

**Preface from the author (Bryce Kaye)** – The following principles should not be standards for expecting perfection in your relationship. We are fallible human beings. We all regress and behave irresponsibly at times. The key is whether a partner is willing to swallow his/her pride, be held accountable to the truth about his/her violation and then plan for more responsible behavior. It is often said by the the best authors in the field: “The magic is in the repair.” Repair doesn't mean mere apology. It means actively planning for more responsible behavior. Responsible to what? I would submit that it's to the following principles.

## **Principles for Promoting Relationship Welfare**

The following principles or transcendent values often compete against hedonic values such as pride, appearance, comfort and pleasure. While the latter are pleasurable condiments in safe circumstances they will damage a relationship when they conflict with and eclipse the following principles.

**Inviolacy** – Personal boundaries are protected against the urge for physical or emotional violence. There's a restraint from hitting, blocking, undesired grabbing, mocking, sarcasm, or other emotional manipulations that are designed to shame the other.

**Respect** – Preferences and beliefs are not imposed on others. Respect is an appreciation of people's differences. One's own perspective is not divine and should not set rules on others. There's also a valuing of other people's choices that are different and may be at odds with one's own.

**Honesty** – Both internal and external truths are held in high regard and are not misrepresented. External truths pertain to the external world (e.g. JFK got shot, Armstrong walked on the moon). Internal truths pertain to personal experience (e.g. a person prefers a certain color or a partner is afraid that if he/she asks for what he/she really wants that his/her partner will painfully disappoint him/her). Honesty doesn't mean that a partner must disclose. It would be honest if a partner declares “I'm going to keep this private and I don't want to talk with you about it just now.”

**Fidelity** – Agreements (contracts) are faithfully kept. The person has a sense of honor in being consistent and fulfilling responsibilities. When he/she forgets to fulfill an obligation he/she follows due-diligence to repair and plan for corrections.

**Equity** - Intimate partners are viewed as being equally deserving of benefits from the relationship. This principle of equality also extends to equalizing sacrifice. Division of labor, equalizing of leisure time, turn-taking in choices for fun may also be managed with the principle that one partner doesn't deserve more than another.

**Accountability** - This principle involves the valuing of objective truth about one's actions. A person who is willing to be accountable is willing to have his/her behavior measured against objective evidence that he/she is being responsible. Making available phone records, bank statements or even expert consultations are all examples of applied accountability. One's ego and secrecy don't rule.

**Fostering Closeness** – In order to maintain affection and love, you need to keep reinforcing it with a certain kind of experience. It's the feeling of being “close” in the here and now.” This is not done when you and your partner engage in tasks and responsibilities. Affection and “closeness” are reinforced when you listen intently to each others' thoughts and feelings. It's also reinforced when you both voluntarily share touch.

**Creative Contribution** – In an intimate relationship, there's a responsibility to both nurture closeness and contribute meaning. It doesn't work if one partner merely depends on the other partner's authority. Being close doesn't enrich a relationship if a partner only shares his/her dependence. It's not enough to be a rule follower and only comply with what's expected. There's a responsibility to think up new ideas of what to share together. This reinforces respect and attraction to each other.

**Self Maintenance** – Your relationship depends on two people maintaining their separate identities and their own separate integrity. This sometimes requires servicing a separate interest that's too important to the person to ignore or sacrifice. Not all needs are joint. It's a responsibility to maintain your own separate identity by maintaining and expressing your own separate interests. Of course this is true as long as other principles are not being violated at the same time. If you don't maintain your separate identity then you will lose attraction and affection for your partner.

**Dynamic Balancing** - This principle means that a relationship is like an organic being. Its needs are constantly changing and will require different servicing at different times. At one time it's important to do business, to engage in methodical conflict and to allow emotional separation. At another time it's important to share leisurely relaxation and connection. At one time one partner make take care of the other. At another time the other partner becomes the care-taker. Both partners

have a responsibility to monitor both their own and each others' states to determine what's needed for the relationship's  
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