



# HELP YOUR CLIENTS IDENTIFY TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS IN 5 EASY STEPS!

**PLUS IDENTIFY THEIR  
SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS TOO!**

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*Relationships are essential - we're wired to connect and we literally need connection to others to survive. Who we spend our time with has a big impact on how we feel - both about ourselves and about life. In this exercise you'll help your clients identify their toxic relationships. You'll also help your clients identify, appreciate and take steps to spend more time with their supportive relationships.*

As coaches we already know that WHO you spend your time with significantly impacts your experience of life. In fact almost EVERY success book will tell you that if you want to be successful, hang around with like-minded, successful people.

## How do you know if a relationship is working for you or not?

**The big question to ask is:** "After spending time with this person, how do you feel about yourself?"

Do you feel energised, inspired, uplifted, supported or encouraged OR do you feel drained, let down, discouraged or somehow worth less? Once your clients have an awareness of how someone leaves them feeling, they can decide whether to spend MORE or LESS time with that person.

So, we created a coaching exercise to help people with this called [Detox Your Toxic Relationships](#). It's one of my favourite coaching tools and gives our clients a simple but powerful way to score and review the 20 people they spend most of their time with - including partners, colleagues, friends and family. And the great news is, it's incredibly simple. You don't even need our tool, and can start right now, by making a list on a piece of paper. Here's how it works.

## 5 Steps to Help (You or) Your Clients Identify Toxic Relationships - and Spot the Good Ones!

Try this toxic relationships exercise now yourself, to see how powerful it is, then try it out with your clients!

1. **Make a list of the friends, colleagues, family** and other people you spend most of your time with. [*This list should be as close to 20 people as you can.*]
2. For each person on your list, pause and **ask yourself:** "How do I feel after spending time with this person?"

3. Next, **add a score** against each name **from +5 to -5** to represent how you *generally* feel after spending time with them. [*Obviously a negative (-) score means you feel somehow less or negative about yourself and your life, and the positive (+) scores represent feeling better about yourself and your life.*]
4. **Consider how much time you spend with each person on your list.** Some things to consider include:
  - What are the scores for the people you spend most of your time with?
  - Are you generally spending more time with the 'pluses' or the 'minuses'?
  - How much time are you spending with your "boosters", the +4s and +5s on your list?
  - What about the "drainers" (toxic relationships), the -4s or -5s?
5. **Make a commitment to YOU.**
  - i) **Look at your plus or "booster" relationships:** If you're not already, find ways to spend *more* time with them.  
IMPORTANT: If you don't have any +4s and +5s on your list, how could you develop some relationships that will be that support and boost in your life?
  - ii) **Looking at your minus or toxic relationships:** In theory, these are people you should be finding ways to spend *lesstime* with, and setting firm boundaries.  
IMPORTANT: Any healthy relationship will have rough patches and we shouldn't discard someone simply because times get tough. Consider the following:
    - What is your gut telling you? If your gut is telling you to move on, that this person isn't right for you, it may be time to pay attention and let go. Or perhaps your gut is nagging you to take some action to mend things?
    - Is there a wound or grievance that needs to be brought into the open and discussed?
    - Do YOU have some 'processing' to do because it's YOU doing the judging, not them?

## How to Enjoy Those Relationships that are Fabulous?

For people who are there for you, who support, encourage and inspire you - as well as finding ways to spend more time with them - **see if you can find an opportunity to recognize them!** What is it about them that you love? And then whether it's a heartfelt thank-you with a hug, words of appreciation and meaningful eye contact over a cup of coffee or glass of wine, a card, letter, email or a spontaneous gift – make sure THEY know how much YOU love and appreciate them!

## What about Toxic Relationships That No Longer Serve us?

You have some thinking to do. If you can't bear to let a friend go, or you HAVE to spend time with a family member, find ways to be with them where there will be less opportunity for the negativity to come out. For example you could go to the cinema with them where you'll interact less. Or you could decide not to discuss areas of your (or their!) life that draw criticism and judgement. But if it IS necessary to see them, set your boundaries and find ways to make the relationship work on your terms.