

# Principles of Smart Relationships

## Overview

This lesson provides practical guidance for making relationship decisions. The first part introduces seven principles for smart relationships. There are smart ways and not-so-smart ways to go about relationships. Activities will provide practice in applying these insights to real-world relationships. The workbook application allows participants to use the seven principles to examine their past and present relationships.

The last part of the lesson helps develop a realistic concept of love based on Robert Sternberg's model. Participants will apply these insights in a group activity, *Love Adviser*.

## Goals

- To analyze smart and not-so-smart relationship attitudes, behaviors, and choices
- To apply the seven principles to assess relationship decisions
- To develop a realistic concept of love

## Lesson at a Glance

- 5.1 **Smart or Not-So-Smart?** (10 minutes)  
Activity: *Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down!*
- 5.2 **Seven Principles of Smart Relationships** (20 minutes)  
Activity: *Identify that Principle*
- 5.3 **Seven Questions to Ask** (5 minutes)  
Activities: *Workbook, What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask; Compatibility Checklist* (optional)

### Trusted Adult Connection

5.4 **Three Sides of Love** (15 minutes)

Activity: *Love Adviser*; Music: *Love Songs*

 **Materials Checklist****Resources:**

- 5a. *Seven Principles of Smart Relationships* handout for Trusted Adult Connection activity (pg. 102) (Duplicate, one per person.)
- 5b. *Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key* (pgs. 103–104)
- 5c. *Compatibility Checklist* worksheet (pg. 105) (Optional: duplicate, one per person.)
- 5d. *Smart/Not-So-Smart* activity cards (class set): (**Locate colored activity cards in back of manual.**) Cut. Duplicate master can be downloaded at [DibbleInstitute.org/LN4](http://DibbleInstitute.org/LN4).

**Materials:**

- Lesson 5 PowerPoint slideshow and all duplicate masters for activity cards are digital downloads that come with the curriculum. Easy-to-follow directions are found at [DibbleInstitute.org/LN4](http://DibbleInstitute.org/LN4).

**Workbook Applications:**

- *What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask* (pgs. 14–16)
- *Real Love—Keeping it Strong* (pgs. 17–18)

 **Preparation**

- ✓ Review the *Smart/Not-So-Smart* colored activity cards (Resource 5d) located in back of the manual. Cut. Feel free to modify, add new ones or delete scenarios as needed. Be sure to use at least two or three scenarios for each principle (see *Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key*, Resource 5b, pgs. 103–104 ) if not all. **Please note:** These cards have been written by diverse youth in everyday language. Most are gender neutral. Some are clearly heterosexual and some clearly same-sex. Hetero- and same-sex youth tend to call partners “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.” Choose or remove the cards based on what you think is best for your participants. Consider soliciting more scenarios as extra credit from your youth to add to your stack.

- ✓ Read the lesson and preview Power Point slides to gain familiarity with the seven principles. Review the *Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key* (Resource 5b, pgs. 103–104) to identify the principles linked to each card. Note, however, that the scenarios described on the cards can apply to more than one principle. The objective of the activity is not to precisely pinpoint a principle (some can apply to more than one), but to offer participants a way to deepen their understanding of all seven principles for healthy relationships through the scenarios.
- ✓ Review the workbook application, *What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask* (pgs. 14–16). Decide if you will have participants answer workbook questions after presenting each principle in Section 5.2, or as directed in Section 5.3.
- ✓ Duplicate *Seven Principles of Smart Relationships* (Resource 5a, pg. 102) handout for Trusted Adult Connection (TAC) activity.
- ✓ Duplicate the *Compatibility Checklist* (Resource 5c, pg. 105, one per person) optional take-home resource.
- ✓ Carefully review the three-sided model of love in Section 5.4 and the workbook application used for the group activity on pgs. 17 to 18, *Real Love—Keeping It Strong* and *Love Adviser*.
- ✓ Arrange for one or two volunteers to play their chosen love song and share which lines say the most to them to conclude the lesson. Consider playing one of your favorite love songs, too. Set up a schedule for student volunteers to bring in their song—perhaps one a session—to listen to.

## SECTION 5.1

# Smart or Not-So-Smart?

- Resource 5d: *Smart/Not-So-Smart* activity cards

10 minutes



**Lesson 5**  
Principles of Smart Relationships

**(PP)** This section uses a fun and lively activity to examine smart and not-so-smart relationships, attitudes, behaviors, and choices. *Smart/Not-So-Smart* activity cards are used during a quiz for the group to determine if the relationship scenario is smart or not-so-smart.

**Note:** These cards have been written by diverse youth in everyday language. Most are gender-neutral. Some are clearly heterosexual and some same-sex. Hetero and same-sex youth tend to call partners “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.” Point this out to youth. Choose or remove as needed, but be sure to cover each principle. Consider soliciting more scenarios as extra credit to add to your stack for the future to keep it real and fresh!

## Activity: Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down!

### Introduce the activity:

- ❖ *Today we’re going to explore some basic principles of smart relationships. Yes, there are smart and not-so-smart relationships.*
- ❖ *These principles can help you know what to pay attention to; what to find out about someone.*
- ❖ *Before we get into those principles, let’s play a game and see if we can all agree on what is smart and not-so-smart when it comes to relationships.*

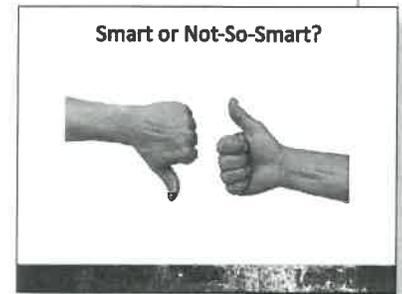
Hold up the colored activity cards (Resource 5d) and announce that each card contains a relationship situation. It might be a behavior, a decision, an attitude, or just the way it is. Give instructions:

- ❖ *I am going to give each of you a card. Stand up, one by one, and read your card out loud so everyone can hear.*

- ❖ *The entire group will vote with either a thumbs up, meaning it's **smart**, or a thumbs down, meaning it's **not-so-smart**. Everyone votes. If there's disagreement, we'll discuss. (PP)*

**Note:** If people disagree, discuss. This activity is an opportunity to open up a very real discussion to deepen awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationships. It's typically fun and lively with laughter and comments. Add reinforcing comments and wisdom as needed. If you know there are literacy issues, state that anyone can opt to have a person next to them read their card out loud. Alternately, the instructor can simply read the cards.

**Ask everyone to hold on to his or her card for the next activity.**



- Resource 5b: *Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key* (pgs. 103-104)

20 minutes

## SECTION 5.2

# Seven Principles of Smart Relationships

### Instruct:

- ❖ *Now I am going to present the seven principles of smart relationships.*
- ❖ *These principles are based on research about what we know makes a good relationship. These principles can guide your current or future relationship decisions.*
- ❖ *After I present each principle, I will pause so you can determine if the card you are holding represents that principle. It can be a smart or a not-so-smart example.*
- ❖ *If you think it matches, raise your hand and then read your card.*
- ❖ **Instructor note:** Just have one or two volunteers read their card after you describe each principle. If the scenario they read actually fits much better for another principle, simply say, "Yes, but it may also apply even more to one of the other principles. Let's see." Then, continue on.

- ❖ The *Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key* (Resource 5b, pgs. 103–104) is a handy resource.

## Activity: Identify that Principle

### Principle #1: Seek a Good Match—Someone with Common Interests (PP)

- ❖ *Research shows that happiest couples often have things in common. They share some interests (not all, of course). A good match means they like some of the same activities, they find each other interesting, have fun, and enjoy doing things together.*
- ❖ *However, it is also true that people are drawn together by their differences, not only because of their similarities. Differences can add to the chemistry between two people.*
- ❖ *If you are choosing smart, you will spend the first weeks and months of a new relationship finding out how compatible you are.*
- ❖ *Some questions to ask yourself: Do you have fun? Do you feel appreciated and admired for the ways in which you are different from each other? Do your differences complement and balance each other? Do you have similar levels of energy and are you matched in intelligence? How similar in age? Ambitions and goals?*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle about compatibility. Please read it.

**Instructor note:** You can either have participants answer the corresponding question for each principle in the workbook (pgs. 14–15) as you pause after each principle is presented or complete after you've presented all seven.

### Principle #2: Pay Attention to Values (PP)

- ❖ *Relationships are likely to be troubled if partners' basic values are out of sync. Your core values are a big part of who you are. If a partner disrespects your values, he or she is disrespecting you.*
- ❖ *Taking the time to think about your own deepest values and beliefs is important. Then talk together about them.*

#### 7 Principles for Smart Relationships

1. Seek a good match.
2. Pay attention to values.
3. Don't try to change a person into someone else.
4. Don't change yourself just to keep someone's love or friendship.
5. Expect good communication; willingness to work at it.
6. Don't play games, be phony, pressure, or use someone.
7. Expect respect. Have standards for how you will be treated.

- ❖ *How similar are your core values and beliefs about ethics, honesty, sense of right and wrong, family, or religion? Do you see eye to eye on issues of drugs, sexual boundaries, and alcohol/drugs? Does your partner share your values?*
- ❖ *If your values are not in sync, this does not bode well for a healthy relationship.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle about values.

### **Principle #3: Don't Try to Change a Person into Someone He or She Is Not (PP)**

- ❖ *Do you genuinely like this person the way they really are?*
- ❖ *Sometimes a person is in love with their idea of what they would like a partner or friend to be—not the actual person he or she really is.*
- ❖ *Sometimes a person believes he or she can change, fix, or save a partner.*
- ❖ *Sometime a person may be blind to who the other person really is because they are desperate for a relationship.*
- ❖ *Don't fool yourself into thinking you can do a make-over on another person. A relationship or friendship in which one person is trying to change the other into someone he or she is not is doomed.*
- ❖ *Of course, it is great to support and encourage someone to make positive changes, especially if he or she is going down a bad path. But they must want to make the change and take responsibility.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle.

### **Principle #4: Don't Change Yourself to Get or Keep Someone's Love (PP)**

- ❖ *Be true to yourself. Don't try to be whatever you think a partner or friend wants. Don't pretend your likes, dislikes, and values are something other than what they really are. You cannot maintain a satisfying relationship or friendship if you are not true to yourself.*
- ❖ *Be the real you and look for people who appreciate you for the person you are. If you find you have to alter yourself considerably to fit in with a partner or friend, you have discovered a danger sign.*
- ❖ *Remember, however, nobody is perfect. We all have flaws and can improve.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle.

**Principle #5: Expect Good Communication (PP)**

- ❖ *If you find you have differences or conflicts in a relationship, talk about these issues. Don't avoid them. Do not remain quiet, thinking it will get better. How you communicate and deal with conflicts now says a lot about the future success and satisfaction you will enjoy in a relationship with someone.*
- ❖ *However, you do not have to make a federal case out of every difference. You will have differences. You won't always see eye to eye. Talking these differences out can be useful and productive. Different points of view add spice and variety to life. Having differences might expand the way you see things.*
- ❖ *Remember, conflict is inevitable in any close relationship. Every family member, friend and couple has disagreements. But the difference between happy and unhappy relationships is how you disagree.*
- ❖ *Some people hit below the belt when they fight. But everyone can learn to fight fairly and not undermine someone.*
- ❖ *Many people silently steam for a long time. Then they explode or unload their complaints all at once. It is better to deal with differences and conflicts as they come along.*
- ❖ *Ask yourself if you can talk openly and honestly and handle disagreements respectfully. Most important, how does this person handle strong emotions such as anger? How do you handle anger? Are there nasty put-downs and the silent treatment?*
- ❖ *The good news on communication is that people can learn skills to help. You'll be learning these skills later in this program.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle about communication.

**Principle #6: Don't Play Games, Pressure, or Use Someone (PP)**

- ❖ *Just as it says, don't play games, be phony, put on a front, or pressure someone. If you are looking for friends or relationships to go the distance, they must be genuine, real, and not fake.*

- ❖ *Don't manipulate or use someone to get what you want. Never pressure someone to have sex. Pressuring someone to do something they do not want to do is just plain wrong.*
- ❖ *In good relationships, both people want to be there and want to support each other and respect each other's values.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle about playing games and pressuring.

### **Principle #7: Expect Respect—Have Standards (PP)**

- ❖ *Have a high standard for how you want to be talked to and treated. Don't ever make excuses or dismiss bad behavior; rather, confront it. Always ask yourself if this is how you want your little sister, brother, or cousin to be treated.*
- ❖ *To have standards means you also must be willing to walk away from a relationship that violates your dignity. You deserve respect and to be treated well.*
- ❖ *You deserve to have your standards and boundaries on things like sex, alcohol, or drugs respected.*
- ❖ *Research shows that those who refuse to tolerate bad behavior from the start tend to have more successful relationships. Anyone can raise his or her standards of what he or she expects, no matter what they accepted in the past. And, any person who has behaved poorly can decide to step up and change their behavior.*

**Pause:** Ask who has a card representing this principle about respect and having standards.

**Special Note:** On Principle #3, point out it is good to encourage a person you care about to make positive change. In fact, most people who have been in trouble or who have gone down a bad path say a big factor in their change was another person who cared enough to encourage them to change. However, it is useful to underscore the old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make the horse drink." The person must want to change and do the work. Also point out that too many females have stayed in abusive relationships believing they were the only one who really understood their partner. This is dangerous for her and for her child (if she is a parent).

## A Special Word to Young Parents

- ❖ *If you are a parent, it is especially important to have tools to examine your relationships. The quality and stability of your relationship will affect not just you, but also your child.*
- ❖ *These seven principles you are learning today can provide a guide to help you know what areas need work to make the relationship all it can be. These principles may also help a person know what to look for when forming a new relationship.*

### SECTION 5.3

## Seven Questions to Ask

**(PP)** Ask the group to turn to *What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask* in the workbook (pgs. 14–16). Announce this questionnaire is based on the seven principles and is valuable whether they are in a relationship or not at this time. This can be done in conjunction with the presentation above or now. If you are short on time, they can start it in session and do the rest as homework. Offer these instructions:

- ❖ *If you are in a relationship right now, use the questions as a way to examine the relationship.*
  - *The answers to these seven questions may help you identify what one or both of you need to work on and improve if you are going to have a positive future.*
  - *In addition, if you are having doubts about your relationship, your answers may help you know if the relationship is worth it or not.*
- ❖ *These questions are also useful for examining a past relationship. They may really help you understand why it did not work.*

- Resource 5a: *Seven Principles of Smart Relationships* (pg. 102)
- Resource 5c: *Compatibility Checklist*, optional take-home (pg. 105)
- Workbook: *What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask* (pgs. 14–16)

5 minutes

#### What Makes a Great Relationship? Seven Questions to Ask



Workbook p. 14-16

- ❖ You can also examine a relationship of someone you know well or a close friendship of yours.
- ❖ You can use these principles to guide you in the future. These principles can help you know what to look for and find out when you are attracted to someone or starting a relationship.

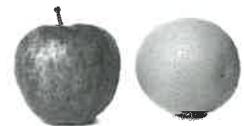
## Trusted Adult Connection

**(PP)** Pass out the *Seven Principles of Smart Relationships* handout (Resource 5a, pg. 102). Have them ask their trusted adult which principles they think are most important and why. Then have them ask their trusted adult if there is a principle that would have been especially useful for them to have known when they were a teenager and to explain why.

## Optional: Compatibility Checklist

**(PP)** Distribute the *Compatibility Checklist* (Resource 5c, pg. 105) and announce this list can help people explore compatibility. Suggest they do this as a self-quiz on their own. Ask them to think about the question on the bottom of the sheet and how incompatibility on some of these areas might cause problems in a relationship.

How Compatible Are We?



- Workbook: *Real Love—Keeping It Strong* (pgs. 17–18)

15 minutes

## SECTION 5.4

# Three Sides of Love

This section aims to help participants construct a more realistic concept of love. A brief presentation adapted from Robert Sternberg's three-sided model of love is followed by a group workbook exercise that asks them to become a love adviser to a young couple.

**Introduce the topic with these questions:**

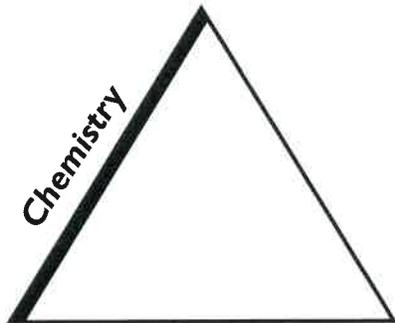
- ❖ *How would you define love? Does everyone mean the same thing when they use that word?*
- ❖ *It's easy to say "I love you." But what does it really mean?*

**(PP)** Announce that they will consider a model that represents a fuller and more realistic concept of love.<sup>2</sup>

State that some psychologists who write about and study love, like Robert Sternberg, describe real love as having three dimensions; no one idea encompasses all sides of love.<sup>3</sup>

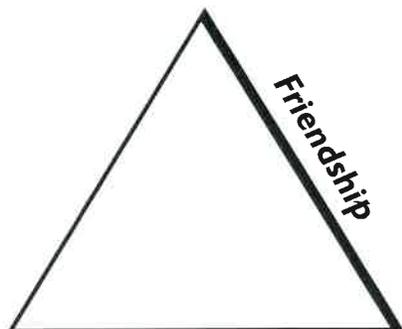


Draw one side of a triangle on board or flip chart. Bold one side of triangle with a marker and label it "**Chemistry.**"



- ❖ *Chemistry is the attraction. You meet someone and a spark is struck. It's those exciting and wonderful feelings that draw two people together and create a desire for physical affection. Shake the glitter bottle used in Lesson 4.*
- ❖ *Chemistry is important. It's part of love. But real love is much more than chemistry.*

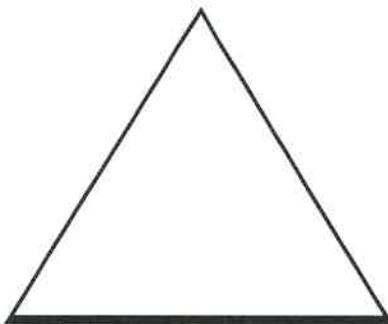
- ❖ *While chemistry may get love going, real love needs more.*



Next, bold another side of the triangle with a different color marker and label it "**Friendship.**"

- ❖ *True love requires friendship. And building a friendship takes time.*
- ❖ *You travel down a road of mutual discovery as you learn about each other's interests, character, maturity, backgrounds, and aspirations.*

- ❖ *It takes seeing and experiencing each other in many different settings — not just alone with you.*
- ❖ *You enjoy being together and communicating.*
- ❖ *Friendship is about getting to really know each other deeply; appreciating each other's qualities, even as you discover you both have flaws.*
- ❖ *True friendship is being able to share thoughts and feelings freely and honestly. You can talk about anything. You enjoy being together. You have fun together.*
- ❖ *Only through building this friendship can you discover if the other person is worthy of your love.*
- ❖ *Without a deep friendship, the connection is just surface-level.*



**Trust & Commitment**

Finally, bold the last side of the triangle with a different color marker and label it "**Trust and Commitment.**"

- ❖ *This part of love means you are able to truly trust someone with knowing everything about you. True love deepens as you come to know each other more and more and you judge that the other is worthy of your love and returns your love.*

- ❖ *Love is a decision — a decision to commit, to be there for each other, today, tomorrow, and in the future.*
- ❖ *Commitment means to be faithful. It means caring about a partner's wellbeing and needs.*
- ❖ *It's about healthy and mutual giving. It's about encouraging and supporting each other, wanting the best for each other.*

### **Conclude the presentation with these points:**

- ❖ *Would you agree that chemistry is how it begins, followed by friendship, and then in some cases, by trust and commitment? Listen to responses before adding:*
  - *That is often the way it happens; but sometimes people become friends first, and then at some point the spark, the switch, occurs.*

❖ Here's another question: Do you think chemistry is bound to fade as friendship and commitment develop? Are those wonderful feelings of chemistry just destined to fade in a serious relationship or marriage over time? Listen to responses before adding:

- The answer is yes, that can happen; but it doesn't need to. One of the secrets to happy, long-term relationships is to be intentional and not go on "cruise control" with a partner.
- Just like the coals of a fire must be stroked to keep it burning, so does the chemistry side of love. (Shake the glitter bottle to demonstrate.)

**Point out some important things we know about love and how to keep it alive:**

1. *Sometimes ill-fated relationships are built on an imbalanced triangle. One side is missing or weak from the very start. Here's an example of one: (PP)*

❖ *Tomas and Maria met when they were 19 and fell in love. They couldn't bear to be apart. Within three months, they moved in together. A year later, they discovered they were not really compatible. They have different values and priorities in life. They don't communicate well. In fact, they argue all the time. They have few common interests. It is not the relationship either of them imagined. Nevertheless, they have become dependent upon one another, especially financially. Even though they both have serious doubts about the relationship, they stay together because it is just not that easy to up and leave. And now Maria worries she is pregnant.*

❖ *Ask: What side of the love triangle was this couple missing from the start? Pause for their response. They certainly had **chemistry** and they jumped right in to **commitment**. But did they really have a **friendship**? Did they have much deep knowledge of each other?*

2. *In any successful marriage or serious, mature relationship, all three sides must be nurtured. But it is awfully easy to neglect one or more sides. (PP)*

❖ *For example, as time goes by, a couple may stop connecting and talking to each other as friends. All of their talk tends to be about work, chores, money, or kids. They can lose touch with each other's inner lives—their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.*

- ❖ *They may stop making time for romance. They might get lazy and stop planning fun dates and there is less physical affection.*
- ❖ *They might become selfish and only think about their own needs. Or, they might cheat on their partner.*
- ❖ *The challenge of love is to pay attention to all three sides.*

**Point out that** couples in smart relationships or marriages, with a realistic concept of love, will strive to cultivate each side. They won't forget to be physically affectionate on a regular basis. They won't forget to talk as friends, stay current with the details and emotions of each other's lives, go on dates, and have fun. They will be faithful to each other and engage in healthy giving to each other. Keeping love alive takes intentional efforts. (Shake the glitter bottle.)

## Activity: Love Adviser

**(PP)** Ask participants to form small groups and open up to workbook application, *Real Love—Keeping it Strong* (pgs. 17–18). Read the text and turn to the next page titled *Love Adviser*. Read aloud the four short paragraphs and directions under *Love Adviser* about the young couple seeking advice.

**Brainstorm ideas to keep love alive on all three sides.**



Workbook p. 17-18

State that their job is to brainstorm a list of ideas for what this couple can do to keep each of the three sides of love strong. Instruct them to pool their ideas and jot them down in the workbook according to chemistry, friendship, and commitment. Allow the groups about four to five minutes. When they are done, process the activity by asking each group what they came up with for each side.

Conclude by emphasizing that when couples tend to all three sides of love, it helps keep their relationships healthy, happy, and satisfying. Point out that relationships don't just stay good by magic or luck. Love takes intentional effort to stay alive.

**Note:** Alternately, this can be assigned as homework; but do make time for them to share their ideas.

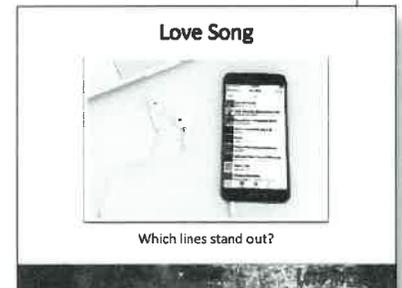
## Love Songs

**(PP)** *In Lesson 4, we asked you to find a song that expresses real love and identify the lines that said the most to you about what real love is.*

*Let's play one of those songs.*

**Instructor's note:** You should be able to access the songs on YouTube if you have internet. Find the clean version, if possible. If you have a speaker jack, you can just play off the teen's phone.

After playing, ask the volunteer to say which refrain or line says the most. Invite the class to add. Depending on how many songs you play, you do not need to play the entire song to get the main message.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Adapted and used with permission by Les and Leslie Parrott, *Relationships*. 1998. (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI)
- <sup>2</sup> The model presented here draws on Robert Sternberg's three-sided triangle of love. Sternberg labels them passion, intimacy, and commitment. This presentation, adapted for youth, uses the words chemistry, friendship, and trust/commitment.
- <sup>3</sup> Sternberg is a psychologist who has written extensively about love. Sternberg, R.J. (1986) "A Triangular Theory of Love," *Psychological Review*, 93, 119-135; and Sternberg, R.J. (1998). *Cupid's Arrow: The Course of Love Through Time*. Cambridge University Press: New York.

## Seven Principles of Smart Relationships

1. **Seek a good match. Look for common interests:** Do you have some similar interests? What activities do you enjoy together? Do you have similar attitudes about life, priorities, and future goals? Do you enjoy talking together? Do you find each other interesting? Are you roughly matched in energy levels? Do your differences work together?
2. **Pay attention to values:** Are the values and beliefs you hold most dearly shared or respected by your partner? Consider religious, spiritual, political, and moral values. Do you see eye to eye on your sexual values, family values, childrearing? What about alcohol, drugs?
3. **Don't try to change a person into someone he or she is not:** If you go into a relationship thinking you can change the person into the type of person you desire, you will be disappointed. Do not be so desperate to be in a relationship that you fool yourself about who this person really is. Support others in making positive changes, but do not think you can do it for them. Ask yourself if you genuinely like his or her personality and character.
4. **Don't change yourself just to get or keep someone's love:** Be true to yourself. Don't try to pretend or become what you think the other person wants. Be the real you and look for people who appreciate you. Remember, nobody is perfect. Recognize and build upon your strengths. Work to make the changes that you have identified.
5. **Expect good communication and do not run from conflict:** Explore your differences and pay attention to how you both deal with conflicts. Evaluate how well you communicate and handle anger. Are you both willing to learn and improve communication skills if necessary? How you communicate and handle conflicts says a lot about your future happiness in this relationship.
6. **Don't play games, pressure, or use someone:** Do not manipulate, pressure, or use a power advantage to get someone to do something. A worthy and equal relationship is not one based on games, pretenses, manipulations, or pressure. If someone pressures you for sex, it's not a sign of respect or a healthy relationship.
7. **Expect respect—have standards:** Have a standard for how you will be spoken to and treated. Expect respect. Do not tolerate disrespectful or abusive behavior! No relationship is better than a destructive relationship where you are forced to compromise your dignity. Remember, it not only hurts you, but it can hurt your child (now or a future child).

**Trusted Adult:** Discuss which ones you feel are most important. Identify one principle from the list that would have been useful to you when you were a teenager. Explain.

SIGNATURE:.....

## Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key

### Principle 1: Seek a Good Match—Someone with Common Interests

We are working hard on our high school equivalencies and both of us plan to continue at the community college. With work and the baby, we don't have much free time. Luckily, my sister watches the baby on Sunday nights so we can play volleyball, something we both like.

We both look on the bright side of life and try to see the good in people.

I am active and on the go. I've got drive to better myself. I like to try new things and my partner never seems to want to do anything. But, my partner is hot and I like being seen together.

I like being outdoors and active. I like fishing, hiking and camping. My partner also likes the outdoors. We enjoy introducing each other to new things.

We're committed to social justice and change and are both involved in community projects. We admire that in each other—it's part of our attraction to each other.

### Principle 3: Don't Try to Change a Person into Someone He/She Is Not

I'm happy with our level of physical intimacy and not ready to go any further. My partner keeps pressuring me and tells me I'm just wierd. Maybe I should just get over it and have sex.

My boyfriend stays up late playing video games and misses school a lot. I cover for him and do some of his assignments. I kept thinking I could change him, but it's over. He's got to want to and do the work himself.

I'm politically active, but my partner is not political whatsoever. I could never have a relationship with someone who wasn't involved. I'll change him.

My girl has a drinking problem, but if she is with me I know I can make her stop.

I want my new girlfriend to get intimate. She says she wants to pace it slowly. I keep telling her over and over it's no big deal, we're lesbians. It's not like we can get pregnant. What's with her!

### Principle 2: Pay Attention to Values

She has lied too many times. I can't trust her not to cheat. I value faithfulness. I've had it. Either she changes her ways or I'm ending it.

My religious beliefs are very important to me. My partner isn't very religious and mocks my beliefs.

I value responsibility, but my partner seems to live from moment to moment without thinking about how their actions hurt and affect others.

I don't do drugs or drink—I've seen it mess up too many people in my family. My partner respects my values on this. Even though there are lots of opportunities, we support each other in avoiding it.

I want to go to a parenting workshop. I really want to do better than my parents. My partner says it's bull and I'm wasting my time.

### Principle 4: Don't Change Yourself to Get or Keep Someone's Love

I broke up with her. It just never felt right. I always had to pretend I was someone I'm not. I am not going to change who I am just to keep her attention.

I don't have to be perfect. Sure, there are things that I want to improve about myself. But basically, I want a person who loves me for who I really am.

When my partner gets angry and explodes, I always ask myself, "What did I do wrong? What can I change about myself?" I keep trying to make things right for him. I really love him.

There are things I want to improve about myself, but I know my partner loves me for who I am. My partner supports me in making positive changes, like going to class so I graduate.

I know he'd like me to hang out with his friends, but I just don't feel comfortable. I have to pretend I'm someone I'm not when I'm around them. It doesn't feel right. I don't think this relationship is going to work.

## Smart/Not-So-Smart Instructor Key

### Principle 5: Expect Good Communication

My partner belittles me and makes me doubt myself. I let her make all the decisions.

My partner gives me the silent treatment whenever I do something they don't like.

It's impossible not to have disagreements and arguments with someone you love. That's life. What's important is how you handle them and controlling your temper.

We disagree about practically everything, but I think with time and love, everything will be all right. I just try to change the subject and avoid certain topics.

He's always right and I'm always wrong. I think it's just better to keep my mouth shut, especially when he starts shouting and raising his fist. If I don't say anything, it will blow over. I just hope things will get better with time.

My boyfriend used to do all the talking, interrupting me and making me feel little. I told him it wasn't okay and we needed to work on communication. I want a good relationship, like my uncle and his partner Eric.

### Principle 6: Don't Play Games, Pressure, or Use Someone

I know I can make my boyfriend jealous and I know I'm better than that so he's been hanging with. If she thinks she can get my man, she's got another thing coming. I'll whoop both their asses!

My partner keeps pressuring me to move in. I'm not doing that until I'm older and I'm with someone and we both want to commit to a future together. Why waste time with someone who is not on the same page with me?

He makes good money and buys me things, but I don't love him and I can't even stand being intimate. I pretend because I like the things he gives me.

He keeps saying, "I want you to have my baby." Hey, I've got my hands full with my 14-month-old. If he doesn't stop the pressure, it's over.

My partner...she's okay for now. I know she's got much stronger feelings than me. I'll stay with her until I find someone better.

I have a baby. The father and I have no real connection, and besides, I've come out. My girlfriend is pressuring me to get sexually involved. I need time to sort out my life—so much has happened. I made it clear that I'm not ready to take it to that level. I'm not going to be pressured.

### Principle 7: Expect Respect—Have Standards

He tells me to stop hassling him about staying out late on weekends without me. I better stop or I might lose him.

He used to talk vulgar and cuss. I told him to stop talking that way... I felt disrespected... that I would not put up with it. He took me seriously and now he doesn't talk that way around me anymore.

Everyone cheats—you just have to accept it.

When we're in public or around his friends, he treats me like I'm nothing. The only time he is really kind and considerate is when he wants sex. I'm not going to be his or anybody's booty call. I deserve better. I'm breaking up with him.

My partner told me to shut up and then shoved me hard. I was mad, but later in private he said he was sorry. He's had a rough background that causes him to act that way. I know he really loves me.

I hit my girl up pretty bad. I apologized later. I was sorry I did it. But hey, she should know not to push me. She knows I got a temper.

For me, I've got to have honesty. If I had a partner who lied about drugs or cheated on me, then there's no trust. What's the point of continuing a relationship? You've got to know when to walk away.

My girl loses her temper fast and has slapped me when she's mad. I guess since she's smaller than me and can't really hurt me, it's no big deal.

My girlfriend loses her temper fast and has slapped me when she's mad. I stayed because I didn't think lesbian relationships could be this way.

## Compatibility Checklist

Check the items below that you have (had) in common with a partner.

- Age
- Family background/upbringing
- Interests, activities, and involvements
- Education and work goals
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Preferences in music and entertainment
- Religious or spiritual beliefs
- Social life/friends
- Philosophy on how to raise children
- Goals for life in next five to ten years
- Optimism and energy level
- Self-discipline and self-control
- Dependability and responsibility
- Political, moral, and ethical views
- Sense of humor
- Ability to communicate
- Ability to manage conflict
- Management of anger
- Expression of emotions
- Confidence
- Role expectations for males and females
- Money/finances attitudes and responsibility

**How might incompatibility in any one of these areas cause problems in a relationship?**

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