Personal Relations — how this relationship is supposed to look

("Wives trust their husbands" "Mothers respect their sons' choices" "Real friends always agree with me")

Example: *Wives stick by their husbands no matter what. → (alone)*

References: Column 3 Instructions | Common Fears | Examples

How to Identify This Area

If I don't think others are acting right in a non-sexual scenario, my **personal relations** are affected. *(ref. 02-column-3.md)*

Using Bill's actor metaphor from Step Three — Personal Relations is **my deep-seated idea of what this type of relationship should look like.** It is the script I've given the other person — how wives should behave, how fathers should act, how employers should treat employees, how friends should be. It is my belief about how this relationship is *supposed* to work.

How to Write It

Write a statement about what you believe this type of relationship should look like — the principle, the rule, the "should." There is no fixed sentence starter; the format varies by relationship type. Then bracket the fear.

These are deep-seated beliefs, not surface complaints. They sound like universal truths: *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what," "Fathers protect their daughters," "Fellow*

workers can trust each other." The fear reveals what happens when reality doesn't match the belief.

Template:

- _____. (_____)
- _____. (_____)

Tips:

- Personal Relations is about **how this relationship should look** in a non-sexual context
- If it's about how a "real man" or "real woman" should be, that's Sex Relations
- These are beliefs about the *relationship itself*, not about what you want (Ambition) or need (Security)
- Think: "What is the unwritten rule for this relationship that was broken?" or "What script am I giving this person?"
- Try to word demands positively where possible: *"Be kind. Be supportive. Tell the truth."* rather than *"Don't be an arsehole."*
- Be concrete and specific — avoid figurative or vague language
- No *"I think..."* or *"I feel..."* statements *(ref. p.62-¶1)*

Examples from the Inventory

- *"Fellow workers can trust each other." (unable to trust)* — #1 Mr. Brown
- *"Wives welcome their husband's friends into their homes." (unwelcome)* — #2 Mrs. Jones
- *"Employers trust their employees' abilities and work ethic." (not trusted)* — #3 My Employer
- *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what." (alone)* — #4 My Wife
- *"Real friends can be trusted by their friends with everything." (not trusting)* — #5 Susie
- *"Real employers should always be honest and reward their best employees." (not needed)* — #6 Mr. Brown Alternate
- *"Fathers protect their daughters. Fathers never love anyone more than their daughters. Fathers stand up for their daughters." (unprotected, rejected, unloved)* — #7 My Father

- *"Fathers love their daughters unconditionally." (not good enough)* — #7 My Father
- *"I'm her brother, her only brother, we grew up together if there is something bothering her, she needs to talk instead of displacing it with anger. Real sisters love their brothers and work through anything." (not trustworthy)* — #8 My Sister
- *"Real Men and Women are able to believe in and have a relationship with God." (stuck, can't believe)* — #9 God Does Not Care About Me
- *"Real Partners are fully known and fully accepted." (not accepted, unloved)* — #10 Not Fulfilled Without a Relationship
- *Principle inventory — do not write on Personal Relations.* — #11 I Am Unloveable
- *"Money is trustworthy, makes me happy and secure." (money doesn't work)* — #12 Not OK Without Money

Additional Examples

These additional examples show the range of Personal Relations scripts — from workplace expectations to family rules to relationship principles.

Workplace scripts:

- *"Stay silent on my wrongdoing. If criticising, do so gently, briefly, and neutrally. Give credit where due."* — Gillian (client's employee)
- *"Leave people to do their service. Let the group spot and correct problems."* — Milford (secretary of home group)
- *"She should agree with everything I say."* — Susan (company director)
- *"Pay attention to me. Greet me warmly."* — Peter (colleague who ignored me)

Authority scripts:

- *"Establish and man an effective and efficient system. Reserve fingerprinting and questioning for established criminals. Let me into the country on the basis only of my passport."* — Immigration system at airport
- *"Leave me alone. Let me move around as I wish. Stay away from me. Treat me pleasantly and cordially."* — Andrew (teacher who shouted at me)

Family scripts:

- *"He should be clear and straightforward."*
- *"They should seek our advice and act accordingly."*
- *"She should be polite and not be accusatory."*
- *"She should not tell me off."*

Relationship scripts:

- *"He should take responsibility for his negative emotions and problems."* — Peter (blames me for his problems)
- *"She should fail or she should be mediocre."* — Martina (she has a successful career)

Positively-worded scripts:

- *"Be kind. Be supportive. Break bad news with gravity and decorum."*
- *"Tell the truth. Tell nothing but the truth. Tell the whole truth."*
- *"Think before you speak. Comply with my requests."*
- *"Call me regularly. Tell funny jokes. Accept my boundaries with grace."*
- *"Speak deferentially. Do not attack me verbally. Complete the tasks you are assigned."*

Pet/neighbor scripts:

- *"Have a silly, harmless dog. If you have an Alsatian, keep it inside. If you let it out, put it on a chain."* — People on corner (with aggressive dog)

Common Fears Under Personal Relations

These fears commonly appear under Personal Relations in the inventory. Each one is what I'm afraid is true when the relationship doesn't match my script.

- **alone** — *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what."* — #4, #9, #10, #12 | fear example
- **can't believe** — *"Real Men and Women are able to believe in and have a relationship with God."* — #9
- **money doesn't work** — *"Money is trustworthy, makes me happy and secure."* — #12

- **not accepted** — *"Real Partners are fully known and fully accepted."* — #10
- **not good enough** — *"I am a great guy to have around."* — #1, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8 | fear example
- **not needed** — *"Real employers should always be honest and reward their best employees."* — #6
- **not trusted** — *"Employers trust their employees' abilities and work ethic."* — #3
- **not trusting** — *"Real friends can be trusted by their friends with everything."* — #5
- **not trustworthy** — *"Real sisters love their brothers and work through anything."* — #8
- **rejected** — *"I want the respect and approval of others."* — #7, #10
- **stuck** — *"Real Men and Women are able to believe in and have a relationship with God."* — #9
- **unable to trust** — *"Fellow workers can trust each other."* — #1
- **unloved** — *"I wanted to be loved no matter what I do."* — #4, #7, #10, #12 | fear example
- **unprotected** — *"Fathers protect their daughters."* — #7
- **unwelcome** — *"Wives welcome their husband's friends into their homes."* — #2

Deeper Understanding

Personal Relations is where the scripts live. Every entry is a belief about how a particular type of relationship is supposed to work — and the resentment comes from reality not matching the script.

These scripts are often inherited. *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what"* is not a personal preference — it is a deeply held belief about the nature of marriage. *"Fathers protect their daughters"* is not a casual wish — it is a conviction about what fatherhood means. These beliefs feel like truths, not opinions. That's what makes them so powerful — and so painful when reality contradicts them.

The entries across the twelve examples show several patterns:

Trust-based scripts: *"Fellow workers can trust each other"* (#1), *"Employers trust their employees' abilities"* (#3), *"Real friends can be trusted"* (#5). These define the relationship by

mutual trust — and the fear is that trust is impossible.

Loyalty-based scripts: *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what"* (#4), *"Real sisters love their brothers and work through anything"* (#8). These define the relationship by unconditional commitment — and the fear is being abandoned.

Role-based scripts: *"Fathers protect their daughters"* (#7), *"Real employers should always be honest and reward their best employees"* (#6). These assign specific duties to the other person — and the fear is that the duty will go unfulfilled.

Notice that the principle inventories (#9–12) stretch Personal Relations beyond people. #9 applies it to a relationship with God, #10 to an ideal romantic partner, #12 to money itself. This shows that we assign scripts everywhere — not just to people, but to institutions, ideals, and even objects.

The Martina Example

One of the most revealing additional examples: *"She should fail or she should be mediocre"* (Martina, who has a successful career). This is a Personal Relations script driven entirely by envy — the belief that someone else's success threatens me. The demand is not for Martina to behave differently toward *me*; it's for Martina to be less successful. This shows that Personal Relations scripts aren't always about how someone treats me — they can be about how someone *exists*.

Concrete vs. Vague Scripts

The additional examples demonstrate the importance of being specific:

Vague	Concrete
"Show respect"	*"Speak deferentially. Do not attack me verbally."*
"Don't be an arsehole"	*"Be kind. Be supportive. Break bad news with gravity and decorum."*
"Go the whole hog"	*"Complete the tasks you are assigned. Don't complain. Be cheerful."*

Vague scripts hide the real demand. Concrete scripts expose it. When you write *"Show respect,"* you haven't discovered anything. When you write *"Speak deferentially. Do not attack*

me verbally. Complete the tasks you are assigned," you can see the exact screenplay you've written — and you can start to ask whether that screenplay is realistic, reasonable, or kind.

What Personal Relations Reveals About "My Way"

Personal Relations and Sex Relations are the **scripts I have given others to follow for my plans to be fulfilled.** If the ambitions are the plans, the scripts are the parts I need other people to play for those plans to work.

The key realization: without the plan, the scripts are unnecessary. Without the play, no actors are required. When I wrote my Step Three decision — to drop my plans in return for doing God's will — I implicitly agreed to release others from the scripts I'd given them. Column 3 is where I discover what those scripts actually were.

This list is not exhaustive — your inventory will reveal personal relations scripts unique to you. Use this as a starting point to help identify the beliefs you hold about how relationships should work.

From the Big Book Awakening Step Four guide at bigbook.it/step-4/ · a page of the guide, not the workbook itself: the workbook's own pages are linked from "Originals & sources." · source personal-relations.md