

Advices and Queries on Personal Relationships (as modified* 2017)

In daily relationships with others, both inside and outside the home, our lives as Friends speak immediately and lastingly. In these relationships, our faith may also be severely tested. We are called to respond to that of God in everyone: we are all children of God. Friends celebrate any union that is dedicated to mutual love and respect, regardless of the unique make-up of the family. We strive to create homes where the Spirit of the Divine resides at the center and where the individual genius of each member is respected and nurtured.

Human sexuality is a divine gift, forming part of the complex union of body, mind and spirit that is our humanity. In a loving adult relationship in a context of mutual responsibility, sexuality brings delight, fulfillment and celebration.

In our homes, we strive to create a loving, safe environment, free of abuse of any kind.

The presence of children carries a special blessing as well as responsibility. Children bring unique spiritual gifts — wonder, resiliency, playfulness and more. Recognize and honor the Divine Light within children and treat them with the dignity and respect that is due to all people. Listen to and learn from children; share with them those values and practices that are central to our own lives. Special care must be given to resolving problems between adults and children in a manner that gives equal weight to the feelings and needs of both children and adults. Tender parenting is one of the critically important peace vocations in our society. Make every effort to offer all parents the personal and institutional support that this challenging work requires.

Do I make my home a place of friendliness, joy, and peace, where residents and visitors feel God's presence?

Are my behaviors towards others consistent with my spiritual beliefs and free of manipulation and exploitation?

What barriers keep me from responding openly and lovingly to each person?

Do we open our thoughts, beliefs, and deep understandings to our children and others who share our lives and our hospitality?

Do we provide our children and young adults with a framework for active, ongoing participation in the Meeting?

* As compared to the original language in Pacific Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice (2001), Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting prefers the above revised version, which adds "In our homes, we strive to create a loving, safe environment, free of abuse of any kind." and a new query "Are my behaviors towards others consistent with my spiritual beliefs and free of manipulation and exploitation?" in substitution of this omitted language:

Take a strong stand against any form of abuse, whether that abuse is minor or severe, and whether it is emotional, physical or sexual in nature. The terrible impact of abuse on the most vulnerable members of our families creates lifelong suffering for its victims and is a major source of violence in our society. Perpetrators are themselves usually victims of similar violence and should be approached with compassion as well as firmness.