

RELATIONSHIPS!

Relationships come in all forms and intensities. Relationships include those with colleagues, service people, mentors, friends, and most important family members. Connections with others at all levels may be supportive or they may be destructive. Research shows that if the majority of your connections (relationships) are friendly, considerate, kind and respectful you will be less stressed and generally happier, more satisfied and successful.

Understanding the social graces necessary to maintain meaningful relationships is a prerequisite to a happier and healthier life. Integrity is a key to building friendships that last, and integrity is built on recognition of one's authentic self. Knowing who you are - having a moral and ethical code based on values that keep you on the path of being (or becoming) the finest version of yourself is first a goal and then simply the way you move through life.

The simplest rule is *"you shall not be destructive to yourself or to another"*. To follow this one must be able to think consequentially, to assess results and to know what their action/inaction will be. The latest research shows that the full ability to think consequentially does not happen until around age 24. Thus, parents and teachers have the responsibility to encourage young people to **THINK** through issues and measure them against a moral and ethical standard. Note the rule is *"yourself or another"* both are equally important. As we are taught, *"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what good am I?"* Strive for balance, do not neglect either side, and remember you are to be the best **YOU**, you can be.

Judie Cotton, LMFT



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TIPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS



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TIPS Here are some ideas to improve relationships.



1. TREAT LOVED ONES LOVINGLY.

The important people in your life will know you cherish them, when you treat them as if you do. Be loving in your words and actions at all times... even when angry. Use your words to build others up, not tear them down. Words are powerful and especially powerful when speaking to children. Words have the power to nourish another's soul or harm it. Learn to use words wisely.

2. GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS DO NOT JUST HAPPEN.

True when you meet someone for the first time you have a sense as to whether there may be a connection - or shared interests, ideas and values. However, the relationships that last and become intimate take a great deal of energy, insight and effort. I might even say they are a lot of work.

3. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CRITICISM, A CRITIQUE OR A CORRECTION.

With young children, corrections are often necessary however, criticism is damaging. A critique is when an equal asks for your opinion. Youngsters need corrections to help them learn and keep them safe. Everyone needs encouragement, notice a kindness, a helping hand a job well done, and say thank you.

4. BE RESPECTFUL AT ALL TIMES TO ALL PEOPLE. All individuals have the right to be treated respectfully at all times in all situations. Learn to live by this value, regardless of how other people are behaving. It does not serve you or others to be hurt or humiliated.

5. STOP COMPLAINING. Complaints are always after the fact and the other can only feel badly. Complaining does not reap compliance it often engenders defeat and non-engagement. Learn to make requests: Requests must meet four qualifications - Be respectful, doable, reasonable and specific. Agreement to fulfill the request is a verbal contract.

6. BE AUTHENTIC. Be truthful in a compassionate, honoring way. This does NOT include unbridled self-expression. Your control ends at your fingertips, you may respectfully ask for what you want/need and if the other says yes, it is a verbal contract.

7. IN RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS THERE IS NO SCORE KEEPING, NO TIT FOR TAT, OR RETALIATION YOU SHOULD HAVE GROWN OUT OF THAT BY THE THIRD GRADE. Safety is a

prerequisite for all healthy relationships. If you are using physical violence against someone in anger, that person is not safe. Intense anger acted out physically will break a connection instantly.

8. NEVER USE YOUR BODY IN ANGER AGAINST YOURSELF OR OTHERS. Safety is a prerequisite for all healthy relationships. If you are using physical violence against someone in anger, that person is not safe. Intense anger acted out physically will break a connection instantly.



"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

- Dale Carnegie