

# 7 Relationship Fears Keeping Successful People From Being Happy

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Randi, a physician, walked into my therapy office not sure if her relationship could be saved. This is the third time she and her partner were trying to repair their relationship in five years. They love each other. He is great with her children. They enjoy hiking and being in the great outdoors. He is thoughtful and romantic, and they laugh together. So, what's the issue? Randi reports they are unable to communicate about tough topics. She can't continue in a relationship where many things Randi says are met with defensiveness, rejection, or complete distortion.

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Alex and Camille are both athletes. In the past three years, they have broken up twice and each break up lasted over six months. They enjoy their sex life. In fact, Alex reported it's the best sex he's had and he was very attracted to Camille. Camille reported Alex is the first man she really feels safe with. What brings them to therapy? When Camille feels insecure, she withdraws and threatens to break up. Alex walks on eggshells and holds resentment with how easily Camille can break up with him.

Amalie is an entrepreneur and has been in and out of therapy for years. Although she waited until later in life to get married, she is unhappily married. Her husband isn't interested in sexual intimacy and is emotionally distant. Amalie isn't sure why she is in therapy other than a pervasive dissatisfaction over her life and a low-grade depression. For most of her life, Amalie has turned to work and shopping to suppress her needs for affection, appreciation, respect, and intimacy.

Despite the many benefits of romantic relationships, many people struggle to achieve and maintain healthy partnerships. Relationship dissatisfaction is often due to a variety of fears, which can lead to self-sabotaging behaviors, communication problems, intimacy disorders, and conflict avoidance.

Oftentimes, one of the components successful people have is that they overcompensate for their fears by throwing themselves into their work, athletic, or creative abilities. However, living with a relationship fear sabotages you from a healthy and happy intimate partnership.

***The following are 7 relationship fears keeping successful people from being happy:***

### **1. Fear of intimacy - the fear of being known**

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Intimacy is a key factor in healthy relationships. It involves sharing your deepest thoughts, feelings, and experiences with your partner. A fear of intimacy is often subconscious and affects your ability to form or maintain close relationships.

Individuals with a fear of intimacy may sabotage a relationship because they are afraid of being known. Being known requires vulnerability -- a risk of being judged, rejected, or betrayed. In their relationships, these folks may crave privacy, keep their distance, and withdraw from their partners emotionally and physically. They may withhold information, be walled off, and may gravitate towards developing intimacy disorders and addictive behaviors.

*Here are some examples of how fear of intimacy can sabotage your relationship:*

Julia has a hard time opening up to new people and often keeps her distance in romantic relationships. Her partner complains that she keeps secrets from him and that she is preoccupied with work and still communicates with her ex-boyfriend. Fear of intimacy became an adaptation for Julia after she was betrayed by her first boyfriend in high school who also controlled and manipulated her with his jealousy.

David has difficulty expressing his feelings and needs to his partner. He becomes defensive and irritable when his partner approaches him for emotional closeness. Fear of intimacy was an adaptation for surviving his unaffectionate and emotionally distant family where he would be left unattended for hours playing video games in his room.

If having a fear of intimacy resonates with you, it is important to understand that true intimacy cannot be achieved without vulnerability. This means being in touch with your inner thoughts and feelings and being willing to share yourself with your partner, even your flaws and imperfections. It also means being open to receiving their feedback and support.

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## 2. Fear of abandonment

Fear of abandonment is a type of anxiety that can cause people to feel overwhelmed and worry that people they love will leave them. Individuals with abandonment issues may experience intrusive thoughts, extreme mood fluctuations, frequent relationship conflicts, hypersensitivity to criticism, difficulty with trust, and underneath the overcompensation is low self-esteem.

*Here are some examples of how fear of abandonment can sabotage your relationship:*

Sarah worries her partner will leave her, even if there is no evidence to support this fear. She vacillates from micromanaging the relationship to threatening to leave. Although Sarah has a relationship with her father, the fear of abandonment was an adaptation from early childhood when her father left the family and moved to England.

Miguel often feels lonely and insecure in his relationships. He tends to walk on eggshells and bends over backward to please his partner. The fear of abandonment was an adaptation to being raised by a single mother who worked long hours.

If fear of abandonment resonates with you, try to work on building trust and security in your relationship and becoming more grounded in your sense of self. Communicate openly and honestly with your partner without accusations while also being supportive and understanding. Developing a strong sense of self-worth and self-love helps to not feel like you need your partner to complete you.

## 3. Fear of rejection

Fear of rejection is the fear of not being accepted by others. It can prevent people from putting themselves out there or from taking risks. People who fear rejection may worry about what others think of them and may lack confidence, or feel

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shame or guilt. They may also avoid social situations, seek reassurance from others, or feel like they have to please people all the time.

This fear may be rooted in a past experience of rejection, or in a fear of not being good enough. People who fear rejection may be more susceptible to anxiety, depression, self-criticism, and beneath overcompensation, poor self-esteem.

*Here are some examples of how fear of rejection can sabotage your relationship:*

Jessica is a natural giver. She packs her days with responsibilities with the family, work, and volunteering. She revolves around her relationships and is afraid of asking for what she needs. She is generally exhausted with little time for herself. The fear of rejection was an adaptation from childhood. Jessica experienced an emotionally violent mother. Jessica's fears intensified in school when she was the target of bullying.

Elvin often assumes that his partner will reject him, so he doesn't pursue his partner sexually. He would rather immerse himself in his artistic world. Their sex life is nonexistent as his partner is tired of being rejected and has also stopped pursuing. A deformity on his body makes Elvin sensitive. When rejected by a high school crush, the fear of rejection marked him.

If a fear of rejection resonates with you, remember that everyone experiences rejection at some point in their lives. Rejection does not mean you are unlovable or unworthy. Healing occurs when you forgive the people who hurt you and you accept yourself just as you are. Freedom comes when you are okay with not being accepted or selected even if it hurts.

#### **4. Fear of conflict**

Conflict is a normal part of any relationship. The fear of conflict is a common experience, especially for people with social anxiety. People with conflict phobia

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may experience intense physical distress, anxiety, and panic symptoms when in a disagreement.

Individuals who fear conflict may also feel inferior and never speak up about their needs. They may avoid confrontation altogether. They may also become passive and quiet, allowing others to take the lead, or may intentionally isolate themselves. This fear may be rooted in a childhood experience of conflict, or in a belief that conflict is always destructive.

*Here are some examples of how a fear of conflict can sabotage your relationship:*

In her relationship, Emily is compliant and submissive. Growing up her parents argued constantly. When she tried to break up the fighting, they made her feel as if it was her fault they fought. A fear of conflict set in to protect herself from being shamed.

Bill has difficulty expressing his disagreement with his partner. His partner complains that he doesn't share or speak much nor is Bill emotionally attuned to her. A fear of conflict emerged in his childhood when his father would come home angry, and explosive, creating a very unstable and unpredictable environment.

If a fear of conflict resonates with you, learn how to communicate your needs and wants effectively. View conflict as a force that can deepen your intimacy and connection. Learning to resolve conflict constructively by being willing to take turns listening to each partner's perspective and finding the parts you both agree upon will get you started.

## **5. Fear of losing personal freedom - fear of entrapment**

Fear of losing personal freedom is the fear of entrapment. This fear keeps you from making a long-term commitment to someone or making long-term plans such as getting married. When a person with the fear of entrapment is in a

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committed relationship, they tend to keep secrets and may create a separate life hidden from their partner.

The fear of losing personal independence may develop in someone who grew up with overbearing caretakers or whose needs were not met in childhood.

A heightened need for independence may manifest in dating as a tendency to fixate on a partner's flaws or claim "something is missing."

*Here are examples of how a fear of loss of personal freedom can sabotage your relationship or lack thereof:*

Even when happy in a relationship, Chloe is hesitant to make a long-term commitment to someone. She has broken three engagements and has never been in a relationship longer than four years. As a young child, her parents used Chloe to get back at one another. When her parents divorced, they each pinned her against the other parent. Today, 50 years later Chloe is still unable to choose a primary partner.

Ben is not interested in getting married or having children. When he was nine years old he was molested by his uncle. Fear of entrapment was an adaptation to feeling powerless over the betrayal he experienced by someone who was supposed to have been a safe person.

If a fear of entrapment or loss of personal freedom resonates with you, it is important to understand that you give up some personal freedoms to gain a partnership. Choose to be with one person who mutually prioritizes, supports, and offers their strengths to the relationship and build a life together. A healthy partnership is possible when you each respect personal boundaries and communicate effectively around your priorities.

## 6. Fear of losing control



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A fear of losing control is a common fear associated with many other anxiety-related conditions e.g., phobias, panic attacks, Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder, social anxiety, and PTSD. Perfectionists are more prone to fear losing control. “Control freaks” are often perfectionists who battle with intense self-criticism, hopelessness, and stress.

This fear may be rooted in a general fear of the unknown or in a desire to maintain control over your life.

*Here are examples of how fear of losing control may sabotage your relationship:*

Olivia is meticulous in everything she does. She has a high-power position and is the main breadwinner. Olivia complains about her husband’s inadequacies and his lack of motivation. She is tired of rescuing him, which includes managing his business. With the fear of losing control, Olivia’s chemistry clicks with the person who represents her worst nightmare -- her opposite. While she focuses on her spouse’s irresponsibility, it keeps her from looking inward and healing. In childhood, Olivia was mentally and physically tormented by her ice skating coaches who trained her for the Olympics.

Mark comes from an affluent family that overindulged and overmanaged him. He’s held various jobs that family and friends helped him find. At home, he has difficulties with taking on responsibilities, making decisions, and abdicating to his partner. Mark fears taking risks. He never had to work hard enough on his own to build self-confidence and self-efficacy. Mark's favorite mantra is “I don’t want to struggle.” His partner worries Mark will never grow up.

If fear of losing control resonates with you, learn to let go of the demand for certainty. Life happens. Failures and mistakes are our greatest teachers. Let go of the illusion of control, take some risks, and face your fears. You’ll be glad to know the world doesn’t fall apart when you are less than perfect.

## 7. Fear of failure



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Fear of failure may cause you to put off or avoid any activity or scenario that has the potential for an unsuccessful outcome. This fear can lead people to give up on their relationships too easily or to avoid getting into relationships altogether.

You may be scared to try new things, take risks, or embrace growth. Fear of failure may be rooted in a past experience of relationship failure or in a lack of confidence in your ability to maintain a healthy relationship.

*Here are some examples of how fear of failure can sabotage your relationship:*

Sofie grew up in an Asian American household with critical parents. As immigrants, her parents relied on her to be a problem solver for the family and expected she'd always take care of them. In her relationships, Sofie fears they will fail, even if there is no evidence to support this fear. Fear of failure was an adaptation to the unrealistic expectations combined with the criticism she received in her childhood.

Raj is a successful artist who has not produced new art in the past decade. He dates affluent women, then finds ways of devaluing them. He is hesitant to invest in his current relationship. He's afraid it will fail as previous ones did and he will be hurt again. Raj was marked with fear of failure at age 11 when he and his family became homeless.

If a fear of failure resonates with you, remember everyone makes mistakes. Focus on the positive aspects of your relationship and of your life. Embracing a lifestyle of gratitude for everything - the good, the bad, and the ugly - in your life will start to ground you.

### **Bonus: Fear of success**

The fear of success can be based on a belief that you don't deserve to be happy. You may be successful in the external world but if chaos or suffering represent

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romantic relationships for you, or if several of the fears mentioned above resonated with you, chances are you may be marked with the fear of success.

*There are many reasons why you might develop a fear of success specifically in the area of relationships. Some common underlying fears include:*

- Fear of change: Success often brings about major changes in a person's life, such as new responsibilities, relationships, and lifestyle. You may worry about how you will cope with these changes and whether you will be able to maintain your success.
- Fear of failure: Ironically, fear of failure can also lead to a fear of success. You may worry that you may not be able to make your partner happy long-term. The truth is everyone is responsible for their own happiness. Your role is to magnify your partner's joy.
- Imposter syndrome: You may feel like you are a fraud and don't deserve to love and be loved.
- Perfectionism: You may have unrealistic expectations about your ideal partner and need to work on self-acceptance and self-love.

With fear of success, you may sabotage your efforts by procrastinating, making careless mistakes, avoiding opportunities that could lead to success, or simply giving up on relationships altogether. Fear of success may lead you to choose a partner who is incompatible with you in lifestyle, intelligence, attractiveness, or values. With fear of success, your love DNA may attract a partner who distracts and frustrates you rather than inspires you.

In a healthy partnership, you get to live happily and freely.

These are not exclusive of one another. There are seasons of sacrifice but then we return to a place of inspiration and freedom within our partnership.

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If you are struggling with relationship fears sabotaging your happiness, there are things you can do to overcome them.

### **Tips for overcoming your fears and building a healthy relationship**

- Identify your fears. What are you afraid of? Once you know what you are afraid of, you can start to address those fears.
- Challenge your negative thoughts. Ask yourself if there is any evidence to support your negative thoughts. Are your thoughts realistic and helpful?
- Talk to your partner about your fears. Can they understand and support your healing?

### **Things to consider when working with a professional**

If you have been unsuccessfully dealing with the issues or fear outgrowing your relationship, consider working with a professional. A couple's specialist commits to helping you both grow in a way that strengthens the partnership.

You may be thinking your relationship is not so bad, so you'll wait. You'll have faster movement toward your desired goal when you address a small problem before it becomes a larger problem.

You may not want to open up Pandora's box and make things worse. Healing is a process that takes time and effort. It's not about finding the perfect solution to every problem in your relationship. Working with a professional will support your ability to learn to communicate and resolve conflict in a healthy way, and embrace growth.

You may worry the therapist will blame you for all of the problems in the relationship. This fear is often associated with a childhood history of being blamed or criticized unfairly. The goal of therapy is to help you both understand and

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address the underlying issues in your relationship. Each client is encouraged to take responsibility for their dysfunctional behaviors.

Therapy can be an intimidating prospect for some because it requires you to confront and address deep-seated personal issues. The fear of facing painful emotions, traumatic experiences, or unresolved conflicts can be overwhelming.

However, the truth is that facing your fears is the pathway to personal freedom.

Working with a professional helps you to create a safe and supportive environment where you can flourish.

Couples therapy and couples therapy retreats can be very effective in helping couples improve their relationship satisfaction, communication, and conflict-resolution skills. Research shows approximately 70% of couples who seek couples therapy report significant improvement in their relationship.

If you have any fears or concerns, talk to your therapist about them. We can help you to understand your fears and to address them.

### **A healthy relationship is the key to your well-being and happiness**

Healthy relationships are essential for our overall well-being, both physically and mentally. Relationships provide us with love, support, companionship, and a sense of belonging.

When we have a healthy partnership, we are more likely to be happy, healthy, and successful in life.



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*Here are some of the specific benefits of healthy relationships:*

- Reduced stress and anxiety. Healthy relationships provide us with a sense of security and belonging. When we know we have people to turn to for help and support, we are less likely to feel overwhelmed by stress.
- Improved physical health. Healthy relationships can help to reduce blood pressure, boost the immune system, and promote healthier lifestyle choices.
- Increased happiness and life satisfaction. Healthy relationships provide us with love, companionship, and a sense of purpose. When we feel loved and supported, we are more likely to be happy and fulfilled.
- Stronger self-esteem and confidence. When we have people in our lives who believe in us and support us, we are grounded in who we are and our abilities.
- Greater resilience. Healthy relationships can help us to be more resilient in the face of challenges. When we have people to support us and help us through difficult times, we are more likely to bounce back from setbacks.

Healthy relationships also promote longevity and benefit society as a whole! Strong families and social connections have been shown to reduce crime rates, improve public health, and boost economic growth.

Fearless love is the path to success and happiness for you, your family, and your community.



Find your path forward. Embark on a journey of growth with personalized counseling, coaching, or a private couple's retreat.

Contact Fearless Love and start your journey today. Call or text 561-450-5580 or visit <https://fearlesslove.net/>.