

Healthy vs unhealthy online interactions


Navigating the world of online connections can sometimes feel a bit like learning a new language. Because we often miss out on facial expressions or the tone of someone's voice, it is perfectly natural that some people may find it difficult to differentiate between a relationship that is genuinely supportive and one that might be becoming problematic. Understanding these nuances is a wonderful way to ensure your time online remains a source of joy and connection.


- **Healthy Interactions:** A healthy online relationship is built on a foundation of mutual respect, honesty, and kindness. It is a connection where you feel safe to be yourself, where your privacy is respected, and where you never feel pressured to do or say anything that makes you uncomfortable.
- **Unhealthy Interactions:** An unhealthy interaction often feels one-sided, controlling, or unpredictable. It occurs when someone uses digital tools to manipulate, pressure, or upset you. These relationships can leave you feeling anxious, drained, or as though you are "walking on eggshells" whenever you are logged in.

Spotting the difference


To help you reflect on your own online experiences, here are five examples of each:


Healthy signs

 **Respecting "No":** They accept it gracefully when you say you are too busy to chat or don't want to share a certain detail.

 **Supporting Your Privacy:** They don't ask for your passwords or

Unhealthy signs


 **Constant Monitoring:** They demand to know who else you are talking to or get upset if you don't reply to a message immediately.


 **Pressure and Coercion:** They try to talk you into doing things you've said

pressure you to share sensitive personal information.


 **Encouraging Real-Life Balance:**


They understand that you have a life outside the internet and don't get angry when you are away from your screen.


 **Kind Communication:** Even if you disagree, the conversation remains polite and constructive.

 **Equality:** You both share the "space" in the conversation, and your opinions are valued just as much as theirs.

no to, perhaps by making you feel guilty or "unfun."

 **Emotional Volatility:** They may be incredibly kind one moment and then turn cold or angry the next to keep you off balance.

 **Isolation:** They try to turn you against your friends or family, perhaps by suggesting that your loved ones "don't understand you like I do."

 **Unwanted Requests:** They persistently ask for photos, financial help, or private details despite your clear discomfort.

Reaching Out for Support

If you ever feel that an interaction is becoming unhealthy, or if you are simply struggling to work out whether a relationship is right for you, please remember that you do not have to figure it out alone.

It is always a good idea to talk to a trusted friend, a family member, or a professional. Sometimes, simply describing a conversation to another person can provide the clarity you need to see things as they truly are. There is great strength in seeking a second opinion, and your peace of mind is always worth protecting.