

THE 15 BUILDING BLOCKS IN A RELATIONSHIP

1. **Accommodation** (adaptation, adjustment, compromise, and concession)
2. **Appreciation** (thankfulness, gratitude, acknowledgment, recognition, regard, and esteem)
3. **Commitment** (engagement, involvement, pledges, vows, bonds, and agreements)
4. **Communication** (imparting thoughts, feelings, ideas, disclosing, sharing, and revealing)
5. **Discord** (expressing anger, frustration, and other negative feelings in non-destructive ways)
6. **Empathy** (vicarious experiencing of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitudes; understanding by putting oneself in another's position)
7. **Expectations** (anticipating, high probabilities, and looking forward to certain things happening)
8. **Forgiveness** (absolution, reconciliation, and contrition)
9. **Honesty** (integrity, honor, and truthfulness; an absence of deceit and fraud)
10. **Kindness** (compassion, tenderness, helpfulness, consideration, and patience)
11. **Predictability** (anticipating in advance with some surety of what to expect and what is going to happen)
12. **Respect** (esteem, being held in high regard and thought highly of; listened to carefully and thoughtfully)
13. **Space** (having the physical and emotional latitude to do things, to be with other people, and to pursue interests alone)
14. **Trustworthiness** (truthfulness, reliability, and dependability; counting on someone and banking on them; believing they've got your back)
15. **Values** (holding ethics, standards, principles, moral codes, and ideologies that are honorable)

ASSESSING THE HEALTH OF A RELATIONSHIP

Directions for Utilizing the Two Assessment Tools

As informative as it may be to list these 15 building blocks, the real value is in *applying* them—that is, in using them to assess the extent to which each is present or lacking in order for a specific relationship to feel healthy and satisfying.

To that end, I have created two tools that assess the impact of each of the 15 building blocks in a given relationship:

1. How I Feel Treated
2. How I Try to Treat the Other Person

DIRECTIONS FOR UTILIZING THE TWO ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Here are directions for utilizing these two tools. (Copies of the tools follow the directions.)

1. **Select a relationship of interest to you.** This may be a relationship from your personal or professional life: one that you think is going well, one that is not going so well, or even a relationship that has ended.
2. **Make a copy of both tools** for the relationship you wish to assess—How I Feel Treated and How I Try to Treat the Other Person.
3. **Decide what period of time to use** for assessing the relationship, e.g., the last few years or the last few months, etc.
4. **Use a rating scale of 1 to 5**, where 1 indicates that the particular building block is “Never” present, 5 indicates that the particular building block is present “All the Time,” and 2, 3, or 4 indicate points in between.
5. **Find the appropriate point** on the scale.
6. **Mark each statement with an arrow** that shows the direction on the scale—either tending to be moving \rightarrow up the scale (improving) or tending to be moving \leftarrow down the scale (declining). If the building block seems stable and not tending to move either up or down, simply put a checkmark \checkmark .
7. **Complete both tools for the relationship you are assessing:** *How I Feel Treated* and *How I Try to Treat the Other Person*.

Example:

Period of time being assessed: June - August 2018 1 = Never 5 = All the Time

	In our relationship, the other person:	1	2	3	4	5
1	ACCOMMODATES me by being willing to compromise and make concessions.			\rightarrow		
2	APPRECIATES me by showing gratitude for and recognition of what I do for him/her.				\leftarrow	

RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOL

15 Building Blocks – How I Feel Treated

Period of time being assessed: _____

1 = Never 5 = All the Time

	In our relationship, the other person:	1	2	3	4	5
1	ACCOMMODATES me by being willing to compromise and make concessions.					
2	APPRECIATES me by showing gratitude for and recognition of what I do for him/her.					
3	Shows COMMITMENT to me by honoring pledges, bonds, vows, and agreements.					
4	COMMUNICATES thoughts, feelings, ideas, and relevant disclosures.					
5	Expresses DISCORD , e.g., anger, conflict, and frustration, in non-destructive ways.					
6	Shows EMPATHY by putting himself/herself in my shoes to understand what I am feeling.					
7	Sets EXPECTATIONS that are shared and practical.					
8	Shows FORGIVENESS with absolution, reconciliation, and contrition.					
9	Demonstrates HONESTY with truthfulness, integrity, and a lack of deceit.					
10	Shows KINDNESS with compassion, tenderness, patience, and consideration.					
11	Provides PREDICTABILITY so I know in advance with some surety what to expect.					
12	Shows RESPECT by making me feel I am held in high regard and with esteem; I am listened to carefully and thoughtfully.					
13	Gives me SPACE so I have the physical and emotional latitude to do things with others or alone.					
14	Demonstrates TRUSTWORTHINESS by always being truthful, reliable, and dependable; has my back.					
15	Acts on VALUES that are ethical, principled, and honorable.					

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RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOL

15 Building Blocks - How I Try to Treat the Other Person

Period of time being assessed: _____

1 = Never 5 = All the Time

	In our relationship, I try to:	1	2	3	4	5
1	ACCOMMODATE him/her by being willing to compromise and make concessions.					
2	Show my APPRECIATION by showing gratitude for and recognition of what he/she does for me.					
3	Show my COMMITMENT to him/her by honoring my pledges, vows, bonds, and agreements.					
4	COMMUNICATE my thoughts, feelings, ideas, and relevant disclosures.					
5	Express DISCORD , e.g., anger, conflict, and frustration in non-destructive ways.					
6	Show EMPATHY by putting myself in his/her shoes to understand what he/she is feeling.					
7	Express EXPECTATIONS that are shared and practical.					
8	Show FORGIVENESS with absolution, reconciliation, and contrition.					
9	Demonstrate HONESTY with truthfulness, integrity, and a lack of deceit.					
10	Show KINDNESS with compassion, tenderness, patience, and consideration.					
11	Provide PREDICTABILITY so he/she can know in advance with some surety what to expect from me.					
12	Show RESPECT by making him/her feel I hold him/her in high regard and with esteem, and by listening carefully and thoughtfully.					
13	Give him/her SPACE so he/she has the physical and emotional latitude to do things with others or alone.					
14	Demonstrate TRUSTWORTHINESS by being truthful, reliable, and dependable, showing I have his/her back.					
15	Act on VALUES that are ethical, principled, and honorable.					

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INTERPRETING THE RESULTS OF THE TWO TOOLS

1. **You may want to combine your responses on one of the tools** by using different initials, e.g., your initials for *How I Try to Treat the Other Person*, and the other person's initials for *How I Think I Am Treated*. Include the arrows showing the tendency to go up or down the scale. This will give you a bird's-eye view, showing how you think you are being treated and how you try to treat the other person for each building block.
2. **To analyze the relationship**, it might be helpful to answer these questions:
 - How important is this building block to me? (Consider putting a star next to the most important ones.)
 - In what ways is this building block a positive part of the relationship?
 - In what ways is it lacking?
 - Am I motivated to try to close the gap?
 - How might I do that?
3. A powerful use of these tools is when the other person in the relationship also completes them and the **responses are shared**. This can help pinpoint specific areas of strength or discrepancy in a relationship where:
 - a. There are significant gaps that may indicate specific areas where one, or both of you, may want to make specific changes.
 - b. There is alignment that may indicate specific areas where one, or both of you, may want to make concerted efforts to continue doing certain things.
 - c. Specific talking points might include:
 - How important is this building block to each of us?
 - In what ways is this building block a positive part of our relationship?
 - In what ways is it lacking?
 - Are either, or both of us, motivated to try to close the gap?
 - How might we do that?
 - In longer-term relationships, are there changes that transpired over time that can be noted with any of the building blocks?

NOTE: In many relationships it might be inappropriate and/or uncomfortable to ask the other person in the relationship to complete the assessment tools. Nevertheless, there is value in completing the assessment tools on your own to see what you can learn about yourself and your participation in a given relationship.

