



LIVE IT. ALL DAY. EVERY DAY.

Learn in Relationships

Speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind ¹Thes. 5:11

Only in trusting, honest, caring relationships can we let go of the past and risk discovering a new future. God made us to be relational beings, and real Christian maturity and spiritual transformation occur in the support and encouragement of healthy relationships. We believe authentic relationships are essential to life-change and begin when we are known, loved, accepted and challenged.

We believe that each person has inherent value and that everyone's life has a purpose. We value each person as a unique and special creation of God, and we honor the gifts each has to give to God and one another. Therefore, we will strive to enable each person to discover and use his or her spiritual gifts; and we will encourage everyone to uplift and support one another everywhere, at all times, and in all places.

Healthy relationships value integrity above deception, empathy above criticism, redemption above condemnation, and faithfulness above all. We believe in the healing power of our words and, therefore, we will speak with gentleness in every aspect of our lives. We believe that sometimes the most healing thing we can do for a friend is speak the truth about their behavior.



*"To the world you may be just one person,
but to one person you may be the world."*

[B.Snyder]

The Heart of a Saint

A spirit that loves God
A Heart that waits to understand
A Hand eager to help
A mouth that listens first.

In a game of hide-and-seek, would you most like to be ...

the seeker

the hider

the watcher

Seekers – make friends, reach out easily, and like being “it”, different

Hiders – wait to be asked, reserved, identifies with the group, not “it”

Watchers – outsiders afraid to get in the game, critical of others

Have you ever wanted to be found, but no one came? *How did that feel?*

In 2 Timothy 1:16-18, how does Paul characterize Onesiphorus?

May the Lord show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, who has often helped me and was not ashamed that I was in prison. When he came to Rome, he looked eagerly for me until he found me. May the Lord allow him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

Refreshes

faithful

Risks

Inspiring

Encouraging

Helpful

Eager

Seeker

Merciful

Trusting

Committed

an example

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Pr 17:17

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Pr 27:6

"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Luke 15:2

“What you permit, you promote.”

I tell you that you will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word you have spoken. Matthew 12:36

- the things that come out of the mouth come from the **heart** [Matt. 15:18]
- “speaking the truth in **love**” [Eph 4:15]

Tips for a healthy relationships

- 1. Speak a little less, listen a little more**
- 2. Don't insist on always having the last word or being right**
- 3. Avoid gossip at all costs**
- 4. Don't take yourself too seriously. Laugh a little.**

Remain faithful and believe in others.

1. Speak a little less, listen a little more

Most people get tremendous pleasure from speaking about themselves. But, here we have to be careful; if we always speak about our achievements or tribulations, people will get fed up with our egoism.

If we are willing and able to listen to others, we will find it much appreciated by our friends. Some people are not aware of how much they dominate the conversation. If you find you are always talking about yourself, consider the advice of the Greek philosopher, Epictetus: "Nature gave us one tongue and two ears so we could hear twice as much as we speak."

2. Which is more important being right or maintaining harmony?

A lot of problems in relationships occur because we want to maintain our personal pride. Don't insist on always having the last word. Healthy relationships are not built through winning meaningless arguments. Be willing to back down; most arguments are not of critical importance anyway.

3. Avoid Gossip

If we value someone's friendship we will not take pleasure in commenting on their frequent failings. They will eventually hear about it. But, whether we get found out or not, we weaken our relationships when we dwell on negative qualities. Avoid gossiping about anybody; subconsciously we don't trust people who have a reputation for gossip. We instinctively trust and value people who don't feel the need to criticize others.

4. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not just a cliché, it's a powerful and important factor in maintaining healthy relationships. However, real forgiveness also means that we are willing to forget the experience. If we forgive one day, but then a few weeks later bring up the old misdeed, this is not real forgiveness. When we make mistakes, just consider how much we would appreciate others forgiving and forgetting.

5. Know When to Keep Silent

If you think a friend has a bad or unworkable idea, don't always argue against it; just keep silent and let them work things out for themselves. It's a mistake to always feel responsible for their actions and outcomes. You can offer support to friends, but you can't live their life for them.

6. Right Motive

If you view friendship from the perspective of "what can I get from this?" you are making a big mistake. This kind of relationship proves very tentative. If you make friendships with the hope of some benefit, you will find that people will have a similar attitude to you. This kind of friendship leads to insecurity and jealousy. Furthermore, these fair weather friends will most likely disappear just when you need them most. Don't look upon friends with the perspective "what can I get out of this?". True friendship should be based on mutual support and good will, irrespective of any personal gain.

7. Oneness.

The real secret of healthy relationships is developing a feeling of oneness. This means that you will consider the impact on others of your words and actions. If you have a true feeling of oneness, you will find it difficult to do anything that causes suffering to your friends. When there is a feeling of oneness, your relationships will be free of jealousy and insecurity.

For example, it is a feeling of oneness which enables you to share in the success of your friends. This is much better than harbouring feelings of jealousy. To develop oneness we have to let go of feelings of superiority and inferiority; good relationships should

not be based on a judgmental approach. In essence, successful friendship depends on the golden rule: “do unto others as you would have done to yourself.” This is the basis of healthy relationships.

8. Humour

Don't take yourself too seriously. Be willing to laugh at yourself and be self-deprecating. This does not mean we have to humiliate ourselves, far from it — it just means we let go of our ego.

Humour is often the best antidote for relieving tense situations.

9. Work at Relationships but don't over analyze

Maintaining healthy relationships doesn't mean we have to spend several hours in the psychiatrist's chair. It means we take a little time to consider others, remembering birthdays and anniversaries etc. But, it is a mistake to spend several hours ruminating and dissecting relationships. This makes the whole thing very mental; it's better to forget any negative experiences. Good friendships should be built on spontaneity and newness, sharing a moment of humour can often do more benefit than several hours of discussion.

10. Freedom

Healthy relationships should be built on a degree of detachment. Here, people often make a mistake; they think that being detached means, “not caring”. However, this is not the case.

Often when we develop a very strong attachment we expect the person to behave in a certain way. When they don't we feel miserable and try to change them. A good friendship based on detachment means we will always offer good will, but we will not be upset if they wish to go a different way.

Strengthen your Relationships

- Humor** Proverbs 17:22 [A happy heart is like good medicine, but a broken spirit drains your strength]
- Empathy** Proverbs 18:13 msg [Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.]
- Availability** Proverbs 27:10 [A neighbor close by is better than a family far away.]
- Right Motives** Proverbs 20:19 [Gossips can't keep secrets, so avoid people who talk too much.] NCV
- Training** Proverbs 9:9 [Teach the wise, and they will become even wiser; teach good people, and they will learn even more.]
- Servant Spirit** Proverbs 17:17 [friend loves you all the time, and a brother helps in time of trouble.]

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, I ask your blessing on all my friends who have given of their own heart and soul to deepen and strengthen my own. I pray especially for those who have walked alongside me when I have not been a faithful friend myself. When I feel alone, remind me that my friends are one your greatest gifts of grace to me. Let me be to them what they are to me. I ask this for the sake of your love. Amen.



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