

**H**ealthy dependence is a mutuality in which I depend on you and you depend on me. I am reliable for you, and you're reliable for me. We depend on each other wisely and appropriately—*not* irresponsibly.

In a healthy dependence, we learn how to make use of each other, how to serve each other, and how to be served by each other. You learn what your partner's strengths are, and they learn *yours*. You *use* their strengths, and that validates them, strengthens them, and brings out the best in them. Healthy mutual dependence strengthens everyone involved, because when someone needs us, we have *reason* to be strong and good and responsible. *And* when someone nurtures us and takes care of us, we draw strength from that, too.

Healthy dependence is a *wonderful* experience. The happiness of togetherness, the strength that comes from it—the wind in our sails, the lightness of step and fullness of heart. And of course, we've all experienced the superior effectiveness of teamwork, when many hands make light the work. Emotionally and practically, life works better when we're in it together.

**We bring out the best in each other.** Only in the context of trust and mutual love will we share our most beautiful, personal, and touching qualities. We need people to inspire us, desire us, need us, make demands on



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us, bring out the best in us, or *most* of who we are will not be expressed.

A mother is tender, soft, compassionate—but without her child, that sweetness would not have come out. A friend gets to be loyal and constant because their friend needs that. The heart is full of passion, but without someone to invite you, ignite you, excite you, your wonderful feelingness remains unexpressed, unexplored, and unknown.

**We have good reason to be dependable.** The truth is, we find our homes in one another. We depend on each other's feeding and care; we depend on love, on relationship. We sometimes *want* to think of ourselves as unaffected, but if our relationship is going poorly, we are *endlessly* bothered; and if our lover or spouse doesn't give us enough love, we're unhappy. We can't help it. In contrast, when our relationship is flourishing, we're happy, strong, full of energy.

We all need the nurturance of being loved, and the happiness of loving. But the *only* way to have love reliably is to *be* reliable for others, otherwise they won't open up to you, or stay close to you. *The love you take is equal to the love you make.* So give the love, care, and commitment you want and need from others. Then you can be part of an endless circle of love.