

Examining Relationships¹

Consider using this journaling exercise as a way to assess of your relationships and remind yourself of most nurturing and challenging in these relationships.

Think about all the different kinds of relationships you have at work, home/family, friends, community, etc. Draw two circles one inside the other. Choose one category of relationships (i.e., home/family) and in the inner circle, write names of people with whom you have primary relationships. In the outer circle, write the names of those who are important but that you do not consider primary. Do this honestly and intuitively – remember, it is only for you. Try also not to judge the process as you do it. For example, there may be only 1 person in the primary circle or there may be 10. Just record your reality, avoid assessing it for now. When finished, journal for at least five minutes on each of the following questions – writing whatever comes to mind. What, if anything, surprises you about the names you wrote down?

- What are your expectations of those relationships? Are these voiced and known to this person(s)? How?

Put a star next to the people who fuel your spirit, or give you the most energy, the people you genuinely love to be with.

- How do you nurture these relationships?
- Do you take time to be deliberate about nurturing them?

Underline the people you spend the most time with.

- Are they mostly family members, coworkers, friends, others?

Circle the people you'd like to spend *more* time with.

- What keeps this from happening? How could you change this?

Draw a line through the people you'd like to spend *less* time with.

- Why? What is hard about these relationships? What do you learn from them?

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Place a tick mark next to those people who you feel respect and encourage your own power.

Describe how this enriches your life and this relationship.

Place an x next to those people who you feel use their power over you.

How do or could you keep yourself safe (physically, emotionally, sexually) in these relationships?

Look at the different circle diagrams, are there people that are in several of the diagrams, meaning there is much cross over in different areas of your life? What effect do these overlaps have on your relationships?

Generally, do you feel satisfied and fulfilled by the relationships in your life right now? If yes, how can you continue to nurture these relationships? If not, how could you strengthen your existing relationships? Develop new relationships with new people?

¹ Adapted from Horwitz, C. (2002) *The Spiritual Activist: Practices to transform your life, your work, and your world*. New York: Penguin Press