



INTIMACY

If You Love Yourself, It Works

Intimacy is a state of closeness with another human being. Our capacity for intimacy determines our ability to participate in a mutually fulfilling, satisfying relationship. Some people, however, are afraid to get too close to anyone else. They fear that, if they open up, they'll be vulnerable to pain.

There are some risks. Yet people who are able to achieve intimacy feel that a close relationship is worth the risk of getting hurt now and then. They can handle the risk because they tend to have high self-esteem, a sense of independence and a healthy respect for others.

Self-Esteem

Those who succeed in intimate relationships usually start out with a high level of self-esteem. While they cherish the closeness, they already feel complete before they enter the relationship. They are not looking for someone to make them feel whole. They also understand that they have value, whether they are in or out of a relationship. The relationship may enhance the way they feel about themselves, but they already accept themselves as

individuals. They are also able to accept the partner's individuality and enhance that person's self-esteem.

Independence

People who are successful with intimacy understand the difference between that state and one of mutual dependency. While there is some mutual dependency in every relationship, those who rely on someone else all of the time are unable to see that there are two unique people in each relationship: oneself and the other person. Mutually dependent people are able to see themselves only as each is reflected by the other.

Respect

People who succeed in intimate relationships understand that intimacy flourishes in an atmosphere of respect. Respectful partners accept each other's individuality, but they also carry it a step further. Neither tries to *change* the other. Discovering what makes one's partner unique can be one of the prime rewards of an intimate relationship.

