breaking in on another’s monologue if they aren’t getting the information they need.

• Look into a woman’s eyes more often when talking than they would if talking with another man.

• When writing, use more numbers, more prepositions, and more articles such as “an” and “the.”

• Write briefer, more utilitarian e-mails.

• Write blogs for the sake of a personal expectation or motive.

• In blogs or chat rooms, are more likely to make strong assertions, disagree with others, and use profanity and sarcasm.

Women:

• Speak more in private, usually to build better connections with others.

• Are generally better listeners, facilitating conversation by nodding, asking questions, and signaling interest by saying “uh-huh,” or “yes.”

• Are more likely to wait for a speaker to finish rather than interrupting.

• Look into another woman’s eyes more often than they would if talking with a man.

• When writing, use more words overall, more words related to emotion (positive and negative), more idea words, more hearing, feeling, and sensing words, more causal words (such as because), and more modal words (would, should, could).

• Write e-mails in much the same way they talk, using words to build a connection with people.
These individuals were more likely to “work hard” to ensure that their nonverbal behavior backed up the words they said—and to say their partners did the same. Regardless of their dating status, the female students valued nonverbal behavior more than men did. They also engaged in more forms of nonverbal communication, such as looking their partners straight in the eye and nodding their heads as their partners spoke.

Culture has a great deal of influence over body language. In some cultures, for example, establishing eye contact is considered hostile or challenging; in others, it conveys friendliness. A person’s sense of personal space—the distance he or she feels most comfortable in keeping from others—also varies in different societies.

Nonverbal Communication

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In a survey of undergraduates at a large southeastern university, those who saw themselves as “involved” daters were more concerned about nonverbal communication than were “casual” daters.

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more about each other; between spouses, as they pass through life together; and between parents and children, as youngsters develop and mature. But throughout life, close relationships, tested and strengthened by time, allow us to explore the depths of our souls and the heights of our emotions. (See Self Survey, “How Strong Are the Communication and Affection in Your Relationship?” on p. 146.)

I, Myself, and Me

It is part of our nature as mammals and as human beings to crave relationships. But invariably we end up alone at times. Solitude is not without its own quiet joys—time for introspection, self-assessment, learning from the past, and looking toward the future. Each of us can cultivate the joy of our own company, of being alone without crossing the line and becoming lonely.

The way each of us perceives himself or herself affects all the ways we reach out and relate to others. If we feel unworthy of love, others may share that opinion. Self-esteem (discussed in Chapter 2) provides a positive foundation for our relationships with others. Self-esteem doesn’t mean vanity or preoccupation with our own needs; rather, it is a genuine concern and respect for ourselves so that we remain true to our own feelings and beliefs. We can’t know or love or accept others until we know and love and accept ourselves, however imperfect we may be.

Social Networking

Modern technology is changing our social DNA. Today you can call, text, or video chat with almost anyone almost anywhere with a “smart” cell phone. You also may blog, “tweet,” follow Facebook or other networking services, upload photos, and give the world (or selected citizens) front-row seats to your life.

Some experts say humans are only doing what comes naturally—just with twenty-first-century tools. Our brains seem wired to connect. As neuroimaging studies have shown, the amygdala, a brain region involved in processing emotional reactions, is bigger in individuals with large, complex social networks.¹

These networks are getting bigger than ever—thanks to “computer-mediated communication”—the conveying of written text via the Internet—whether by Facebook, Twitter, or ever-evolving new networks and sites. About one in ten online adults maintains a blog, most often a personal journal or commentary site.² College students are blogging and e-mailing less than they did five years ago and communicating more via Facebook and Twitter.³

Not all undergraduates have plunged into the brave new world of high-tech communications. Female and white students are more than twice as likely to own cell phones than are male and African American students. Income also matters. Students whose families earn more than $100,000 a year are more than three times as likely to own a cell phone than are those from lower economic brackets.⁴

Computers are more widely used for social networking—and at younger ages. According to recent surveys, seven in ten teens between ages 12 and 17 use social networking sites; eight in ten of those between ages 14 and 17 have a profile page.⁵ Young users may face special risks online, including unsuspected contact with pedophiles and perverts, cyber stalking, cyber bullying, and other forms of harassment.⁶
College-age young adults may be the most wired age group. More than 94 percent of college students maintain a social networking profile, with Facebook the most popular choice.10 In one study undergraduates reported visiting social network profiles 2.4 to 4.2 times a day for an average time of one to two-and-a-half hours.11 (See How Do You Compare? The Net Generation on p. 121.)

**The Facebook Phenomenon**

The world’s most popular website worldwide was created by a college student for college students in 2004. More than 600 million users around the globe have since joined and spend an average of 19 minutes a day on the site. Men and women between ages 18 and 25 make up a third of Facebook users.12 However, these days your parents and their friends are as likely to have Facebook pages as your peers.

What draws people, particularly young ones, to social networking sites? According to researchers, the appeal comes from the opportunity such sites offer to:

- Explore users’ identities
- Make new friends
- Continue to develop long-standing relationships
- Explore their sexuality
- Voice their opinions
- Be creative

Facebook, users add, is fun and convenient, allowing them to get a peek into the worlds of many acquaintances, not just those they see or interact with regularly.13 Simply having a certain number of Facebook friends boosts feelings of happiness, researchers have found. Even more meaningful is getting support from online acquaintances—but only if it comes in response to an honest presentation of oneself.14

Despite its many benefits and pleasures, social networking also poses risks. At the very least, it can take up time and attention that should be given to studying and other commitments.

Facebook can, deliberately or not, become a tool for humiliating, harassing, bullying, or stalking others. Boyfriends and girlfriends have broken up by “defriending” a partner. Doctors have documented at least one case in which viewing his “ex” in photos with new male friends on Facebook triggered asthma attacks in a rejected suitor.15

**Self-Disclosure and Privacy in a Digital Age**

A key element of relationships—whether friendships or romantic ones—is self-disclosure—that is, how much we reveal about ourselves to another person. What you share about yourself is a critical building block that affects the nature and quality of the bonds you establish with others.

Social networking has transformed the issues of privacy and disclosure. Rather than confiding in a trusted friend, individuals may go online and reveal highly personal information to a stranger—or, if a comment or video makes its way onto a public site, to many strangers.

Previously personal moments now play out in public—sometimes by choice (as in an engagement announced by a change in status on Facebook), sometimes by chance (as when someone uploads a video of drunk beer-pong players).

In surveys of teenagers and young adults with online profiles, a third to a half had posted photos or videos depicting what researchers call “negative health risk behaviors,” such as drinking and using drugs. Many viewed the images (of drinking more than drug use) in positive ways.16 Parents, friends of parents, siblings, coworkers, and employers often have a very different perspective.

Sexual disclosures and references also can have unanticipated consequences. In one recent study, women’s sexy pictures or comments increased the sexual expectations of male students. “The sexier the pictures, the wilder you know they are,” commented one young man. “Sexual pictures equal sexual activity being around the corner,” said another.

Yet at the same time, sexual or suggestive material lessened the guys’ interest in a serious relationship with the young women. “I don’t want to show my friends a girl I like on Facebook and have them see sexual pictures and her all drunk,” a student remarked. Sexual references generate powerful “subconscious impressions,” the researchers concluded—and could put female students at risk for unwanted sexual advances.17
Friendship

Friendship has been described as “the most holy bond of society.” Every culture has prized the ties of respect, tolerance, and loyalty that friendship builds and nurtures. An anonymous writer put it well:

A friend is one who knows you as you are,
Understands where you’ve been,
Accepts who you’ve become,
And still gently invites you to grow.

Friends can be a basic source of happiness, a connection to a larger world, a source of solace in times of trouble. Although we have different friends throughout life, often the friendships of adolescence and young adulthood are the closest we ever form. They ease the normal break from parents and the transition from childhood to independence.

On average we devote 40 percent of our limited social time to the five most important people we know, who represent just 3 percent of our social world.18 Having more than five best friends is impossible when we interact face-to-face because of time constraints. But thanks to social networking online, it’s possible to accumulate hundreds, even thousands, of virtual friends.

Even so, most of us can maintain no more than 150 meaningful relationships online and off—a total called “Dunbar’s number” in recognition of the researcher who came up with it.19 At one time, when almost all humans on earth lived in small, rural, interconnected communities, everyone in a village may have known the same 150 people.

In our modern mobile society, we move time and again, leaving behind old friends. Emotional closeness, Dunbar found, declines by around 15 percent a year in the absence of face-to-face contact. Facebook, at the least, provides us an opportunity to maintain friendships that would otherwise rapidly wither away. Online status reports and, more effectively, everyday images of faraway friends can provide some of the same benefits as real-life friendship, including enhanced self-esteem and happiness.20

Campus friends help each other in other ways, including preventing female friends from engaging in risky sexual behavior after heavy drinking. In a recent study of 141 undergraduates, three-quarters said they would persuade a female friend not to go home with a new male acquaintance or that they would make sure she arrived home safely. However, the likelihood of their intervening depended on how well they knew the woman and the man. They would be more likely to step in and protect a friend in what they deemed a risky situation but more willing to do nothing if both they and their friends knew the guy.21 What would you do?

Loneliness

More so than many other countries, ours is a nation of loners. Recent trends—longer work hours, busy family schedules, frequent moves, high divorce rates—have created even more lonely people. Only about a quarter of Americans say they’re never lonely. Loneliest of all are adolescents and elderly people, those who are divorced, separated, or widowed, and those who live alone or solely with children.22 Loneliness is most likely to cause emotional distress when it is chronic rather than episodic.

To combat loneliness, people may join groups, fling themselves into projects and activities, or surround themselves with superficial acquaintances. Others avoid the effort of trying to connect, sometimes limiting most of their personal interactions to chat groups on the Internet.

The true keys to overcoming loneliness are developing resources to fulfill our own potential and learning to reach out to others. In this way, loneliness can become a means to personal growth and discovery.

Shyness and Social Anxiety

Many people are uncomfortable meeting strangers or speaking or performing in public. In some surveys, as many as 40 percent of people describe themselves as shy or socially anxious. Some shy people—an estimated 10 to 15 percent of children—are born with a predisposition to shyness.23 Others become shy because they don’t learn proper social responses or because they experience rejection or shame.

Some people are “fearfully” shy; that is, they withdraw and avoid contact with others and
experience a high degree of anxiety and fear in social situations. Others are “self-consciously” shy. They enjoy the company of others but become highly self-aware and anxious in social situations.

In studies of college students, men have reported somewhat more shyness than women. Students may develop symptoms of shyness or social anxiety when they go to a party or are called on in class. Some experience symptoms when they try to perform any sort of action in the presence of others, even such everyday activities as eating in public, using a public restroom, or writing a check.

About 7 percent of the population could be diagnosed with a severe form of social anxiety, called social phobia, in which individuals typically fear and avoid various social situations. Childhood shyness, emotional abuse, neglect, and chronic illness increase the likelihood of this problem. Asian cultures typically show the lowest rates; Russian and American, the highest.

Adolescents and young adults with severe social anxiety are at increased risk of major depression. The key difference between these problems and normal shyness and self-consciousness is the degree of distress and impairment that individuals experience.

If you are shy, you can overcome much of your social apprehensiveness on your own, in much the same way as you might set out to stop smoking or lose weight. For example, you can improve your social skills by pushing yourself to introduce yourself to a stranger at a party or to chat about the weather or the food selections with the person next to you in a cafeteria line. Gradually, you’ll acquire a sense of social timing and a verbal ease that will take the worry out of close encounters with others. Those with more disabling social anxiety may do best with psychotherapy and medication, which have proved highly effective.

Building a Healthy Community

“No man is an island,” the English poet John Donne wrote in 1624. In today’s global society, this phrase rings just as true. In addition to our families, friendships, and social networks, we are part of communities—our campus, our neighborhood, our town or city. (Chapter 19 discusses the community we are all citizens of: Planet Earth.)

Contributing to your community can take many forms, from volunteering at a Habitat for Humanity building project to singing in a church choir. By giving to others, you get a great deal in return. As researchers have documented, altruism—helping or giving to others—enhances self-esteem, relieves physical and mental stress, and protects psychological well-being.

Hans Selye, the father of stress research, described cooperation with others for the self’s sake as altruistic egotism, whereby we satisfy our own needs while helping others satisfy theirs. This concept is essentially an updated version of the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The important

Your Strategies for Change

Become Involved

• Evaluate your schedule and current commitments. Be realistic in assessing how much time you have available to give to others. If you have only an hour or two a week, that’s enough to serve a meal at a center for the homeless or read to children at a library.

• Organize your friends. If your campus is sponsoring a beach clean-up or your community is organizing a diabetes research walkathon, get your friends to join with you to make an even bigger difference—and have more fun!

• If you’re interested in health, volunteer to assist at screening days on campus or in the community. Check the schedule of upcoming local events sponsored by groups such as the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and American Lung Association.

• Check out programs like AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps as post-graduation options. You’ll learn a lot about life, the world, and yourself while providing help to people who need it most.

social phobia  A severe form of social anxiety marked by extreme fears and avoidance of social situations.

altruism  Acts of helping or giving to others without thought of self-benefit.
difference is that you earn your neighbor’s love and help by offering him or her love and help.

Volunteerism helps those who give as well as those who receive. People involved in community organizations, for instance, consistently report a surge of well-being called helper’s high, which they describe as a unique sense of calmness, warmth, and enhanced self-worth. College students who provided community service as part of a semester-long course reported changes in attitude (including a decreased tendency to blame people for their misfortunes), self-esteem (primarily a belief that they can make a difference), and behavior (a greater commitment to do more volunteer work).

Dating on Campus

Dating isn’t what it used to be. Many young people socialize in groups until a couple pairs off into a romantic relationship. Rather than the conventional dinner and a movie, college students may just get together to hang out. Is one person interested in something more? Is the other? Often it can take a while for couples to figure out if they are in fact dating.

Meeting People

With more people remaining single longer, the search for a good date has become more complex. Singles bars have become less popular; cafés, Laundromats, health clubs, and bookstores have become more acceptable as places to meet new people.

Many young people meet or maintain contact online. Facebook, texting, tweeting, and e-mail may be convenient and fun, but virtual encounters can be tricky. Because you can’t observe body language or detect the tone in a voice, it can be hard to tell if a person is being sincere or sarcastic, informal or inappropriate.

Flirting in the digital world tends to be bolder and racier than in real life, in part because two people are looking at a screen rather than into each other’s eyes. Caught up in the “conversation,” they may not reflect on the message.

CONSUMER ALERT

Online Flirting and Dating

Virtual flirtations can be fun, but they also entail some risks, particularly if you decide to go off-line and meet in person. Here are some guidelines:

Facts to Know

- Remember that you have no way of verifying if a correspondent is telling the truth about anything—sex, age, occupation, marital status. If your online partner seems insincere or strange in any way, stop corresponding.
- Be careful of what you type. Anything you put on the Internet can end up almost anywhere, including with potential employers. To avoid embarrassment, don’t say anything you wouldn’t want to see in newspaper print.

Steps to Take

- Don’t give out your address, telephone number, or any other identifying information. The people you meet online are strangers, and you should keep your guard up.
- Don’t “date” on an office or university computer. You could end up supplying your professors, classmates, or coworkers with unintentional entertainment. Also, many organizations and institutions consider e-mail messages company property.
- Don’t rely on the Internet as your only method of meeting people. Continue to get out in the real world and meet potential dates the old-fashioned way: live and in person.
- If you do decide to meet, make your first face-to-face encounter a double or group date and make it somewhere public, like a café or museum. Don’t plan a full-day outing. Coffee or a drink in a crowded place makes the best transition from e-mail.
- Don’t let your expectations run wild. Finding Mr. or Ms. Right is no easier in cyberspace than anywhere else, so be realistic about where your relationship might lead.
they’re sending—or whether they should be sending it at all. (See Consumer Alert.)

Dating can do more than help you meet people. By dating, you can learn how to make conversation, get to know more about others as well as yourself, and share feelings, opinions, and interests. In adolescence and young adulthood, dating also provides an opportunity for exploring your sexual identity. Some people date for months and never share more than a good-night kiss. Others may fall into bed together before they fall in love or even “like.”

Separating your emotional feelings about someone you’re dating from your sexual desire is often difficult. The first step to making responsible sexual decisions is respecting your sexual values and those of your partner. If you care about the other person—not just his or her body—and the relationship you’re creating, sex will be an important, but not the all-important, factor while you’re dating. (See Chapter 9 for more on sexual decision making.)

The Internet may be replacing introductions through mutual friends as the best way to meet potential dates and mates. In a recent survey on “How Couples Meet and Stay Together,” 80 percent of those with Internet connections were either married or living with a partner, compared with 63 percent of those without access to the Web. Individuals who traditionally have found it difficult to find a good mate—such as middle-aged heterosexuals and gays and lesbians, as well as those with disabilities—have found online sites particularly useful.26

Some young people also engage in sexual activities with friends with whom they are not romantically involved. Many “friends with benefits” may have had a sexual relationship in the past. Others have no expectation of any serious involvement.

**Hooking Up**

On some campuses hooking up is as common as or even more common than dating.27 In various studies, about 75 percent of men and 84 percent of women reported hooking up in college, with a mean of about ten hookups. Fewer—52 percent of men and 36 percent of women—reported a “penetrative” hookup involving oral, vaginal, or anal sex.28

Traditional dating and hooking up vary in many ways. In dating, one person (usually the male) asks the other out, picks her up, pays for a meal or a movie, initiates sexual advances, and takes her home. Men may see dating as costly both in terms of responsibility and finances since they are expected to entertain their date and cover the expenses. But they get to decide whom to ask out, what activity to plan, and when to end the date. Women play a passive, reactive role in dating but usually are expected only to be pleasant and look nice. Usually they have the ability to accept or reject a man’s sexual advances.29 (See Table 5.1 on the risks and benefits of dating.)

A college hookup usually involves two people who have met earlier in the evening, often at a bar, fraternity house, club, or party, and agree to engage in some sexual behavior for which there is little or no expectation of future commitment. There is often little or no communication, and the hookup ends when one partner leaves, falls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1 Top Four Perceived Benefits and Costs of Traditional Dating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived benefits of traditional dating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Your partner is a friend who you can disclose information/problems/happy moments/tough times with</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. You have the feeling of being liked/loved</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Traditional dating is a more productive/healthy relationship</td>
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<td>4. You get to share something you enjoy with another person</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risk of broken heart</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Traditional dating is an investment of feelings and there’s a potential of getting hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Risk of broken heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Risk of losing friendship if you cross a line</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. You risk being more interested in your partner than he is in you</td>
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asleep, or passes out. For men, there is less risk of rejection, less anxiety, and less financial cost. Women typically experience more negative effects, including being pressured to engage in unwanted sexual activity.

In a recent survey, both men and women preferred traditional dating to hooking up if there was a chance of a long-term relationship. Women preferred dating, with its promise of true intimacy, to hooking up in almost every circumstance while men generally preferred hooking up, with its promise of sexual gratification.30

**Why Students Hook Up** Various factors influence hookup behavior, including gender, alcohol, and a desire to avoid a serious relationship. College men report more sexual partners and are more likely to engage in sex without emotional involvement. In some studies college women engage in just as many hookup experiences as men, but they do so for different reasons. Some, focused on academic and career goals, say they want to interact with interesting or attractive men without compromising their freedom.

Alcohol use and intoxication play a major role, with 65 percent of students in one study reporting drinking before hooking up. Social norms are another influence. Even students who say they’ve never engaged in any type of casual sex believe that almost everyone else is hooking up. Students who had hooked up in high school are likely to continue this behavior in college. Those who describe themselves as religious or who attend religious services report fewer hook-ups and less likelihood of intercourse during a hookup.31

**Consequences of Hooking Up** Although hookups imply no conditions and no expectations, they can and do have unanticipated consequences, including unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual assaults. Women, at higher risk for these outcomes, also experience more negative psychological consequences.

Because of the continuing “double standard,” men are still lauded and admired for their sexual prowess and experience, while women, who are shamed for them, are more likely to feel guilty or anxious after hooking up. In one study, young women who had engaged in casual sex reported more distress than virgins or women who had engaged in sex only with romantic partners. Such distress increased for women, but not men, with the number of casual sex partners.32

In an analysis of self-esteem and casual sex, both men and women reporting hookups had lower self-esteem than those who did not. Depression has been linked with hooking up in women, but not men. Feelings of sexual regret in college women have been associated with sexual intercourse with someone only once and intercourse or oral sex with someone they had known for less than 24 hours.33

**Loving and Being Loved**

“One can live magnificently in this world if one knows how to work and how to love, to work for the person one loves and to love one’s work,” Leo Tolstoy wrote. You may not think of love as a basic need like food and rest, but it is essential for both physical and psychological well-being.

Mounting evidence suggests that people who lack love and commitment are at high risk for a host of illnesses, including infections, heart disease, and cancer. “Love and intimacy are at the root of what makes us sick and what makes us well,” says cardiologist Dean Ornish, author of

**Your Strategies for Change**

**How to Be Single and Satisfied**

- Fill your life with meaningful work, experiences, and people.
- Build a network of supportive friends who care for and about you.
- Be open to new experiences that can expand your feelings about yourself and your world.
- Don’t miss out on a special event because you don’t have someone to accompany you: Go alone.
- Enjoy your own company. Allow yourself to be amazed by your own witty or off-the-wall observations.
- Volunteer to help others less fortunate, or become involved in church and social organizations.
Intimate Relationships

Committed romantic relationships may be beneficial for college students’ physical and mental health, just as marriage is for spouses. In a study of more than 1,600 undergraduates between ages 18 and 25, those in committed relationships experienced fewer mental health problems, were less likely to be overweight/obese, and engaged in fewer risky behaviors (such as binge drinking).

The reasons may be that these students have less time for risky behavior, that being in a relationship fosters a less impulsive lifestyle, or that partners who use drugs or drink heavily may be unable to keep a romantic partner. Simply having fewer sexual partners lowers general stress as well as the risk of sexual infections or assaults. There was no difference in physical health, possibly because most students are young and healthy to begin with.34

In another recent survey of undergraduates between ages 18 and 23, in the long term men received greater emotional benefits than women from the positive aspects of romance and were more likely than women to be emotionally harmed by the stress of a rocky patch.35

The term intimacy—the open, trusting sharing of close, confidential thoughts and feelings—comes from the Latin word for within. Intimacy doesn’t happen at first sight, or in a day or a week or a number of weeks. Intimacy requires time and nurturing; it is a process of revealing rather than hiding, of wanting to know another and to be known by that other. Although intimacy doesn’t require sex, an intimate relationship often includes a sexual relationship, heterosexual or homosexual.

In an intimate relationship, empathy becomes even more important. You can develop your capacity for empathy by pulling back periodically, particularly in moments of stress or conflict, and asking yourself: “What is my partner or spouse feeling right now? What does he or she need?”

What Attracts Two People to Each Other?

What draws two people to each other and keeps them together: chemistry or fate, survival instincts or sexual longings? “Probably it’s a host of different things,” reports sociologist Edward Laumann, coauthor of Sex in America, a landmark survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. “But what’s remarkable is that most of us end up with partners much like ourselves—in age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, education.”
Why? “You’ve got to get close for sexual chemistry to occur,” says Laumann. “Sparks may fly when you see someone across a crowded room, but you only see a preselected group of people—people enough like you to be in the same room in the first place. This makes sense because initiating a sexual relationship is very uncertain.”

Scientists have tried to analyze the combination of factors that attracts two people to each other. In several studies of college students, four predictors ranked as the most important reasons for attraction: warmth and kindness, desirable personality, something specific about the person, and reciprocal liking. Economic factors, including money or lack thereof, didn’t make the list. (See Health on a Budget, p. 131.)

Do opposites attract, or do people find greater happiness with partners who are similar to them? One of the most comprehensive studies ever undertaken on these questions found no evidence that opposites attract. Most people, the researchers found, tend to marry those who are similar in attitudes, religion, and values. However, these similarities have little to do with having a happy marriage. What does matter are similarities in personality, such as being extroverted or conscientious. These take more time to recognize but have a greater impact on how a couple gets along over the long term.

Infatuation. It is tempting to think of love as scenes from a movie script: blazing sunsets and misty nights, fiery glances and passionate embraces, consuming desire and happy-ever-after endings. However, movies only last for two hours; ideally, love lasts a lifetime. Infatuation falls somewhere in between.

Certainly, falling in love is an intense, dizzying experience. A person not only enters our life but also takes possession. We are intrigued, flattered, captivated, delighted—but is this love or a love of loving?

At the time you’re experiencing it, there is no difference between infatuation and lasting love. You feel the same giddy, wonderful way. However, if it’s infatuation, it won’t last. Infatuation refers only to falling in love. People genuinely in love with each other do more than fall: They start building a relationship together.

Being head over heels in love can have such an impact on the brain that it reduces pain. Stanford University researchers studied 15 undergraduates in the infatuation stage of love and inflicted pain with a handheld thermal probe. Those looking at a photograph of their beloved not only reported less pain but showed the same brain changes as those induced by drugs like cocaine.56

Infatuation also can be a disguise for something quite different: a strong sex drive, a fear of loneliness, loneliness itself, or a hunger for approval. Sometimes lovers in love with love may become infatuated with someone who doesn’t even exist: the projection of their unmet needs for unconditional love.

Figure 5.1 Sternberg’s Love Triangle
The three components of love are intimacy, passion, and commitment. The various kinds of love are composed of different combinations of the three components.

The Science of Romantic Love
We like to think of this powerful force, this source of both danger and delight, as something that defies analysis. However, scientists have provided new perspectives on its true nature.

A Psychological View. According to psychologist Robert Sternberg, love can be viewed as a triangle with three faces: passion, intimacy, and commitment (Figure 5.1). Each person brings his or her own triangle to a relationship. If they match well, their relationship is likely to be satisfying.

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Sternberg also identified six types of love:

- **Liking**, the intimacy friends share.
- **Infatuation**, the passion that stems from physical and emotional attraction.
- **Romantic love**, a combination of intimacy and passion.
- **Companionate love**, a deep emotional bond in a relationship that may have had romantic components.
- **Fatuous love**, a combination of passion and commitment in two people who lack a deep emotional intimacy.
- **Consummate love**, which combines passion, intimacy, and commitment over time.

**An Anthropological View** When you first fall in love, you may be sure that no one else has ever known the same dizzying, wonderful feelings. Yet, while every romance may be unique, romantic love is anything but. Anthropologists have found evidence of romantic love between individuals in most of the cultures they have studied—it seems to be a human universal or, at the least, a near-universal.

Anthropologist Helen Fisher, author of *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery and Divorce*, describes romantic love “as a very primitive, basic human emotion, as basic as fear, anger or joy.” As she explains, it pulled men and women of prehistoric times into the sort of partnerships that were essential to child rearing. But after about four years—just “long enough to rear one child through infancy,” says Fisher—romantic love seemed to wane, and primitive couples tended to break up and find new partners. This “four-year itch” may well have endured through the centuries, contends Fisher, who notes that divorce statistics from most of the 62 cultures she has studied still show a pattern of restlessness four years into a marriage.37

**A Biochemical View** The heart is the organ we associate with love, but the brain may be where the action really is. According to research on neurotransmitters (the messenger chemicals within the brain), love sets off a chemical chain reaction that causes our skin to flush, our palms to sweat, and our lungs to breathe more deeply and rapidly. The “love chemicals” within the brain—dopamine, norepinephrine, and phenylethylamine (PEA)—have effects similar to those of amphetamines, stimulant drugs that intensify physiological reactions (see Chapter 12).

Infatuation may indeed be a natural high, but like other highs, this rush doesn’t last—possibly because the body develops tolerance for love-induced chemicals, just as it does with amphetamines. However, as the initial lovers’ high fades, other brain chemicals may come into play: the endorphins, morphine-like chemicals that can help produce feelings of well-being, security, and tranquility. These feel-good molecules may increase in partners who develop a deep attachment.

The hormone oxytocin, best known for its role in inducing labor during childbirth, seems...
particularly important in our ability to bond with others. By measuring blood levels of women as they recalled positive and negative relationships, researchers have found that women whose oxytocin levels rose when remembering a positive relationship reported having little difficulty setting appropriate boundaries, being alone, or trying too hard to please others. Women whose oxytocin levels fell in response to remembering a negative emotional relationship reported greater anxiety in close relationships.

**Mature Love**

Social scientists have distinguished between *passionate love* (characterized by intense feelings of elation, sexual desire, and ecstasy) and *companionate love* (characterized by friendly affection and deep attachment). Often relationships begin with passionate love and evolve into a more companionate love. Sometimes the opposite happens and two people who know each other well discover that their friendship has “caught fire” and the sparks have flamed an unexpected passion.

Mature love is a complex combination of sexual excitement, tenderness, commitment, and—most of all—an overriding passion that sets it apart from all other love relationships in one’s life. This passion isn’t simply a matter of orgasm but also entails a crossing of the psychological boundaries between oneself and one’s lover. You feel as if you’re becoming one with your partner while simultaneously retaining a sense of yourself.

**Dysfunctional Relationships**

Although they enrich and fulfill us in many ways, our relationships with friends, siblings, parents, or colleagues can also sabotage our health. Mental health professionals define a “toxic” relationship as one in which either person is made to feel worthless or incompetent.

Nearly half of all couples experience some form of physical aggression at some point in their relationship. Couples who are cohabiting (see page 137) experience more aggression than married partners and those who are dating but living separately. In teenage couples, dating violence has been linked with higher levels of jealousy, verbal conflict, and cheating. In the most recent ACHA-NCHA survey, about 2 percent of students had been in a physically abusive relationship in the 12 months. One in ten reported being in an emotionally abusive intimate relationship. (See the accompanying table.)

Relationships that don’t promote healthy communication, honesty, and intimacy are sometimes called *dysfunctional*. Individuals with addictive behaviors or dependence on drugs or alcohol (see Chapters 12 and 13), and the children or partners of such people, are especially likely to find themselves in such relationships, although they occur in all economic and social groups.

Often partners have magical, unrealistic expectations (e.g., they expect that a relationship with the right person will make their life okay), and one person uses the other almost as if he or she were a mood-altering drug. The partners may compulsively try to get the other to act the way they want. Both persons may distrust or may deceive each other. Often they isolate themselves from others, thus trapping themselves in a recurring cycle of pain.

“Physical symptoms, such as headaches, digestive troubles, tics, and inability to sleep well, can be signs of a destructive relationship,” says sociologist Robert Billingham, professor of human development and family studies at Indiana University. Yet, although one person may repeatedly attack, abandon, betray, badger,
bully, criticize, deceive, dominate, or demean the other, the responsibility for changing the unhealthy dynamic belongs to both.

“The big question is, ‘Do I want or have to keep this relationship going?’” says sociologist Jan Yager, author of When Friendship Hurts. “If yes, are you willing to invest time and energy to turn it around?”

**Emotional Abuse**

Abuse consists of any behavior that uses fear, humiliation, or verbal or physical assaults to control and subjugate another human being. Rather than being physical, emotional abuse often takes the form of constant berating, belittling, and criticism. Aggressive verbal abuse includes calling names, blaming, threatening, accusing, demeaning, and judging. Trivializing, minimizing, or denying what a person says or feels is a more subtle but equally destructive type of abuse. Even if done for the sake of “teaching” or “helping,” emotional abuse wears away at self-confidence, sense of self-worth, and trust and belief in oneself. Because it is more than skin deep, emotional abuse can leave deeper, longer-lasting scars.

In a survey of more than 1,500 never-married undergraduates, 25 percent reported that they had experienced at least two acts of physical abuse in a dating relationship. Far fewer (12 percent) believed that they had ever physically abused their current or most recent dating partner. The majority of students who abuse or are physically abused by a dating partner, the researchers concluded, may not identify themselves as being in an abusive relationship. This may be because of denial, ignorance, or acceptance of physical violence as a norm in a dating relationship.

No one wants to get into an abusive relationship, but often people who were emotionally abused in childhood find themselves in similar circumstances as adults. Dealing with an emotional abuser, regardless of how painful, may feel familiar or even comfortable. Individuals who think very little of themselves also may pick partners who treat them as badly as they believe they deserve.

**Health in Action**

**Assessing a Relationship**

How do you know if you’re in a healthy relationship? Ask yourself the following questions, and jot down your answers in your online journal:

- Do you have a clear sense of who you are, what you believe and value, the goals you want? Such self-knowledge is critical for forming any mature relationship.
- Do you respect the other person and feel respected in return?
- Do you have differences in values, politics, religion, age, or race? Can you accept them?
- Do you still feel like a unique, strong individual within this relationship?
- Do you feel that you can be yourself when you’re with this person? Do you feel good about yourself? Do you get—and give—compliments, support, and praise?
- Do you share interests and values? When you have things in common, you have a foundation to expand and build your relationship.

If you’re currently involved with someone, read through the following list of positive indicators of a healthy relationship and check all that apply.

___You feel at ease with your new partner.
___You feel good about your new partner when you’re together and when you’re not.
___Your partner is open with you about his or her life—past, present, and future.
___You can say no to each other without feeling guilty.
___You feel cared for, appreciated, and accepted as you are.
___Your partner really listens to what you have to say.

The more items you’ve checked, the more reasons you have to keep seeing each other.

Read through the list of negative indicators below and check those that apply. In this case, every check is a red flag warning of dangers ahead.

___You don’t feel comfortable together.
___You feel angry or let down when you’re together or apart.
___Your partner is very secretive about his or her life.
___You feel your partner isn’t attentive to you.
___You don’t feel cared for and appreciated.

Reflect on the pluses and minuses of your relationship in your online journal.
Your Strategies for Change

How to Cope with an Unhealthy Relationship

• Start a dialogue. Focus on communication, not confrontation. Start with a positive statement, for instance, saying what you really value in the relationship. Volunteer what you might do to make it better, and state what you need from the other person.

• Distance yourself. Take a vacation from a toxic friendship. Skip the family reunion or Thanksgiving dinner. When forced into proximity, be polite. If you refuse to engage—not arguing, not getting angry, not trying to make things better—toxic people give up trying to get under your skin.

• Consult a professional. A therapist or minister can help people recognize and change toxic behavior patterns. Changes you make in how you act and react may trigger changes in others.

• Save yourself. If you can never get what you need in a relationship, you may need to let it go. Nothing is worth compromising your mental or physical health.

Abusers also may have grown up with emotional abuse and view it as a way of coping with feelings of fear, hurt, powerlessness, or anger. They may seek partners who see themselves as helpless and who make them feel more powerful.

Among the signs of emotional abuse are:

• Attempting to control various aspects of your life, such as what you say or wear.

• Frequently humiliating you or making you feel bad about yourself.

• Making you feel as if you are to blame for what your partner does.

• Wanting to know where you are and whom you’re with at all times.

• Becoming jealous or angry when you spend time with friends.

• Threatening to harm you if you break up.

• Trying to coerce you into unwanted sexual activity with statements such as, “If you loved me, you would . . .”

If you can never get what you need or if you’re afraid, you need to get out of the relationship. Take whatever steps necessary to ensure your safety. Find a trusted friend who can help. Don’t isolate yourself from family and friends. This is the time when you need their support and often the support of a counselor, minister, or doctor as well.

Codependency

Codependency has expanded its definition to include any maladaptive behaviors learned by family members in order to survive great emotional pain and stress, such as an addiction, chronic mental or physical illness, and abuse. Some therapists refer to codependency as a “relationship addiction” because codependent people often form or maintain relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive, or abusive. First identified in studies of the relationships in families of alcoholics, codependent behavior can occur in any dysfunctional family.

Among the characteristics of codependency are:

• An exaggerated sense of responsibility for the actions of others.

• An attraction to people who need rescuing.

• Always trying to do more than one’s share.

• Doing anything to cling to a relationship and avoid feeling abandoned.

• An extreme need for approval and recognition.

• A sense of guilt about asserting needs and desires.

• A compelling need to control others.

• Lack of trust in self and/or others.

• Fear of being alone.

• Difficulty identifying feelings.

• Rigidity/difficulty adjusting to change.

• Chronic anger.

• Lying/dishonesty.

• Poor communications.

• Difficulty making decisions.
Because the roots of codependency run so deep, people don’t just “outgrow” this problem or magically find themselves in a healthy relationship. Treatment to resolve childhood hurts and deal with emotional issues may take the form of individual or group therapy, education, or programs such as Codependents Anonymous (www.codependents.org). The goal is to help individuals get in touch with long-buried feelings and build healthier family and relationship dynamics.

**Enabling** Experts on the subject of addiction first identified traits of codependency in spouses of alcoholics, who followed a predictable pattern of behavior: While intensely trying to control the drinkers, the codependent mates would act in ways that allowed the drinkers to keep drinking. For example, if an alcoholic found it hard to get up in the morning, his wife would wake him up, pull him out of bed and into the shower, and drop him off at work. If he was late, she made excuses to his boss. The husband was the one with the substance-abuse problem, but without realizing it, his wife was enabling him to continue drinking. In fact, he might not have been able to keep up his habit without her unintentional cooperation.

Codependency progresses just as an addiction does, and codependents excuse their own behavior with many of the same defense mechanisms used by addicts, such as rationalization (“I cut class so I could catch up on my reading, not to keep an eye on my partner”) and denial (“He likes to gamble, but he never loses more than he can afford”). In time, codependents lose sight of everything but their loved one. They feel that if they can only “fix” this person, everything will be fine.

**When Love Ends**

As the old song says, breaking up is indeed hard to do. Sometimes two people grow apart gradually, and both of them realize that they must go their separate ways. More often, one person falls out of love first. It hurts to be rejected; it also hurts to inflict pain on someone who once meant a great deal to you.

In surveys, college students say it’s more difficult to initiate a breakup than to be rejected. Those who decided to end a relationship report greater feelings of guilt, uncertainty, discomfort, and awkwardness than their girlfriends or boyfriends. However, students with high levels of jealousy are likely to feel a desire for vengeance that can lead to aggressive behavior.

Research suggests that people do not end their relationships because of the disappearance of love. Rather a sense of dissatisfaction or unhappiness develops, which may then cause love to stop growing. The fact that love does not dissipate completely may be why breakups are so painful. While the pain does ease over time, it can help both parties if they end their relationship in a way that shows kindness and respect. Your basic guideline should be to think of how you would like to be treated if someone were breaking up with you. Would it hurt more to find out from someone else? Would it be more painful if the person you cared for lied to you or deceived you, rather than admitted the truth? Saying “I don’t feel the way I once did about you; I don’t want to continue our relationship” is hard, but it’s also honest and direct.

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**Your Strategies for Change**

**How to Deal with Rejection**

- **Remind yourself of your own worth.** You are no less attractive, intelligent, interesting, or lovable because someone ends a relationship with you.
- **Accept the rejection** as a statement of the other person’s preference rather than trying to debate or defend yourself.
- **Think of other people who value or have valued you,** who accept and even see as appealing the same characteristics the rejecting person viewed as undesirable.
- **Don’t withdraw from others.** Although you may not want to risk further rejection, it’s worth the gamble to get involved again. The only individuals who’ve never been rejected are those who’ve never reached out to connect with another.
Partnering across the Life Span

Even though men and women today may have more sexual partners than in the past, most still yearn for an intense, supportive, exclusive relationship, based on mutual commitment and enduring over time. In our society, most such relationships take the form of heterosexual marriages, but partners of the same sex or heterosexual partners who never marry also may sustain long-lasting, deeply committed relationships.

These couples are much like married people: They make a home, handle daily chores, cope with problems, celebrate special occasions, plan for the future—all the while knowing that they are not alone, that they are part of a pair that adds up to far more than just the sum of two individual souls.

Relationships in Emerging Adulthood

Growing up is not what it used to be. Social scientists have identified “emerging adulthood” as a unique developmental period that spans the late teens and the twenties, marked by volatility and identity formation. Traditionally the milestones of this life stage were completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying, and having a child.

Today more than 95 percent of Americans consider the most important markers of adulthood to be completing school, establishing an independent household, and being employed full-time. Only about half consider it necessary to marry or have children to be regarded as an adult. Unlike their parents and grandparents, young people view these markers as life choices rather than requirements.42 What do you think?

The changing timetable for adulthood has affected the timing and nature of intimate relationships or, as sociologists describe them, “partnerships.” Although just as eager for intimacy—emotional and sexual—younger adults are following a different pattern than past generations. Among a smorgasbord of romantic options, they may enter into casual, short-term relationships, commit to a long-term monogamous relationship, or live with a partner with or without the intent of getting married. Increasingly, marriage has become the final step in a relationship and may take place after sexual involvement, shared living, and even childbearing and parenting.43

Nearly half of young people live with their parents. This percentage drops below one in seven by the late twenties and below one in ten by the early thirties. Women are typically younger than men when they leave home because they complete college earlier, form cohabiting unions earlier, and marry about two years earlier.44

In 1970, two-thirds of twenty-somethings were married. Now just about a quarter are.45 “Emerging adults” who want to get married in their twenties generally express greater religiosity and more conservative sexual attitudes, are less sexually active, and engage in fewer risky health behaviors (smoking, drinking, drug use, etc.). Younger adults are more likely than older ones to participate in relationships that cross racial lines, but those in interracial relationships report receiving less social support from family and friends.46

Figure 5.2  Unmarried Couple Households
The number of unmarried couples living together, both with and without children, has risen dramatically in the last 50 years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Cohabitation

Although couples have always shared homes in informal relationships without any official ties, “living together,” or cohabitation, has become more common (see Figure 5.2).

The majority of young adults have lived with a partner by their midtwenties, but they do not view it as a permanent alternative to marriage. Although cohabitation has been increasing steadily for decades, the number of couples living together has spiked in recent years, increasing by 13 percent from 2009 to 2010.47

One reason may be economic. Partners may not have enough money to live alone but don’t plan to get married until they have more money—which is harder to get in a bad economy. Social acceptance may also contribute. A few generations ago “shacking up” seemed shocking. Today fewer than half of Americans think living together is a bad idea.

About a quarter of unmarried women ages 25 to 39 are currently living with a partner; an additional quarter lived with a partner in the past. Couples live together before more than half of all marriages, a practice that was practically unknown 50 years ago. In addition, the proportion of cohabiting women between the ages of 20 and 50 has tripled in the last 50 years.

Cohabitation can be a prelude to marriage, an alternative to living alone, or an alternative to marriage. Couples choose to cohabit for different reasons. In one study, spending more time together and convenience were the most common motivations. Couples who move in together to “test” their relationship report more problems—including more negative communication, physical aggression, and symptoms of depression and anxiety—than others. (See Table 5.2.)

The timing of a decision to move in together also matters. Couples who cohabited before getting engaged later reported less marital satisfaction, dedication, and confidence as well as more negative communication and greater potential for divorce than those who lived together after engagement or after getting married.48 Asians and non-Hispanic white couples are the least likely to cohabit. A higher percentage of Native Ameri-
Couples are more likely to live happily long after their wedding day if they share the same values and religious beliefs, tolerate flaws, and communicate effectively.

it long-term. As more states have recognized the legality of same-sex marriage, more gay and lesbian couples have joined together in matrimony (see pages 140–141).29

Like heterosexual (“straight”) couples, same-sex relationships progress through various stages. The first, blending, is a time of intense passion and romantic love. Gradually the couples move through nesting (starting a home together), to building trust and dependability, to merging assets, to establishing a strong sense of partnership.

Because there are no social norms for same-sex unions, researchers describe these relationships as more egalitarian. Each partner tends to be more self-reliant, and homosexual men and women tend to be more willing to communicate and experiment in terms of sexual behaviors.

Gay and lesbian relationships are comparable to straight relationships in many ways. But same-sex couples have to deal with everyday ups-and-downs in a social context of isolation from family, workplace prejudice, and other social barriers. However, gay and lesbian couples are more upbeat in the face of conflict.

Compared to straight couples, they use more affection and humor when they bring up a disagreement and remain more positive after a disagreement. They also display less belligerence, domineering, and fear with each other than straight couples do. When they argue, they are better able to soothe each other so they show fewer signs of physiological arousal, such as an elevated heart rate or sweaty palms, than heterosexual couples.

Marriage

Like everything which is not the involuntary result of fleeting emotion but the creation of time and will, any marriage, happy or unhappy, is infinitely more interesting and significant than any romance, however passionate.

W. H. Auden

Contemporary marriage has been described as an institution that everyone on the outside wants to enter and everyone on the inside wants to leave. The proportion of married people, especially among younger age groups, has been declining for decades. Across North America and many European countries, the age of first marriage has risen, with both men and women waiting an extra three years before saying “I do,” and the rate of first marriages among men has been cut in half.

A generation ago nearly 70 percent of Americans were married; now only about half are (Table 5.3). Yet most young adults view marriage positively, and 95 percent expect to marry in the future—except for young African Americans, who have significantly lower expectations of being wed than their white counterparts, with Hispanics in between.

If you aren’t already married, simply getting a college degree increases your odds of entering into matrimony in the future. According to a recent report, The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families,30 college graduates (who make up 30 percent of the adult population) are far more likely to marry (64 percent) than those without a baccalaureate degree (48 percent). Less well educated Americans are not only less likely to marry; if they do, their unions are more likely to end in divorce.51

The median age for first marriage, which has gone up about a year every decade since the 1960s, has risen to 28.2 years for men and 26.1 years for women. Men in every age bracket through age 34 are more likely to be single than are women. Black men and women are less likely to be married than whites, with Hispanics between the two.52
Preparing for Marriage  Most people say they marry for one far-from-simple reason: love. However, with more than half of all marriages ending in divorce, there’s little doubt that modern marriages aren’t made in heaven. Are some couples doomed to divorce even before they swap vows? Could counseling before a marriage increase its odds of success? According to recent research findings, the answer to both questions is yes.

There have been government attempts to set requirements for couples who want to marry. Some states, such as Arizona and Louisiana, have established “covenant” marriages in which engaged couples are required to get premarital counseling. Utah allows counties to require counseling before issuing marriage licenses to minors and people who have been divorced. Florida requires high school students to take marriage education classes.

Not too long ago, marriage was often a business deal, a contract made by parents for economic or political reasons when the spouses-to-be were still very young. Today, in some countries, it is still culturally acceptable to arrange marriages in this manner. Even in America, certain ethnic groups, such as Asians who have recently immigrated to the United States, plan marriages for their children. In such arrangements, the marriage partners are likely to have similar values and expectations. However, the newlyweds also start out as strangers who may not even know whether they like—let alone love—each other. Sometimes arranged marriages trap both partners in loneliness and longing.

Premarital Assessments  There are scientific ways of predicting marital happiness. Some premarital assessment inventories identify strengths and weaknesses in many aspects of a relationship: realistic expectations, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sex, children, family and friends, egalitarian roles, and religious orientation. Couples who become aware of potential conflicts by means of such inventories may be able to resolve them through professional counseling. In some cases, they may want to reconsider or postpone their wedding.

Other common predictors of marital discord, unhappiness, and separation are:

- A high level of arousal during a discussion.
- Defensive behaviors such as making excuses and denying responsibility for disagreements.
• A wife’s expressions of contempt.
• A husband’s stonewalling [showing no response when a wife expresses her concerns].

By looking at such behaviors, researchers have been able to predict with better than 90 percent accuracy whether a couple will separate within the first few years of marriage.

The Benefits of Marriage Despite its problems, marriage endures because it is a fulfilling way for two people to live. As researchers have proved, saying “I do” can do wonders for your health. Married people are healthier than those who are divorced, widowed, never-married, or living with a partner. They live longer, have lower rates of coronary disease and cancer, are less likely to suffer back pain, headaches, and other common illnesses, and recover faster with a better chance of surviving a serious illness. Three or more marriages and a lower proportion of adult life spent married are each linked with higher mortality after age 50 for both men and women, regardless of their current marital or socioeconomic status.

Married men and women also have lower rates of most mental disorders than single or divorced individuals.

For years researchers thought that marriage was especially beneficial to men. Married men have lower rates of alcohol and drug abuse, depression, and risk-taking behavior than divorced men. They also earn more money—possibly because they have more incentive to do so. However, more recent research indicates that a happy marriage boosts mental health and well-being in both spouses.

Among the theories of why marriage benefits health are:

• Selection: People in better physical and psychological health may be more likely to get married in the first place and to remain married.
• Social support: Marriage may provide people with emotional satisfaction that buffers them against daily life stressors.
• Behavioral regulation: Marriage partners may monitor each other’s behaviors, discourage risky behaviors like smoking, and encourage healthier ones such as driving safely.

Marital status affects both weight and fitness. Fitness declines in men who remain single, but declines even more in those who marry. Fitness increases in women who remain single but not in those who marry. Married men who divorce show a small increase in fitness, but their fitness declines if they remarry. Married men are more likely to be overweight or obese. Three in four married men ages 45 to 64 are overweight or obese. The slimmest groups are men and women who have never married.

Same-Sex Marriage Same-sex marriage, also called gay or single-sex or gender-neutral marriage, refers to a governmentally, socially, or religiously recognized marriage in which two people of the same sex live together as a family. Several countries, including Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain, have legitimized same-sex marriages. Several states now recognize same-sex marriages; others recognize domestic partnerships and civil unions that grant some of the legal and economic benefits of marriage.

Same-sex marriages have triggered intense controversy. Some oppose gay unions on religious grounds, while others feel that same-sex relationships are intrinsically immoral. Current research shows that gay marriage is no more likely to lead to divorce than heterosexual marriage.

Your Strategies for Prevention

Think Twice about Getting Married If . . .

• You or your partner are constantly asking the other such questions as, “Are you sure you love me?”
• You spend most of your time together disagreeing and quarreling.
• You’re both still very young (under the age of 20).
• Your boyfriend or girlfriend has behaviors (such as nonstop talking), traits (such as bossiness), or problems (such as drinking too much) that really bother you and that you’re hoping will change after you’re married.
• Your partner wants you to stop seeing your friends, quit a job you enjoy, or change your life in some other way that diminishes your overall satisfaction.
homosexual parents follow normal patterns of general development and are virtually indistinguishable from other youngsters.\footnote{55}

Issues Couples Confront

No two people can live together in perfect harmony all the time. Some of the issues that crop up in any long-term relationship include expectations, money, sex, and careers.

Money  Money may make the business world go around, but it has the opposite effect on relationships: It knocks them off their tracks, brings them to a halt, twists them upside down. However, even though almost all couples quarrel about money, they rarely fight over how much they have. What matters more—whether they...
make $10,000 or $100,000 a year—is what money means to both partners. How does each person use money to meet emotional needs? Who decides how the money is spent? Who keeps track? Until they resolve these issues, couples may quarrel over money as long as they’re together.

To avoid fighting over money, understand that having different money values or expectations doesn’t make one of you right and the other wrong. Recognize the value of unpaid work. A partner who’s finishing school or taking care of the children is making an important contribution to the family and its future. It also helps to go over your finances together so that you have a firm basis in reality for what you can and can’t afford. Talk about the financial goals you hope to attain five years from now. Set priorities to meet them. Also, set aside money for each of you to spend without asking or answering to the other. Even a small amount can make each partner feel more independent.

**Sex** Like every other aspect of a relationship, sex evolves and changes over the course of marriage. The redhot sexual chemistry of the early stages of intimacy invariably cools down. Even so, the happiest couples have sex more often than unhappily married pairs do.

What matters most isn’t quantity alone, but the quality of sexual activity and intimacy. Are both partners satisfied with their sexual relationship? Does one partner always initiate sex? Do the partners talk about their preferences and pleasures? Sexuality, like personality, is dynamic and changes throughout life. Do the partners acknowledge and adapt to these changes? Do they feel sufficiently at ease with each other to discuss anxieties about sex? The answers to these questions can determine how sexually gratifying a marriage is for both spouses.

**Extramarital Affairs** How faithful are American mates? The answer depends on the questions researchers ask and who they ask. In face-to-face interviews, University of Chicago researchers found that 25 percent of men and 15 percent of women had had affairs and that 94 percent of the married subjects had been monogamous in the last year. Another survey of Americans found that one out of six Americans had had an extramarital relationship—19 percent of the men and 15 percent of the women.26

High or low, numbers are little comfort when affairs do occur. A husband or wife who learns about a spouse’s affair typically feels a devastating sense of betrayal as well as deep feelings of shame, fear of abandonment, depression, and anger. Two crucial questions determine whether a marriage can survive: Do the spouses still feel a serious commitment to each other? And do they love each other and want to remain together?

**Two-Career Couples** More than 75 percent of women with children work—a dramatic increase from the 1960s, when only 30 percent of mothers worked outside the home. Two careers can bring pressure to a relationship: Both individuals may come home tired and irritable; both may have to spend a great deal of time on their jobs; both may have to travel or work on weekends. Two-career couples must be able to discuss their problems openly to resolve these pressures.

Couples pursuing individual careers sometimes face difficult choices. What happens, for example, if one of them is offered a promising job in another city? Does the spouse quit his or her job, pack up, and move? Some couples resolve such dilemmas by working in different cities and spending weekends together. Others try to alternate career and home priorities. However imperfect these arrangements may be, they work for some couples.

**Conflict in Marriage** While all couples may wish to live happily and peacefully ever after, sooner or later, they argue. In a five-year study of newly married couples, about a third (36 percent) sought some form of help for their relationship, most often from books on relationships and marital therapy.27 Years of research have shown that while conflict is inevitable, the key difference between happy and unhappy couples is the way they fight.

Happier couples interject positive interactions, like a joke or a smile, into their arguments. As long as the ratio of positive to negative interactions remains at least five to one, the relationship remains intact. By comparison, unhappy couples unfurl a barrage of negative words, gestures, criticisms, and hostility at their mates with hardly any positive interactions. Based on
observations of couples in conflict, researchers have been able to predict which would divorce with 94 percent accuracy. Both men and women feel the strain of arguing and being angry because of marital difficulties, but wives are more likely to develop high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, and other markers of metabolic syndrome (discussed in Chapter 14). The reason may be that many women take negativity to heart and become depressed.

**Saving Marriages** Fewer than two-thirds of couples—64 percent of husbands and 60 percent of wives—say their marriages are very happy (down from 70 percent of men and 66 percent of women a generation ago.58

According to recent research, happy marriages allow both partners to self-actualize (discussed in Chapter 2) and develop to their fullest potential. Some refer to this mutual benefit as “co-actualization.”59 Others refer to the process of using a relationship to accumulate knowledge and experiences as “self-expansion.” The more self-expansion that people experience from their partner, the more committed and satisfied they are in the relationship.60

Among the other suggestions therapists offer couples are:

- **Focus on friendship.** If a marriage is not built on a strong friendship, it may be difficult to stay connected over time.
- **Remember what you loved and admired in your partner in the first place.** Focusing on these qualities can foster a much more positive attitude toward him or her.
- **Show respect.** Your spouse deserves the same courtesy and civility that your colleagues do. Without respect, love cannot survive.
- **Compliment what your partner does right.** Noticing the positive can change how both of you feel about each other.
- **Forgive one another.** When your partner hurts your feelings but then reaches out, don’t reject his or her attempts to make things better.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of couples go into counseling in an effort to make their unions happier. Among the approaches currently in use are marriage education and various forms of couples therapy.

Marriage education consists of workshops that teach couples practical skills so they get along better. Some studies indicate that graduates of these programs have a lower divorce rate than unhappy couples who do not enroll in them.

Couples therapy, also called marriage counseling or marriage therapy, uses a variety of psychological techniques to help couples understand and overcome their conflicts. These include:

- **Behavioral marital therapy,** which teaches partners to communicate better and to improve their conflict resolution skills.
- **Emotionally focused therapy,** which helps couples identify and break free of destructive emotional cycles.
- **Insight-oriented marital therapy,** which combines behavioral therapy with techniques for understanding negative behaviors, such as power struggles, within the relationship.

**Divorce**

According to the most recent government data, the marriage rate now stands at 6.9 per 1,000 Americans. The divorce rate is almost 50 percent: 3.4 per 1,000 Americans.

Your risk of divorce depends on many factors. Simply having some college education improves your odds of a happy marriage.61 Other factors that do the same are an income higher than $50,000, marrying at age 25 or older, not having a baby during the first seven months after the wedding, coming from an intact family, and having some religious affiliation.

Race also influences marriage and divorce rates. African American couples are more likely to break up than white couples, and black divorcées are less likely to marry again. Researchers have found that African Americans place an equally high value on marriage. However, there is a smaller “marriageable pool” of black men for a variety of reasons, including a higher mortality rate.

Children whose parents divorced are less likely to marry and to stay married. However, their adult relationships aren’t doomed to fail. “Divorce isn’t in the genes,” says child psychologist Judith
Family Ties

Children have become the exception rather than the rule in American households. A century ago most households contained children under age 18. In 1960, slightly fewer than half did. Only about a third of households now include children.

Attitudes also have changed. While many traditionally viewed having children as the primary purpose for getting married, nearly 70 percent of Americans now cite another reason.

Fertility has declined in the United States since 1960. At that time, the average woman had about three and one-half children over the course of her life. Today’s woman has an average of about two children, which is lower than the “replacement level” of 2.1 children per woman. This is the level at which the population would be replaced by births alone. In most European and several Asian countries, fertility has dropped even lower.

Diversity Within Families

Families have become as diverse as the American population and reflect different traditions, beliefs, and values. Within African American families, for instance, traditional gender roles are often reversed, with women serving as head of the household, a kinship bond uniting several households, and a strong religious commitment or orientation. In Chinese American families, both spouses may work and see themselves as breadwinners, but the wife may not have an equal role in decision making. In Hispanic families, wives and mothers are acknowledged and respected as healers and dispensers of wisdom. At the same time, they are expected to defer to their husbands, who see themselves as the strong, protective, dominant head of the family. As time passes and families from different cultures become more integrated into American life, traditional gender roles and decision-making patterns often change, particularly among the youngest family members.

American families are diverse in other ways. Multigenerational families, with children, parents, and grandparents, make up 3.7 percent of households. They occur most often in areas where new immigrants live with relatives, where housing shortages or high costs force families to double up their living arrangements, or where high rates of out-of-wedlock childbearing force unwed mothers to live with their children in their parents’ home.

Three of every ten households consist of blended families, formed when one or both of the partners bring children from a previous union. In the future, social scientists predict, American families will become even more diverse, or pluralistic. But as norms or expectations about the configurations of families have changed, values or ideas about the intents and purposes of families have not. American families of every type still support each other and strive toward values such as commitment and caring.

The traditional family with a breadwinner and a homemaker has been replaced by what some call “the juggler family.” Two working parents or an unmarried working parent head 70 percent of American families with children. As a result, American parents have fewer hours to spend with their children. Women, balancing multiple roles as parents, spouses, caregivers, and employees often give their own personal needs the lowest priority.

Unmarried Parents

“Fragile families,” a term coined by social scientists, refers to those in which the parents are unwed at the time of their child’s birth. The proportion of babies born to unmarried parents has grown from about 4 percent in 1940 to about 40 percent. About seven in ten African American babies and half of Hispanic babies are born out of wedlock. Unmarried African American mothers have the lowest rates of marriage and cohabitation and the highest breakup rates. Mexican immigrant mothers have the highest rates of marriage and cohabitation and the lowest breakup rates.62
Most unmarried parents are in a romantic relationship when their baby is born, with about half cohabiting and the others living apart. The majority are not able to establish stable unions. A third of fathers virtually disappear from their children’s lives within five years.63

The percentage of undergraduates who are unmarried parents nearly doubled over the last 20 years, from 7 percent to just over 13 percent. Overall 8 percent of male undergraduates and 17 percent of female undergraduates are unmarried parents.64

More than a third of African American college women and 15 percent of African American college men are unmarried parents, as are 20 percent of Native American undergraduates, 16 percent of all Latino undergraduates, and 10 percent of whites.65

Fathers as well as mothers often find themselves juggling the needs of their children and the demands of their jobs.
Creating Better Relationships

We are born social. From our first days of life, we reach out to others, struggle to express ourselves, strive to forge connections. The fabric of our lives becomes richer as family and friends weave through it the threads of their experiences. No solitary pleasure can match the gifts that we gain by reaching out and connecting with others.

As with other significant endeavors, good relationships require work—through hard times, despite conflicts, over months and years and decades. As you strive to improve the ties that bind you to others, keep in mind the characteristics of a good relationship. Check the ones that are most important to you.

___ Trust. Partners are able to confide in each other openly, knowing their confidences will be respected.

___ Togetherness. In a healthy relationship, two people create a sense of both intimacy and autonomy. They enjoy each other’s company but also pursue solitary interests.

___ Expressiveness. Partners in healthy relationships say what they feel, need, and desire.

___ Staying power. People in committed relationships keep their bond strong through tough times by proving that they will be there for each other.

___ Security. Because a good relationship is strong enough to absorb conflict and anger, partners know they can express their feelings honestly. They also are willing to risk vulnerability for the sake of becoming closer.

___ Laughter. Humor keeps things in perspective—always crucial in any sort of ongoing relationship or enterprise.

___ Support. Partners in good relationships continually offer each other encouragement, comfort, and acceptance.

___ Physical affection. Sexual desire may fluctuate or diminish over the years, but partners in loving, long-term relationships usually retain some physical connection.

___ Personal growth. In the best relationships, partners are committed to bringing out the best in each other and have the other’s best interests at heart.

___ Respect. Caring partners are aware of each other’s boundaries, need for personal space, and vulnerabilities. They do not take each other or their relationship for granted.

Self Survey

How Strong Are the Communication and Affection in Your Relationship?

Effective, caring communication and loving affection markedly enhance a couple’s relationship. The following self-test may help you to assess the degree of good communication, love, and respect in your intimate relationship. If you agree or mostly agree with a statement, answer yes. If you disagree or mostly disagree, answer no. You may wish to have your partner respond to this assessment as well. If so, mark your answers on a separate sheet.

1. My partner seeks out my opinion. Yes No
2. My partner cares about my feelings. Yes No
3. I don’t feel ignored very often. Yes No
4. We touch each other a lot. Yes No
5. We listen to each other. Yes No

6. We respect each other’s ideas. Yes No
7. We are affectionate toward one another. Yes No
8. I feel my partner takes good care of me. Yes No
9. What I say counts. Yes No
10. I am important in our decisions. Yes No
11. There’s lots of love in our relationship. Yes No
12. We are genuinely interested in one another. Yes No
13. I love spending time with my partner. Yes No
14. We are very good friends. Yes No
15. Even during rough times, we can be empathetic. Yes No

Section I  Building Your Future
16. My partner is considerate of my viewpoint. Yes No
17. My partner finds me physically attractive. Yes No
18. My partner expresses warmth toward me. Yes No
19. I feel included in my partner’s life. Yes No
20. My partner admires me. Yes No

**Scoring:**
A preponderance of yes answers indicates that you enjoy a strong relationship characterized by good communication and loving affection. If you answered yes to fewer than seven items, it is likely that you are not feeling loved and respected and that the communication in your relationship is decidedly lacking.


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**Making Change Happen**

**Listen Up**
The essence of good listening is to seek to understand another person before you seek to be understood. In the process you not only will get an earful but also will learn more than you might imagine. If you would like to take a relationship to another level, see what happens when you listen up. And if you’re shy or feel self-conscious in social settings, expect an added return on your investment. Knowing how to listen can help you—and the people around you—feel at ease. “Listen Up” in Labs for IPC shows you how to “be all ears.” Here’s a preview.

**Get Real**
In this stage, you will replay three conversations you’ve had in the last 24 hours with three different people and answer 11 questions about them, including the following:

- What was the purpose of the conversation? Killing time? Flirting? Trying to get information you needed for a class or assignment?
- What questions did you ask, if any?
- What do you remember?

On the basis of your answers, rate your listening skills on a scale of 1 (you talkin’ to me?) to 10 (competition for Oprah).

**Get Ready**
In this stage, you will check your schedule and make time for listening opportunities.

**Get Going**
In this stage you will embark on a comprehensive program that includes four steps:

- **Enhance basic skills** by engaging in at least one conversation each day in which you focus on specifics such as making eye contact and reading body language.

- **Observe listening styles** in yourself and others as you converse in varied settings.

- **Master interviewing skills.** You will set up situations in which you might pretend you’re a reporter doing a “person-on-the-street” interview or talk with an instructor about some class material that you’re struggling to comprehend.

- **Apply listening skills.** You will seek out real-life encounters—for instance, with a friend seeking advice or with someone you don’t like talking with and usually avoid.

**Lock It In**
To keep your listening muscles in shape, you will consciously practice intensive listening on a daily basis. You might ask a sales clerk how the day is going, and then listen—really listen—to the answer, or ask a classmate about . . .
Review Questions

1. Romantic love
   a. is associated with the depletion of the hormone oxytocin.
   b. is an emotional phenomenon between humans that has its roots in prehistoric times and occurs in almost all cultures.
   c. can only occur between people who share interests and goals.
   d. always results in a committed long-term relationship.

2. Which of the following is most likely a sign of a dysfunctional relationship?
   a. The partners have frequent disagreements about money.
   b. One partner makes all the decisions for the couple and the other partner.
   c. Each partner has a demanding career.
   d. One partner is much older than the other partner.

3. Smart suggestions for online dating include:
   a. Use your office or school computer so that contacts can’t access your personal computer.
   b. Give out only your cell phone number, not your address.
   c. Plan a full-day outing so that you will have plenty of time to get to know each other.
   d. Plan to meet in a busy place, like the local coffeehouse.

4. In friendships and other intimate relationships, which of the following is not true?
   a. Friends can communicate feelings as well as facts.
   b. Listening is just as important as talking.
   c. Emotional investment is required but the rewards are great.
   d. There is no need to pay attention to nonverbal communication.

5. Which of these is an example of self-disclosure?
   a. Steve tells his friend Twana that he would really like to change jobs sometime in the next year.
   b. Mike and Nicole talk about which cars they prefer.
   c. Maria mentions to Carrie that she and her brother don’t get along so he won’t be at the picnic.
   d. Angela lets her boyfriend Paul know that she used to be bulimic.

6. Married people
   a. have sex less frequently than unmarried partners.
   b. are more likely to become alcoholics and drug users.
   c. typically have at least one extramarital affair during their marriage.
   d. live longer than single or divorced individuals.

7. Which of the following scenarios demonstrates what might be considered gender differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles?
   a. While Alyssa and Peter are discussing their vacation plans, Alyssa is gazing at the television and Peter is looking at Alyssa.
   b. Good friends Eva and Julia see each other for the first time after Christmas break and greet each other with a nod and a quick “Hi.”
   c. New bank manager Alejandro tells the staff that they should consider him “the team coach and the keeper of the playbook.”
   d. During an argument, Tony complains to Nicki, “I don’t appreciate your crude jokes and constant swearing.”

8. Which of the following statements is false?
   a. College education increases your chances of a happy marriage.
   b. African American couples are more likely to divorce than white couples.
   c. Children whose parents divorced are more likely to stay married.
   d. The divorce rate is lower now than it was in 1980.

9. Partners in successful marital relationships
   a. are generally from the same social and ethnic background.
   b. usually lived together before marrying.
   c. were usually very young at the time of their marriage.
   d. have premarital agreements.

10. The characteristics of a good relationship include which of the following?
    a. trust
    b. financial stability
    c. identical interests
    d. physical attractiveness

Answers to these questions can be found on page 672.
Critical Thinking
1. While our society has become more tolerant, marriages between people of different religious and racial groups still face special pressures. What issues might arise if a Christian marries a Jew or Muslim? What about the issues facing partners of different races? How could these issues be resolved? What are your own feelings about mixed marriages? Would you date someone of a different religion or race? Why or why not?

2. What are your personal criteria for a successful relationship? Develop a brief list of factors you consider important, and support your choices with examples or experiences from your own life.

Media Menu
Visit www.cengagebrain.com to access course materials and companion resources for this text that will:
• Help you evaluate your knowledge of the material.
• Allow you to prepare for exams with interactive quizzing.
• Use the CengageNOW product to develop a Personalized Learning Plan targeting resources that address areas you should study.

• Coach you through identifying target goals for behavioral change and creating and monitoring your personal change plan throughout the semester using the Behavior Change Planner available in the CengageNOW resource.

Internet Connections
www.goaskalice.columbia.edu
Sponsored by the health education and wellness program of the Columbia University Health Service, this site features educators’ answers to questions on a wide variety of topics, including those related to relationships and marriage and family.

www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/topic.php?id=2
The American Psychological Association provides a wealth of articles and information on sustaining healthy relationships.

www.cyfc.umn.edu
This site offers research, programs, publications, and information on all types of parenting, relationships, and family issues.

Key Terms
The terms listed are used on the page indicated. Definitions of the terms are in the Glossary at the end of the book.

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33. Bradshaw, et al., “To Hook Up or Date.”
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