

# Five Good Things?

## Growing in Connection with Others



A healthy and growth-fostering relationship enables both people to grow towards connection, not separation. Growth-fostering relationships empower all people in them. There are five good things that can describe the outcomes of growth-fostering relationships:

### 5 Good Things Needed in All Relationships:

1. A sense of zest or well-being that comes from connecting with another person or other persons.
2. The ability and motivation to take action in the relationship as well as other situations.
3. Increased knowledge of oneself and the other person(s).
4. An increased sense of worth.
5. A desire for more connections beyond the particular one.

These ideas suggest that all growth occurs in connection, that all people yearn for connection, and that growth-fostering relationships are created through mutual empathy and mutual empowerment.

### About Disconnection

Disconnection is an inevitable part of being in relationship (caused by empathic failures, relational violations, injuries, etc.). Feeling disconnected can have an impact on the way we feel about ourselves and interact with those around us. When we are able to represent our feelings and have them heard and responded to, this experience of disconnection can actually lead towards a strengthened relationship. However, when we are unable to represent ourselves or our feelings in a relationship, or when we receive a response of indifference, we can sometimes feel it is safer to begin to keep aspects of ourselves out of the relationship in order to keep the relationship. In these situations, we will sometimes use a variety of strategies to twist ourselves to fit into the relationship, and in the process become less and less authentic.

Feeling and being disconnected in a relationship is the pathway that leads to failures in growth-fostering relationships, accompanied by diminished zest, empowerment, clarity, worth, and desire for connection. Within this context, one's natural yearning for connection becomes a signal of danger; the individual comes to dread the vulnerability necessary to fully engage in growth-fostering relationships.

Feeling disconnected can sometimes lead to unhealthy behaviors: promiscuity, over/under eating, over/under sleeping, excessive use of alcohol and/or other drugs, self-harming behaviors, etc.

There are many resources available at UNH if you are struggling with a relationship, feeling disconnected and/or engaging in unhealthy behaviors. The good news is that many of these resources are available to you at no cost while you are a student at UNH!



### Resources at University of New Hampshire

The following offices offer counseling, education and support to the University Community. Please visit their Web sites for more information:

Office of Health Education and Promotion, Health Services  
(603) 862-3823 | [www.unh.edu/health-services](http://www.unh.edu/health-services)

Counseling Center  
(603) 862-2090 | <http://www.unhcc.unh.edu/>

Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP)  
(603) 862-SAFE | <http://www.unh.edu/sharpp/>