

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

A. A basic human need.

1. In Genesis 2:18-25 God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. None of the animals were suitable to be a companion for Adam, so he created Eve.
2. People need people. They long to belong.

B. Even though this is a basic need, many people do not know how to relate to other people. The divorce rate is an example of this...as is the strife filled home!

Biblical Basis

- A. The root problem is that man has alienated himself from God (Gen. 3:8—12)
- B. The solution is vertical and horizontal.
 1. Vertical — reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1-11).
 2. Horizontal — reconciliation with others (I Jn. 2:8-11, 4:20-21).
 3. However, this is just the foundation for significant relationships.

Work, Materials and Skills.

A. Good communication is the key to good relationships. A break down in a relationship is usually either caused by or accompanied by a break down in communication.

B. Ways to deepen relationships:

1. Assign top priority to relationships. They won't deepen without a conscious effort on your part. Where is the evidence that this is a top priority with you?
2. Cultivate transparency. Openness and honesty are key ingredients. Build windows instead of walls. Exchange worlds with the other persons. Tell him/her when you are happy as well as when you are sad.
3. Dare to talk about your affection. People love to be loved. You must be a friend to have a friend. Do not be afraid to express your feelings about others to them.

4. Create space in your relationships.
 - a. Be cautious with criticism and correction. People are what you encourage them to be, not what you nag them to be. Remember to compliment them for things well done!
 - b. Allow for solitude.
 - c. Encourage people to be themselves and to be unique.
 - d. Encourage other relationships.
 - e. Be a good listener.
5. Keep short accounts. Forgive and try to forget wrongs. Try not to bring other people into your disagreements. Triangular communication sometimes creates big problems.
6. Remember to give gifts or send cards "just because you care."
7. Remember to show the common courtesies.
8. Retain respect. . .do not become too familiar. . .build each other up.

C. The languages of love:

1. Meeting material needs. This is a language that men commonly speak.
2. Helping. This is a language women commonly speak.
3. Spending time together. This is a language females commonly hear. Women need to be told often that they are loved.
4. Meeting emotional needs. This includes listening, crying and laughing together.
5. Saying it with words. This is the most precise language. While words without deeds are empty, it is true that everyone likes to have deeds of love accompanied by words of love!
6. Being on the same team. This is a language men often hear.' It means "show me we are on the same team even when you disagree with me." It is a team mentality and an environment of acceptance. `
7. Saying it with touch. This is a language females often hear.
 - a. Physical — holding hands, exchanging hugs, eyes expressing care and attention...
 - b. Emotional — sharing joy and sorrow...
 - c. Spiritual - sharing your relationship with Christ, praying together, studying the Word together. . .
8. Bringing out the best. This is drawing out each other's potential and highlighting each other's strengths. ..because you are on the same team you are not in competition and you will not be threatened by the other person`s victories.

The dirty dozen. . .ways not to communicate:

1. Inflammatory words (things you know will anger).
2. Withheld words. undertalk (not admitting seriousness), superficial talk & silence.
3. Abusive talk-: or discouraging words.
4. Sideswipe — not stating directly - coming in on a tangent. .
5. Counter complaining or defensiveness (not accepting blame).
6. Emotional talk where only the emotions speak (crying, screaming; yelling).
7. Double level messages (where there are two levels of communication).
8. No eye contact (sometimes hard for men).
9. Speaking for the other (outguessing or interpreting).
10. Overtalk — repetitious words or nagging.
11. Not thinking before you speak.
12. Not listening.

Restoring broken relationships.

Remember that relationships will break down without regular maintenance. Stress repentance!

1. To God.
2. To others.
3. Love does not mean "never having to say you are sorry." You must learn to say "I am sorry" in order to have good relationships.

Stop listening to and passing on negatives.

Begin to affirm.

1. Silence is not enough...we often assume the worst because of our own self doubts.
2. Love in deed is love indeed.
3. We are not so much called to change a person's life, as we are to affirm them as God changes them.

As much as possible, love unconditionally.

1. Love for people should be based on acceptance rather than on performance.
2. It is easier (and better) to act your way to more positive feelings, than it is to wait for positive feelings before acting.

Be as honest and open as you can be with your feelings without harming another person (it is good to remember that just because you have a negative feeling is no excuse for thoughtlessly lowering the ax on another person). It is generally not very successful to answer feelings with facts.

Pray for each other daily and pray for your relationship. God will strengthen it and bless it

The above has been adapted from a paper submitted by a student in one of my classes. The paper drew on information from THE FRIENDSHIP FACTOR by Alan Loy McGinnis, and LOVING EACH OTHER by Leo Buscaglia) .

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