

HOW TO HAVE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

One of the keys to a successful and happy life is to have the ability to have great relations, at home and at work. The following suggestions are based on the skills and attitudes of people who develop and maintain wonderful relationships.

- **Be a good listener.**
Show a sincere interest in what's happening in the other person's life, remember you have one mouth and two ears, use this as a reminder of how much talking to engage in versus how much listening.
- **Put yourself in the other person's shoes**
Being in the other person's world requires that you listen with openness, without being sucked into their negative states.
- **Empathy rather than sympathy**
Empathy means understanding and having a feel for their difficulty without trying to get involved unless asked. Sympathy or feeling sorry for them is disrespectful and indicates that you believe that they do not have the resources to handle their own difficulty.
- **Look for the other person's good points**
You have a choice in whether you pay attention to their good points or just continue to see their imperfections. The more time you take to discover a person's good points, the more your respect for them increases.
- **What is their point of view?**
Be able to see the world from their viewpoint, if you were in their shoes, with their feelings, beliefs, background and values, how would the situation look to you? What would be your needs or expectations or concerns?
- **Respect their views**
Recognise that we see things differently, that we all have a different world view. This view of reality is based on our experience of life up to now. No one world view is "right" or "wrong" it is just a matter of opinion, and just as your opinion changes over time, so will the clients. By taking the time to get to know their ever changing world view you might just learn things which would enrich or widen your own.

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- **Accept imperfections**
Recognise and tolerate a person's weaknesses as in reality those imperfections and weaknesses are just subjective evaluations based on your world's view.
- **Value the differences**
Often it is the differences between you that are the things that provide the stimulation and the learning opportunities to build the relationship. Remember the quote by Ken Blanchard "none of us is as smart as all of us".
- **Compliments & Criticism.**
How do you personally feel when someone compliments and lists you on your good points? How do you feel towards a person who criticises you and lists your failings? Show consistency and fairness in all your comments.
- **Don't expect people to be clairvoyant.**
It is not enough to MEAN well when communicating, people can only respond to what and how you communicate. They cannot read your mind and know what you mean? You must communicate with responsibility for the response you get from the other person. If the other person is not responding as you had expected you need to change how you communicate with them, otherwise it is simply ineffectual communication.

Inter-personal communication can be a bit like a mine field at first, if you blindly rush in, with the good intention of getting a particular result, you could step on a few mines. But there is no point in blaming the mines, what is important is to figure out the most effective way of getting your message across to the particular person with whom you are communicating. Not only has your message got to be tailored to suit the other person's thinking style it also has to be tailored to suit their mood at that particular moment.

- **Recognise their specialty**
Be aware that everyone you meet is your superior in some way and seek to learn from them. Everyone has a story to tell, a skill to share, an insight to enrich the world with. And you will only learn about these when you make the space and take the time to do so.