

Fulfilling Relationships - 7 Commonsense Core Elements

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Relationships can be complicated is pure understatement. And yet, rather than shy away from them, we continually seek new ones.

They are the pivot point around which society, an organized pattern of relationships, is formed. An internet search brings up 255,000,000 entries for relationships! It has always been a hot topic and will remain so as long as there is more than one person on planet earth!

But for all this vast amount of material, do we really know any more about building and maintaining fulfilling relationships than we ever have? We've certainly studied the subject, but the same issues that divided hundreds of years ago continue to divide.

A great deal of commonsense is necessary to birth and nurture any healthy relationship. We often seek complex answers to weighty issues when true and lasting success is found in simplicity.

To begin, let's look at seven necessary components to any healthy caring relationship. Perhaps you can assemble a more impressive, more complex list, but these comprise a core from which you can build, or begin rebuilding any relationship.

Self-Respect. To treat oneself as worthy of attention, esteem, regard, and consideration is the first step. Just as charity begins at home, respect begins with oneself. You cannot give what you don't have and you cannot respect another person without a healthy dose of self-respect.

Without it, relationships are hopelessly lopsided and you will soon attempt to get from the relationship what must come from within. From self-respect comes the capacity to respect another and relationship is birthed.

Mutual Respect is the result. This critical element must flow freely through the relationship, from within yourself to the other individual and back to you again. It must continue unabated, nourishing the relationship in its life blood.

Mutual Affection. A degree of fondness is necessary in any relationship that is going to endure past necessity. Many relationships based on self-interest, without honest affection, can exist briefly but only for a specific purpose.

However, those that endure beyond the reason for their beginnings will be those that develop a genuine and caring interaction, a fondness which grows from the other elements. The deeper the fondness, the more powerful the relationship.

Self interest, not to be confused with self-knowledge, is the enemy of all true affection. Mutual affection assumes a genuine concern for the other, and never with an "agenda."

Intimacy. Some would place intimacy with or even before affection, but the true personal and private familiarity that is intimacy grows from affection, and must be based on mutual respect. Today's society mistakenly puts intimacy first, and is surprised when mutual respect and affection do not develop as a result. But true and lasting intimacy, beyond the physical, can only grow as a result of the first three elements.

Cooperation. Operating in a common effort, in agreed unity of purpose, builds relationship strength as surely as any muscle building activity builds physical strength. We hear it from the time we are old enough to learn from Grover and big Bird, but many of us cast it aside when we outgrow the playground.

Cooperation implies accountability to something greater than the individuals, to the relationship itself. Focusing on this perspective will keep pride from sabotaging this necessary element.

Mutual Trust will be the result. It is reliance based on the truthfulness, character, integrity, and the proven ability of the other individual, as experienced over time. Trust is always earned experientially and there's no way around it. You cannot demand it and you cannot finagle it. You must make deposits to the account and only then can you withdraw the trust.

Commitment to the Relationship. Commitment is an agreement, a pledge, and it must be fully engaged to count. It's an all or nothing undertaking. It has been said that 100% commitment is easy. It's 99% commitment that is difficult.

Commitment is nothing more than a decision and, like most decisions, it's only difficult if it's avoided. Sitting on the fence has never been comfortable! Once the decision is made, the execution follows along easily.

Communication. Without this one, none of the rest is worth the ink. Bathe your relationships in quality communication.

- Listen deeply and really hear what's being said. Practice being truly and fully present in a conversation, not merely waiting for the next opening to interject your pithy comment. Drop your own agenda and listen from a place of selflessness.
- Make it your practice to speak from integrity, from a place of such soundness and wholeness that trust will always be the end result.
- Vow to use communication to encourage, refresh and heal, never to inflict pain.
- One of the quickest and surest ways to a breakdown in communication is to make assumptions. The purpose of communication is to exchange information. Always ask, never assume.
- Make your questions open-ended. Questions requiring a yes or no answer will seldom grow an exchange. Open questions leave plenty of room for an interesting give and take.
- When asking a question, be genuinely interested in gaining information. If you're not prepared to be really interested in the response, don't ask the question.
- For communication to be truly valuable, healthy and nurturing to a relationship, it must occur in an atmosphere of safety. What is said during a time of warmth and affection must never be used as a weapon during a period of distress or conflict.
- Successful relationship-building communication must be based soundly in honesty. This is not by any means a license to inflict pain. It is instead a refusal to be deceptive, in word or action, toward another individual or toward oneself.

Examine these important elements of successful relationships with an open mind and heart and be prepared to honestly assess your own relationships. If you see a pattern and any are faltering in these areas, take ownership of your role in the breakdown and begin the rebuilding process immediately.

Lopsidedness in any of these areas leads to dependency or co-dependency in relationships. Guard against always being on the giving or always on the receiving end in any of these areas. Balance is the key to each of these principles.

Start to build and rebuild your own relationships with these seven core elements and soon you'll be adding to them, consistency, courage, wisdom, humor, generosity, etc. The list can be truly endless and as unique as your many fulfilling relationships.

Karin Syren, CTACC, is a Life & Leadership Coach specializing in EffectivenessCoaching©. She works with leaders at all levels to increase their personal & professional effectiveness by guiding them through learning to live powerful & significant lives. If you want to discover what makes you unique & how to form your future around it, living more effectively as a result, join Karin for **Discovering Your Purpose**, a free teleclass. Learn how becoming a visionary, understanding **Mission, Visions & Goals**, will lead you into a life plan bringing your dreams to pass. Register today at Solushunz.com

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