

RELATIONSHIPS ARE PART OF OUR OVERALL HEALTH

By JULIE PATRICE RAPPAPORT

Relationships are made up of habits — good ones and not-so-good ones. Relationships are with people, places, possessions, ideas and beliefs, situations, habits and even life itself. As relationships grow, we acquire new habits that mingle with or diverge from our old, established habits. Life is described by our relationships — just listen to any eulogy.

Lee Liberman (my best friend, ex-husband and father of our precious Tasha) and I have coined the term “Relational Shifts” when referring to a defined relationship becoming something else. New parents are no longer newlyweds, refugees no longer have a homeland, jobless no longer have security, and so on. Our attachments to those definitions cloud our apprehension of the truth that those defined relationships will shift when experienced from another perspective.

Relationships help us evolve. As our relationships evolve, so then do we, and the relationship shifts from what it was to something else. Sometimes relationships evolve and turn sour, as a nourishing fruit eventually will rot.

Ruth Kaiser explains that *refua shleima* (as found in all Hebrew get-well cards) means not just “get well” physically, but “complete healing”: mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially... not just healing of the body parts, but also of the soul and of our lives.

Many of us suffer as we witness the inevitable shifts in our relationships with our bodies, our capabilities, our memories, our loved ones, our perspectives. Accepting that our perspectives and relationships will

change, or shift, lessens the stress in our lives when inevitable shifts occur.

For ways to not only survive, but thrive, www.e-zinedivorce.com is not about proposing divorce, but about supporting families through their Relational Shifts. Divorce is a dissolution of a contract, but its Relational Shifts are found on every level of our lives: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, sexual, economic and familial.

Divorce is a perfect example of a Relational Shift, and we compare it to a major life surgery. Like surgery, shifting can help the patient (relationship) survive and live with quality of life, or, if haphazardly done, it can cripple or even kill the patient (relationship). Much of the success depends on the patient's overall health coming into surgery.

When our relationships suffer, it affects our health. When our health suffers enough, it affects those relationships that define our life. Conscientiously tending to our relationships reinforces tending to our health.

