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## **Disclaimer**

This information is based on the experience and research of the author. He believes that those who follow the principles outlined in this book will find their lives greatly enhanced. However, he assumes no responsibility for reader's personal choices.

**Written by David Pearce**

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# MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

## Understanding personality types

We are all different, unique and special. Attempting to mould one person's personality into another is very unwise and sometimes even damaging. To be personally responsible and satisfied with our individual temperament is more satisfactory. At the same time, we need to have a determination to improve ourselves by overcoming the inherent weaknesses of our personality type.

Thousands of years ago, when Greek philosophers influenced the world, Hippocrates understood the four basic people types. If we understand the varying temperaments of people today, using the same criteria, relationships can be improved dramatically. We are all a unique, individual blend of these basic temperaments. Briefly, they are as follows:

### Sanguine



Sanguines are extroverted, responsive, friendly, talkative and compassionate. They are bubbly, outgoing, fun people - the life of the party. On the negative side they can be undisciplined and even emotionally unstable. They are also prone to exaggerate.

### Choleric

The choleric is also extroverted, yet in a different way from the Sanguine. Choleric are independent, strong willed and visionary. They also tend to be very productive and make things happen. They can be strong leaders. Their weaknesses are described as cold, unemotional, impetuous and domineering. They can even be sarcastic and angry at times.



## Melancholy



Those with this introverted temperament tend to be gifted, industrious and self-disciplined. They are generally deep thinkers, good at attending to detail and analysing problems. Yet melancholies can be moody, self-centred and very touchy. They have also been described as unsociable and critical.

## Phlegmatic



Phlegmatics are also introverted, and are mostly calm, quiet, easygoing and dependable. They also show diplomacy and organising ability, blended subtly with a touch of dry humour. But there are weaknesses, such as lack of motivation, procrastination, indecision and the tendency to worry.

Most of us will major in one of these temperaments and have a less dominant secondary temperament. Most will also have traits of each temperament in varying levels, making each person unique by possessing an individual blend. If you as a person major on the extroverted personalities of Sanguine or Choleric, you will most likely deal well with people. If you are the more introverted Melancholy or Phlegmatic, you will most probably get things done in a most efficient way. To say extroverted is superior to introverted is incorrect. All personality types are needed for efficient function of the human race.

We are born with a certain **temperament**, but by attitude and choice, modification is possible. **Character** is the real person, which involves our attitudes, beliefs, principles and motivations. Our **personality** is the

outward expression of ourselves. This can be faked to hide our real character, but the genuine person tends to be the real winner in the end.

Understanding the different personality types tends to make us more patient with people without being judgmental. When this difference is not understood we often expect too much of them and believe they should think and act according to our own set of ideals. Relationships are greatly improved when we don't enforce our standards on others. They may be just as right as we are - in their own eyes. The simple rule is to accept people as they are. I am not saying the weaknesses in their temperaments are acceptable to society. However, to know where they are coming from can be an invaluable aid in understanding their make-up as well as being able to encourage them to major on their strengths and modify their weaknesses.

### Self image

Relating well with others is greatly influenced by how we perceive our personal worth. Having low self-value reflects badly on relationships.

Persons with **high self-worth** are said to have the following thought patterns.

- Think well of others
- Expect to be accepted by others
- Evaluate personal performance favourably
- Not afraid of other people's reactions
- Tend to work harder
- Comfortable with superiors
- Will defend themselves against negative comments

Thinking patterns of those with high self-worth tend to be positive. Notice the 'self thoughts' of those with high self-esteem:

'I'm ok, you're ok', 'I accept myself as I am', 'I can do better', 'I'll beat this problem', 'I'll keep going', 'I'm pleased with my progress', 'I'm not concerned what others think, I'm sure I'm on the right track'.

Persons with **low self-worth** are said to think in the following way.

- Disapprove of others
- Expect not to be accepted by others
- Less favourable about their personal performance
- Tend to perform poorly when watched
- Prefer to work for those who are less critical of them
- Tend to feel threatened by their superiors
- Find it difficult to defend themselves

Low self-worth often results in negative thinking patterns. These are some 'self thoughts' of those with low self-esteem.

'I'm no good', 'I just can't cope', 'I can't take it any longer', 'There's no point', 'I just can't do it', 'I'm miserable', 'What will people think?'

Having self-worth is in no way related to being self-centred, boastful or proud. Rather, these persons have a genuine image of dignity and feel needed in society. They have a sense of belonging, security and identity. Why then do so many have a low self-image? To a large degree we tend to believe what other people say about us; especially our parents and those we associated with in childhood. This is the time to develop a sense of worth in the young mind by showing support, giving affirmation and letting children see they are valued and respected. This gives them a feeling of competence, increasing their confidence in personal ability. Unfortunately, children are often exposed to negative 'put-downs'. These make such a deep impression on the mind that belief about their abilities and individuality becomes warped. This thinking spills over into adulthood and can only be changed by positive mental action and time to effect a desirable transformation. Changing life quality and achievement can be accomplished by having a positive mental attitude and making progressive choices.

We all need an attitude to accept ourselves as we are, regardless of education, success, possessions, occupation or looks. This, of course, does not mean we have no interest in improving ourselves. What it does mean is that we don't compare ourselves with others. Their opinions will not concern us if we can accept ourselves. There will be no need to feel heavily dependent on people, but rather, we will feel confident to stand-alone. If we are honest with ourselves we can better understand our makeup, then in turn, become more accepting and understanding of others. There will be no compulsion to hide from self by escaping reality with alcohol or drugs. Instead, we will be in touch with ourselves on the feeling, thinking and planning level. Neither do we place unrealistic demands on others to make up for personal inadequacies.



Those with self-worth are less likely to explode in anger or be frustrated by bottling up feelings to the breaking point. In contrast, there comes an atmosphere of confidence. Differences can be solved in a creative way rather than becoming aggressive, making improved relationships a natural outcome.

### **Who are you?**

Even if you believe otherwise, you are an important person, because there is only one "**you**" in the world. Some may be like you, but they are not you, because you are unique. Perhaps you don't have a high opinion of yourself because you have experienced 'put downs' in your past. Maybe



your peers or family members have painted a miserable picture of you, which you have consciously or unconsciously come to believe.

Maybe you will have difficulty in altering your present thinking of your self-image, but it's not impossible and you do have the right to change. Yes, you are **special**. In fact, you need to love yourself! Don't misunderstand me. I am not suggesting you are self-opinionated, or think you're better than anyone else. Such people are usually objectionable, but you can choose to be self-confident. See yourself as somebody to be counted in the world.

You don't need to mimic someone else. Just be yourself, but endeavour to do your best. Make changes if necessary. Of course you can't change the past, but you can modify the present to make changes for the future. Make a strong decision to change, then determine to persevere, and you will make a major difference. This is an achievable accomplishment. Be confident in your ability. Believe you are a significant person, simply because it is the truth.

### **How important are you?**

Some are treated with indifference and disrespect. They may be addressed with a "Hey! Pinhead", or "What's **your** problem?" Yet these same people may treat other individuals with the utmost respect. There is often a simple reason. Those whose presence demands respect, tend to be respected, simply because they value themselves.

If you are treated with disrespect, the solution may lie in your own thinking about yourself. Often others see in you what you actually think of yourself. If you think you're inferior, this seems to be the way you will be treated. See yourself as important, because you really are a significant person! How you think determines how you act. The simple rule of attitude and behaviour is expressed as follows.

*Your attitude and actions determine  
How others react to you.*

How can you achieve respect from people? Here are a few ideas.

1. Dress well.
2. Have an aim in life. The world has a respect for those who know where they are going.
3. Without being pompous, think of yourself as a person with worth.

### Feelings of inferiority and self-image

Do you have a feeling of inferiority? Do you feel other people are better than you are? Do you feel the world has been unkind to you personally, or that you have been unjustly treated?

Perhaps you are suffering from past hurts. Continuing to think in this negative vein can be quite destructive. It's better to believe you are a special person with talents. Everybody has at least one. Search yourself for your good points. Develop a healthy self-image rather than discrediting yourself. Do the best with what you have, instead of trying to compete with your peers. Be your own self.



No matter who you are, whether plain or beautiful, fat or skinny, tall or short, clever or slow. Take the attitude, **"I am glad to be who I am"**. "I accept myself as I am and I will do the best I can." How you think of yourself reflects incredibly on your relationships with others.

## Be yourself

Some people are extroverts. You know the kind, always talking, usually loudly, the life of the party, bubbling over with self-confidence. Sometimes this can be a front while they strive for recognition with their peer group. This type of person may have a talent to communicate, which, if correctly channelled, is a tremendous asset in many kinds of employment.

However, extroverts are really no better than quiet persons are. Introverts simply have other talents, and often quietly achieve without saying too much. If you are introverted, don't see this as inferior, but rather as a different personality type.

Visualise yourself as the person you want to become. Don't let body size, or mental capacity deter you. People generally accept you for who you are. The biggest battle is to accept self. If you want to change your self-image, you can. You may not become the most physically beautiful person in the world, but you can dress well, and learn to make the best of the assets you have. You may not become the most intelligent person in the world, but you can choose a career that suits your talents and abilities and be the best **'you'**. You don't have to crawl through life on your hands and knees. Stand erect, put your shoulders back and live with confidence.

If you think defeat, that's what you'll get. If you think victory, you improve your chances. As you continue to exude confidence, you will become stronger. Conquering can be real, if you believe you can. The simple solution for a healthy self-image is to 'believe in yourself.' Spiritual people generally have a self dignity because they believe they are precious in the sight of God. Their trust is more in what God can do through them rather than what they achieve through their own personal abilities.



## ***Effective communication***

### **Levels of communication**

When we communicate with people, we do so at varying levels of involvement. We generally communicate on a basic level with those we know casually or hardly know. Naturally, we share the private details of our lives only with those we know well. Different communication levels are as follows.

### **General greetings**

This may be a simple “Good Morning” or a “Hello” or “How are you today?” It indicates recognition of the other person. This is a very important level of communication because people hate being ignored, but enjoy being acknowledged (unless they choose to be anti-social). To fail at this level can create relationship problems, particularly with those we see often. To neglect this greeting, even with those with whom we communicate more deeply, can result in misunderstandings.

### **Speaking about facts**

The communication can deepen if the circumstances for conversing are favourable. Certain facts may be brought into the conversation, such as the weather, a news item, world events or a home or work-related subject.

## Speaking about ideas

The level of communication deepens even further when we state our opinions on the facts we are discussing. We may even pass our personal judgment on an issue. This level has an element of danger, particularly if our opinions differ with the person with whom we are talking. When we engage in this level of discussion it's an advantage to understand the art of diplomacy and be able to disagree agreeably. Relationships are often badly damaged at this level. People can easily be hurt or misunderstood.

## Speaking about feelings

Talking from the heart can be very risky, but with the right person, at the right time, it can result in deep and enduring friendships or relationships. There are levels of speaking about feelings, too. You can say, "I enjoyed our talk." This is a limited way of expressing feelings, yet important for developing friendships. When the heart talk develops to the point of how you feel about another person, feelings can be charged with emotion and the situation become very sensitive. For those you love, this way of speaking can cause the relationship to become more enduring. In encounters with others who are not close it may be unwise to overstep boundaries and speak too freely. Those who speak openly about how they feel, especially with very private aspects of their lives, may be guilty of inappropriate disclosure. Some things are not to be shared. We all have a level of privacy. In this level of communication, filter your disclosures to fit the time, place and circumstances.

## Emotional words

Words spoken from the heart are expressed in the following statements. They are words of emotion.

### **Negative statements** (yet sometimes necessary to say)

"You hurt me".

"I am disappointed".

"I feel angry".

"That makes me very sad".

"That makes me feel very jealous".

“Don’t do it. I am afraid”.

“I feel your actions are very foolish”.

“I hate it when you interrupt”.

Now for some **positive emotional words** from the heart.

“I love you”.

“I care about you”.

“I enjoyed that”.

“That was a beautiful experience”.

“What you have done is sensational”.

“I am very grateful to you”.

“That’s an outstanding accomplishment”.

“You sang beautifully”.

“You look terrific”.

“I appreciate your help”.

“That makes me feel very happy”.

### **Some positive emotional experiences**

Joy - love - power - courage - satisfaction - happiness - serenity - humour - inspiration - conviction - gratefulness - compassion - achievement - honesty - sympathy - empathy - admiration - appreciation - excitement - caring.

### **Some negative emotional experiences**

Pain - loneliness - fear - anger - lust - shame - pride - jealousy - apathy - discouragement - frustration - depression - sorrow - betrayal - hate - irritability - resentment - disappointment - apprehension - worry.

Talking from the head is understood as logical intellectual knowledge.

Talking from the heart is emotional, revealing how we feel.

Wisdom knows how to blend them effectively.

Because the vital ingredient for relationships is from the heart, ‘feelings’ communication knowledge is imperative. In the experience of many,

emotional expression has been squashed from childhood. Emotional 'hate talk' is often heard but affirmation from the heart is very rare. Those who choose to be in touch with emotions, even though some practise may be required, will be rewarded with healthy relationships. Share feelings of happiness and sadness together. Listen as well as talk from the heart. Be in touch with your emotions.

### **Communication by personal contact**

There is also value in giving your partner a cuddle or your children a hug as you affirm them from your heart. This is wisdom and strength, not weakness as some falsely assume. Even an experiment with newborn mice showed significant progress and better health when they were gently stroked for ten minutes a day by comparison with those receiving no attention. Personal contact in humans is exceedingly more important and necessary. Touching is a basic form of communication. Humans do need this contact to express closeness when sharing joys, sorrows, fears, anxieties, hopes and dreams. Health is greatly benefited, but so are relationships.

Personal contact also helps guard against stress-related diseases and feelings of depression. When touching, family bonding, loyalty and closeness demonstrate love. However, inappropriate touching, suggesting sexual overtones, will have the opposite effect on family members. Psychological damage can occur in young children and even effect them in adulthood if they are subject to this unwarranted abuse. Sexual touching is meant only for a partner.

Practise expressing your love by touching, or with a kiss on the cheek or a gentle pat on the head or back, or a hand or arm on the shoulder, or perhaps a hug. Gently stroking the forehead. Running fingers through the hair or an arm around the waist. This touching, done appropriately and practised with genuine motives on those we love, will greatly enhance relationships. When combined with talking and listening, a strong communication bond is formed.

## Speaking intimately

This is a total sharing of two minds - like two persons blending into one. Such intimacy is usually reserved for life-long partners who have become as we hear in wedding services, "One flesh." They live as one unit and discover the deepest level of communication, which in turn results in a fulfilment of happiness and an ever-growing bond of true love. Marriages often fail because of communication failure - not just in this intimate level - but also in the other four levels. In marriage, couples usually experience physical intimacy without difficulty, but seldom understand or reach the intimate level of mind communication.

## Body language

Body language is simply communication through posture and body movements. It seldom stands alone but is usually associated with the five communication levels above. Some say we communicate this way as much as 55%. Our body movements have a tremendous influence in our relationships with people. Our attitude is often shown by the way we stand, sit or move. In addition, body language displays fear, anger, cheerfulness or indifference. Even a smile, a nod of the head, pointing or frowning is body language. However, too much can be read into body language. For example, folding the arms is said to be an aggressive or defensive signal, yet it may simply be a way to keep warm on a cold day. What I am saying is, don't jump to conclusions when interpreting body language. Follow up tactfully with controlled speech and make sure of your facts. Being aware of facial expression, body posture and movement is helpful if you wish to communicate in a positive way for a favourable impression.

Some of the most common body language messages are as follows: Placing the hand over the mouth (indicates telling a lie.) Showing open palms when speaking to a person (indicates honest intentions.) Hand placed on the chin (being thoughtful or making a decision.) Arms folded or legs crossed (can indicate a closed attitude.) Head tilted forward with the person looking at you over the top of his/her glasses (disapproval.) Sitting in a chair with hands placed behind the head and one ankle resting on the



knee (a signal of overconfidence.) To study this subject in depth, read the top-selling book 'Body Language' by Norman Pease.

### **Talking to the heart**

We are usually quite comfortable when speaking about facts and logic but become strangely silent when talking about feelings. How we feel is generally regarded as personal and not to be shared. With this attitude we have a lot to lose. Close communication is achieved when we use this "feelings" type dialogue, to build meaningful relationships. One very important rule, which needs repeating, is to keep conversations free of inappropriate disclosures, or the benefit will be lost.

Filter the revelation of your feeling to suit the occasion. You need to be selective as to whom you will reveal your deepest feelings. Only a person you can trust and will keep a confidence is safe. Talking about feelings is healthy in conversation, providing it's not personally threatening.

When we combine heart talk with kindness, courtesy, tenderness and compassion, people warm to us. Human nature responds more favourably to what we are than what we say, although words are still important.

Hollywood knows how to talk to the heart. Their productions can cause audiences to laugh, cry, and become angry, happy or sad. They usually do this with a moving story. A love story touches emotions. Other stories stir up indignation or reconciliation. Music also has a magical effect on our feelings.

We touch the hearts of people when we genuinely tell them we care about them. We let them know we are interested in them personally. The importance of expressing our feelings rather than suppressing them is vital in developing a bonded relationship. However, wisely guard against over-familiarity, taking care not to step over the borderline of appropriateness.

The heart is touched when we show a true interest in people's welfare. We care about their problems, being willing to help if we can. Being loving and lovable is a virtuous characteristic that will win hearts.

Emotion is a very real part of the human race. We cannot deny our feelings. Use them to your benefit and draw close to people you love. Speak words to show how you feel. Talk about feelings and you will reach hearts.

### Talking with people

Talking **to** people is not effective communication. Talking **with** people; a **two-way** conversation, is the desired ideal. The aim is to become one with them, not to speak in a superior or inferior manner, but to meet them on their level.



### Starting a conversation

First of all find a point of interest - maybe weather conditions. People generally do not seem to grow tired of this subject. This is a good discussion opener for many occasions. "Lovely day", "Looks like rain", "That's a cold wind," etc. If you are travelling you can say, "What a

magnificent view”, or at work, “We’re going to be busy today”, or in a person’s home, “What an excellent painting.” The list of discussion openers seems endless.

### **Keep it rolling**

To continue a conversation beyond the point of an interest opener, try asking an appropriate question after first making a relevant statement. “I enjoy water skiing.” (Statement) “Do you water ski?” (Question) This method of beginning with a fitting statement followed by a sensible question can be an opener to a healthy conversation.

### **Share some of yourself**

If you only ask questions, it may appear intrusive. To avoid this possibility, tell something about yourself. You may continue the conversation by saying, “I go skiing about once a month.” To encourage two-way communication in the early stages, try to be fairly brief when talking about yourself. Speak in a friendly tone of voice. Some may find this instruction basic, yet those who are just beginning to converse may find communication difficult. Knowing these principles can give a flying start to engaging in meaningful conversations. If you are short of conversation material, try asking about their family, occupation or recreation.

### **Be a good listener**

We have two ears and only one tongue. Perhaps nature is suggesting we are meant to listen more than we speak. Certainly, effective listening is essential to good communication. First of all we show we are really interested in what a person is saying. This is demonstrated by positive body language. Also, in many cultures the importance of looking at a person as they speak is considered correct. Even nodding the head or smiling at appropriate times as they speak is viewed favourably. Carefully listening to what they are saying is demonstrated by making simple responses like, “Aha”, “I see”, “That’s very interesting.” Many do not listen but concentrate on what they personally will say next. They are not listening or communicating.

Good listening shows an attitude of concentration on the content of the conversation. A good listener also tries to understand the motivation of the person by asking appropriate questions, which in turn helps grasp the big picture.



### **Acknowledge what a person says**

One of the most effective listening techniques is to acknowledge what a person says. Only as you listen closely can an appropriate acknowledgment be made. Many make the mistake of carrying on with their own story or theme, making no response to the person's words. Two people are speaking. Matthew says, "I'm flying to Spain next week." Joshua replies, "I'm flying to USA the week after." Can you see how the first person's statement was ignored, or at least, not acknowledged?

Let's try again. Matthew says. "I'm flying to Spain next week." Joshua responds by saying, "Lucky you, business or pleasure?" Matthew answers, "I'm taking a few days holiday." Now, after Joshua has acknowledged Matthew, he continues. "I'm certainly looking forward to my holiday in USA in two weeks." An important point to practise in conversation is to be as natural as possible.

### **Use a person's name**

People respond favourably when their name is used in conversation, providing it isn't overdone. Be sure to use correct pronunciation or the advantage is lost. Usually the Christian name is better to use, but in some cases, depending on culture, the proper thing may be to use their title and/or surname.

### **Maintain eye contact**

In many societies it is seen as a weakness not to maintain eye contact. Some cultures however, view this practise differently, seeing eye contact as aggressive or disrespectful. Generally speaking, looking at a person with a pleasant expression enhances friendship and creates a favourable impression. Ideally, maintain eye contact about 70% of the time you are conversing. People are not at ease if you stare, nor do they trust you if your eyes are shifty or darting around. Mostly they tend not to respect you if you do not look at them while they are speaking. Be relaxed, natural and confident.

### **Don't interrupt**

Common courtesy allows people to finish what they are saying without interruption. Except on certain occasions, don't finish a sentence for them. This can be deflating to their ego by making them feel inadequate.

### **Be nice to people - be friendly**

This advice should not be necessary, yet people fail this virtue constantly, almost as a habit. The simple rule is - if we want to make friends we need to be friendly. If we are likeable, people tend to like us. Avoid being over friendly however, especially by being too close to a person and entering their private zone. We all psychologically protect ourselves by an imaginary bubble around us. Some have bigger bubbles than other people do but we all have a private space, which is wise to respect. Be friendly but always with dignity. Over-familiarity by stepping over boundaries is detrimental to healthy relationships.

Being kind and compassionate by showing genuine concern for a person's well being is very impressive, simply because there isn't enough attitude of true care in the world.

## Smile

A smile is such a simple thing, yet so vitally important. Let your smile come from within by smiling with your eyes as well as your mouth. Avoid the 'cheesy grin' and the 'rubber band smirk'. Be natural. A smile creates a happy atmosphere and adds vitality to friendships. Laughter at appropriate times is also beneficial.

People are usually drawn to you if you are happy, and withdraw from you if you are sad. Happiness comes from within, rather than from good things that happen. Happiness from within is more an attitude of mind. The fact is we will be as happy as we choose.

We don't have to laugh all the time to be happy, but it does help if we smile, even if we don't feel like smiling. There is tremendous power in a smile. It says, 'I am pleased to see you', 'I am happy to help you', 'I like your company', and much more. Some people smile so infrequently they find it hard to smile when they want to! Such people can practice smiling in front of a mirror until they have developed a pleasant smile that comes naturally and often. The emphasis however, is on 'natural'. Smiling naturally is difficult unless a positive and happy attitude is developed. A pleasant, radiant face does more for one's appearance than the most expert make-up. Practise smiling with your eyes, as well as your mouth even if you don't feel inclined and the spirit will be catching. Let your smile come from within.

Happy people are more likely to succeed. They get promotions at work, make more friends, generally have happier homes and enjoy life more. A smile can even be detected over the phone. The tone of voice is affected by a smile, so that even what you say sounds happy. When you meet someone, whether you know them or not, smile when you say 'Hello'. The ice is broken for you to begin a pleasant conversation.

A smiling expression is also a good antidote for discouragement. It can bring sunshine to those who are sad and hope for those who feel defeated. This small act of communication is extremely valuable. It can't be bought, begged, borrowed or taken away against your will. But when you give it away, other people can receive a treasure of help. Even if a person is grumpy, flash a smile. Nobody needs a smile so much as the person who has none to give!

Yes, a smile may cost nothing, but its meaning can be worth a million dollars. It promotes happiness and can begin meaningful friendships. Others benefit from your smile, but do you know who receives the greatest reward? YOU!

### **Thank people**

Thank people in the course of conversation without creating a big issue. "Thanks for your help". "Thanks for your time". "I appreciate that information", etc. Don't overdo the thanks but remember human nature does like being appreciated. Many don't practise this small act of courtesy, but those who do are well rewarded with more meaningful relationships.

### **Communication blocks**

Some responses in conversation block effective communication and harm relationships. This is usually done without realising the danger. The following list shows some of the most common mistakes made by people in families, the workplace and friendships.

#### ***1. Judging attitudes***

##### **a. Criticising**

Criticising puts people down. Unless the criticism is constructive and shows genuine concern for a person who needs help, relationship harm can result. We hurt people more by the way we speak than by what we

actually say. A harsh or angry tone of voice can hurt sensitive feelings without the speaker even being aware of the damage to relationships.

Criticism is mostly the cruel, bitter, nasty variety, causing the critic to be disliked or even hated. Looking for the best in people and exhibiting genuine affirmation is a far better alternative.

### **b. Name-calling**

Putting people down is a form of sport to some, but it can hurt, even though the victim may laugh along with the joke. Calling people names like 'Fatso', 'Baldy', 'Jerk', etc. offends and causes them to dislike you and tends to destroy your relationship.

### **c. Manipulating**

Manipulation is against a person's right of choice. None of us has the right to force our views or desires on others. Perhaps an exception can be made in some cases if a person is making a choice which will end up as a major mistake, but if the motive is to just have our own way, the relationship will ultimately suffer.

### **d. Passing judgment**

Helping people is fine; condemning them is not. There is a difference, however, between discernment and judgment. Discernment is an analytical evaluation of a situation needing a positive and constructive solution. Judgment is declaring a person guilty, usually with dogmatic harshness, without sufficient information. This attitude makes very real enemies and the worst type of friends. A healthier attitude is to show a little mercy. We may need some ourselves one day!

## ***2. False solutions attitude***

### **a. Giving orders**

The person who gives orders like a dictator is usually disliked. Nobody appreciates being forced. When a person who has no authority gives orders, tremendous friction is generated. Even a person, who has control,



will gain respect from those under authority if he/she **asks** for a task to be done rather than giving an order. The staff of a boss in these circumstances will tend to work well whether the boss is watching or not. The same is true in the home. An attitude of cooperation is formed in a contented atmosphere.

### **b. Threatening**

Nobody likes a bully. Threatening punishment creates resentment, which in turn harms relationships. Physical bullying in schools and homes has become an issue in modern times. So has mental bullying in the workplace, social media and elsewhere. Very positive repercussions may be enforced by law and can be some deterrent, but the most preferable solution is attitude change.

### **c. Moralising**

Avoid telling people they 'should' or 'must' or 'have to'. Being preached at causes people to cringe or rebel and doesn't change their attitude anyway. They may be even more resentful.

### **d. Excessive questions**

Using detective style questions, putting people 'on the mat' to demand precise answers distances people. This attitude bruises and breaks relationships.

### **e. Advising**

When we give advice we are insulting another's intelligence. We are saying, "You're not clever enough to work out your own problems but I am." A good counsellor talks through a person's problem to help them find their own solution. While a counsellor may offer a suggestion or ask how a certain solution may work, they don't actually give advice, unless under certain circumstances when it becomes necessary.

### **3. Uncaring attitude**

#### **a. Diversion**

Changing the subject purposely to avoid the issue leaves the problem unsolved. Communication has been broken.

#### **b. Enforcing logic**

This attitude does not listen to the other person but says, “My way is the only way.” This outlook cuts communication because it only looks from one viewpoint. This person refuses to listen.

#### **c. False reassurance**

Telling a person all will work out well, when it won't is cruel. Sometimes there is no solution, such as in the death of a loved one. Only sympathy and to 'be there' can help at a time like this, but to say everything will be fine is certainly false reassurance. Where possible, offer positive hope, but don't be uncaring in a difficult time.

These blocks cause conflict and hinder communication. By avoiding them you choose to be a better person, which will result in more satisfactory relationships. Those who follow these principles of communication and avoid the blocks, have happier families, relationships, friendships and work relations.

### **Poor communicators**

There is a type of person who has an obsession to keep the record straight. This person will precisely correct every minor detail when someone is speaking. This is alienating and annoying. Others try to keep one step ahead of the speaker by guessing what will be said next, making the story difficult to complete. This is “takeover conversation” and poor communication. Then there is the cross-examiner type who keeps interrupting by asking trivial, irrelevant questions, then puts the speaker down for not having this unimportant information. This person is listening well but is far from popular.

## ***Communication through better speech***

Our communication is much better if we speak correctly. Body language is important for communication, but we make ourselves better understood by speech. Here are a few tips, which may help:

### **1. Speak in a natural conversational style**

Avoid the 'plum in the mouth' or sounding posh. We can speak well without showing unnecessary superiority. We are accepted more readily if we speak naturally, in a conversational style. Avoid speaking to people in a preaching way or sounding artificial or unnecessarily different.

### **2. Speak with proper volume**

Some people speak too loud while others speak too softly. We are not always aware of our own volume. Real benefit is gained if we listen to ourselves on a DVD recording to make improvements to our speech.

### **3. Speak with confidence**

Don't speak with superiority, as if you are better than the others are, but do be confident. Be one with people as you speak with them and don't feel they are more important than you are. See them as different and unique, but as equal human beings who you respect as much as you respect yourself.

### **4. Speak clearly and articulately**

Using correct grammar will always be in your favour. People will respect you more if you speak correctly. Speech is better understood if you speak clearly. Round off the vowels, clip the words so that speech doesn't become a ramble, but do endeavour to sound natural. Newsreaders usually speak correctly and in a way that is acceptable to the average person. Use them as a guide.

## **5. Don't mumble or trail off at the end of a sentence**

Indistinct speech, or trailing off, causes the thought of the sentence to be lost because it isn't heard clearly. Speak distinctly, right to the very end of the sentence.

## **6. Speak at the correct speed**

Some speak so quickly, they are hard to comprehend, which causes understanding to be lost. Others speak too slowly, often resulting in loss of interest. The recommended speed is 125 to 150 words per minute.

If your speech lacks fluency, try this for an exercise. Pick an object, such as a calculator, and talk about it without stopping for one or two minutes. Don't worry too much about making a lot of sense on these practice runs, just keep talking. As you continue, your fluency will improve. Over time, you will never be lost for something to say when you do make conversation.

## **7. Use expression and emphasis**

Where appropriate use expression and emphasis when you speak. A monotone voice is boring. Add a little emphasis to punch lines. Speak some words slowly for emphasis. Let the voice rise and fall at the proper places rather than talking on a level plane. Practise a little enthusiasm when talking. This helps the hills and valleys of the voice and makes you sound more interesting. Avoid the singsong voice, although it is acceptable in some cultures. Once again, remember - be natural.

## **8. Speak in a pleasant tone**

This is where you profit from seeing yourself on a DVD. Speaking in a pleasant tone and smiling where appropriate creates a happy atmosphere resulting in people enjoying your company.

## **9. Eliminate word whiskers**

What's a 'word whisker'? Unnecessary 'umms' and 'arrs'. We all do this a little, but the more we avoid it, the better. A conversation inflicted with 'word whiskers' becomes drawn out and loses its sparkle. Changing

incorrect speech habits is not easy. It takes a lot of determination, time and practise - but it's worth doing. Your life and those you contact will be enriched.

### **10. Speak from the diaphragm.**

A common practise is to speak from the throat and not use the body as a sounding board. This strains the vocal cords. To speak correctly, first take a deep breath and fill the lungs. Secondly, allow the diaphragm, (situated at the base of the lungs) to drop a little to take in more air. The stomach will bulge slightly. Then, using the strength of the abdominal muscles, as you speak, force the air up through the throat and even into the head. What actually happens is that the body and the head with their various cavities become a sounding board like a guitar base. A guitar has no worthwhile sound with strings only. The voice will have more volume, but even more importantly, more resonance. This information is vital for public speakers and singers. Everyday speech is not so intense, but even so, it's healthier to speak correctly. Furthermore, your conversations will contain more life and make your influence more effective.

### **Be assertive**

**To be assertive does not mean to be aggressive.** This is a very important point to understand when considering this subject. The assertive person, especially in conflict situations, experiences a deeper communication. To be assertive is an asset to finding solutions for misunderstandings and differences.

### **Non-assertive persons**

Non-assertive persons tend to conceal their true feelings. They are afraid to communicate their real understanding for fear of non-acceptance. They have low self-confidence, feeling other people are better. They purposely avoid conflict, feeling a peaceful situation is desirable. This may sound good initially, until we consider their unwillingness to deal with issues. By avoiding conflict in smaller matters, larger, worse conflicts can evolve.

They have a strong desire to be liked by people, so avoid blame wherever possible. They shy away from responsibility. They are very hard and critical on themselves and because they have low self-esteem, they lack confidence in their personal ability.

Sometimes these persons carry a large Santa Claus bag on their shoulders, but it isn't filled with Christmas presents, it's more like heavy rocks. The person may talk to a sympathetic person or a counsellor and take all the rocks out of the bag and place them on the floor, then describe the problem of each one. The rocks represent the problems of their life, particularly the hurts of the past. This is often referred to as 'baggage'.

To relieve the heavy burdens of life, we would consider the wisest procedure, after talking about the rocks or problems, is to throw them away and get on with the future. But the non-assertive person will pick them up, place them back in the bag, and continue to complain about the heavy burden and the pain. To be fair, some have a horrendous past and it's not always possible to forget. The constructive solution is this: choose to forgive the past. Only then can we make progress into the future.

The unfortunate consequences of childhood hurts or unresolved, brooding resentments, is that they often become emotional weapons, used to damage present relationships. The hurts of the past rear their ugly heads, often undetected, resulting in a person boiling over with deep resentment, perhaps associated with aggressive behaviour. This non-assertive person who was so intent in keeping the peace, now loses control with misplaced anger on a person or persons in the present, who become victims of aggression, motivated by this person's past emotional hurts.

Afterward, feelings of guilt for this unwarranted behaviour begin to surface. Further feelings of shame engender a determination never to make that mistake again. But it does happen again, and again.

The angry words spoken often use '**you**' statements. "You make me so angry". "You are the one to blame". The word 'you' is used with great repetition. The situation worsens with the use of aggressive words in the

form of accusation. 'You must', 'You should'. Further threats, blaming, criticism, ridicule or even sarcasm, turn the home into a verbal battlefield, or even to a physical war. Inevitably, an aggression response from the other party is to be expected. In the meantime, emotions become frazzled and may take time to heal. Some damage never heals.

The aftermath of the great battle can take various forms. Some become deathly silent, nursing brooding hurts. Others set out to make living difficult by withdrawing the niceties of life from their partner. Some choose to purposely irritate wherever possible. A power struggle becomes real under a cold war atmosphere. Relationships are at breaking point. Other people become unfortunate victims of the conflict such as children, relatives, or even friends. Sometimes the cat or dog. The bewildering question is often asked, "What's wrong with him/her today?"

Unfortunately, non-assertive persons often resort to aggression, which is viewed as the best form of defence - to attack first. If they had personal respect they would behave differently, also, they would have greater respect for others.

### **The assertive person**

The assertive person has a very healthy attitude towards people and life in general. There is first of all a respect of personal rights, coupled with a strong respect of the rights of others. Inferior or superior feelings are not considered, rather, a belief of equality between people of all classes. There is sufficient self-confidence to be openly honest when communicating to strengthen human relations. Except for inappropriate disclosure, the assertive person feels free to be very open. Because they respect others, they dialogue courteously, not seeking an occasion to belittle or criticise. They will set a caring type atmosphere. This type of person will succeed in life through developing excellent human relationships.

An assertive person is quite comfortable in speaking for self rather than placing blame on others in a conflict situation. Instead of "you"

statements, this person will use “I” statements. This is not to be confused with people who only speak about themselves. This is another issue. By using “I” statements, this individual is clearly communicating personal feelings on the subject at hand. He/she is speaking for self, rather than blaming another by using “you” continually. He/she is really saying how he/she feels about the issue and taking personal responsibility for feelings. Rather than saying, “**You** made a mistake.” This person would say, “**I** feel it was a mistake.” This removes a blaming attitude and communicates true feeling from the heart in the conflict situation. This is the pathway to a solution.

The conversation may include statements like, “**I notice**” (you are often late). “**I imagine**” (you have a personal problem). “**I feel**” (you need help) **When this happens, it seems like** you have no interest in work. **It would help me** if you could talk the matter over. **Next time** come and see me first. **How do you feel** about your work? Words to avoid are, never, always, you, but, have to, should. Forcing absolutes on people causes resentment and greatly reduces the possibility of a solution.

Naturally the assertive person will speak in a calm voice and use non-aggressive body language. This is not avoiding the issue, but facing it squarely in a constructive rather than destructive attitude. The next important consideration is to listen to the other person and build from there.

Assertive people have problems, but they are more in a position of control. Assertive behaviour is non-aggressive behaviour. Assertion stands for rights in a positive, non-violent and productive way. This is a more effective way to solve problems. It’s also the way to develop healthy relationships and build lasting, genuine friendships.

Assertion is not submission, manipulation or aggression, but assertive persons do have the following beliefs. They feel they have the right to be treated with respect and be able to express in a positive way their own feelings or opinions and be listened to and taken seriously, as well as the



right to establish personal priorities and say “No” without feeling guilty. Also to expect and receive what rightfully belongs to self. This attitude is very much in contrast with non-assertive persons who tend to avoid problems which, in turn, causes stress, capable of building into anger, or feelings of depression, helplessness, lack of self confidence, or even loss of control.

Conflict is easier to resolve if feelings and opinions are expressed openly in a non-aggressive attitude. This gives a sense of ‘being in control.’

### **Assert yourself**

As an individual person, you have the right to assert yourself. It’s not a matter of you being right or someone else being wrong. The way you behave is a choice on your part. Your treatment of others needs to be acceptable to you, according to your personal life values.

It’s important to stand up for your personal ideals in a way that is also acceptable to others. You certainly don't have to apologise for your stand. State your case factually and fairly with tact and confidence. Don't reason on emotion, but do let the person or parties know your feelings clearly. Again, do not direct your objections toward persons, but to behaviour. In situations where you are upholding your ideals as a person, be kind, but firm. For example, a family member may decide to shout an abuse at you personally. How do you respond? Say, "I don't really appreciate being shouted at like that". You have asserted yourself. The family member may object, but you will not retract your statement. You have revealed how you feel. You have not criticised. You have simply objected to unwarranted behaviour and you have made it clear that this is not acceptable to you. You can be kind by saying, "I'm sorry you're annoyed". But be firm by continuing, "I just don't appreciate being yelled at".

The standard has been set and you will be respected as you continue to uphold your rights. If this is new behaviour for you, a time period may be required for your partner or friend to become acquainted with your different style of dealing with conflict. There may be many times when

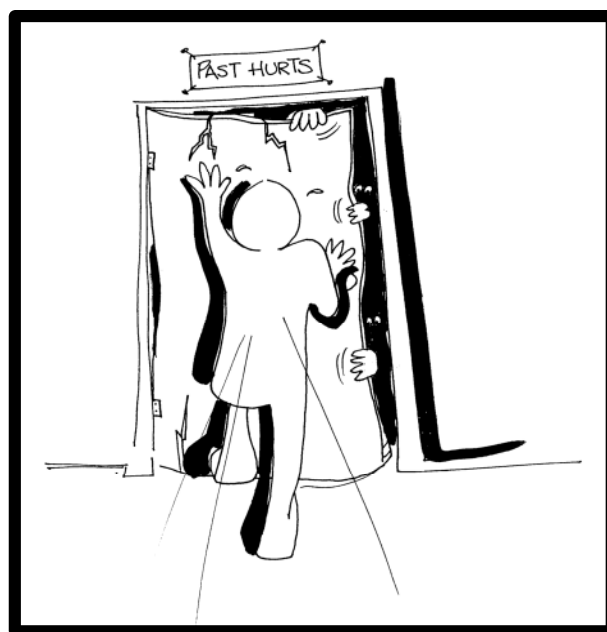
you need to assert yourself with intelligence and without aggression. There may also be times when it's better **not** to assert yourself, if the situation is considered inappropriate.

## Forgiveness

Practising an attitude of forgiveness is a vital ingredient in maintaining meaningful relationships. Many have lost good friends and pleasant relations with family members when they refuse to forgive the mistakes of someone close. After all, most seem to make a slip at some time in life. When we do refuse to forgive others or ourselves guess who gets hurt the most? We do! Carrying grievances and bitterness is detrimental to a healthy state of mind. The body is adversely affected, which can lead to ill health. Those we feel we can't forgive may not even be aware of our negative thoughts toward them, so remain unhurt, while we continue to boil internally. More personal benefit is gained if we maintain a spirit of forgiveness.

Wrongs certainly may have been done, and in time justice will finally emerge, but for the present, it's a wiser move to forgive and get on with life rather than continue stewing and hating. An unforgiving spirit has no redeeming qualities. Revenge thoughts can create a very bitter feeling. The cliché that 'revenge is sweet' tends to be mythical in real life experience.

**People who cannot forgive the past, (which cannot be changed) will have great difficulty in forming a satisfactory future.**



Forgiving may be difficult, but trying to cope under the heavy burden of resentment diminishes joy and crushes love. Forgiving also gives a sense of freedom, making life easier rather than harder. If feelings are controlled by logic rather than letting emotion rule, this results in a more contented and resolved feeling. Forgiveness is experienced in two phases. Firstly, in a change of attitude, by being prepared to forgive. Secondly by choosing a healthy communication solution to reconcile a relationship.

A miracle seems to occur when we choose to be forgiving. Other people change their attitude toward us. Then we change ourselves. We become more relaxed, and develop a sense of peace and serenity. Others enjoy our company. Life has meaning and purpose. Genuine forgiveness chooses to not dwell on others wrongs. True forgiveness dispels guilt and enables us to relate well, even to those who have hurt us personally. Those who choose not to hold grudges are certainly happier than those who let anger consume their thoughts.



### **Supporting a friend in need**

When a friend or relative who wants to talk over a personal problem approaches you, how can you communicate effectively and offer some

help? If they have a serious problem they may need professional help, but in general, personal friends can be adequate support.

Avoid giving advice, especially in the early stages. Let them talk out their problem without interruption, except where you need more information for a clear understanding. This talking is therapeutic to them and lets them see their own situation more clearly.

As you listen, acknowledge what they say as previously explained. Also accept what they say as valid. The issue is big to them so a minimisation of their problem is not helpful. After their explanation you may then ask what they think they need. Their thinking is now ready to accept solutions. Their problem is clearer now they have expressed it fully and they are in a position to be rational. Of course a solution is not always wanted. Sometimes people talk to friends because they know they will listen. They feel better just by 'letting it all out'. This is one reason why we are unwise to be too forthcoming with a solution. So give them a little space to let them arrive at their own conclusions.

They will appreciate you when you are there for support in their present situation and when you offer some future hope. Your care for them will be appreciated as they sense your atmosphere of genuine love. This type of communication enhances life-long relationships.

### **Escaping the dysfunctional pattern**

Belonging to a dysfunctional family is a problem many people face. What is dysfunctional? This simply refers to a poor functional family engaged in irrational behaviour, inability to handle finance or unfortunately being inflicted with personality problems. Other factors may add to the problem such as criminal activity, rebelling against society or creating havoc with neighbours and others. Relationships in these homes are often at their worst.

Unacceptable social behaviour is generally learned from role-model parents. Children seldom have any other role to follow than what they

have observed in their parent's home. Sometimes the baggage of the past from divorce or separation adds to the problem or may well have contributed to the present unpleasant situation. Problem behaviour is often influenced by conflicts from the past, even as far back as childhood. Unconscious negative attitudes are developed which damage and distort self-image and badly affect relationships. A healthy self-perception is a vital ingredient to resolve past difficulties. Accepting self as a person to be respected is imperative.

But an escape is possible by anyone who chooses to follow a different life pathway and construct new life values. How can this happen? The right kind of knowledge is necessary to make this change. An education in human relations can indeed reverse the problem and has done so in countless cases. If the dysfunctional cycle is broken, the next generation can be transformed to functional happy living people, simply by deciding to reverse the trend. If the situation is not resolved, such families are destined to repeat their past unsociable pattern. Usually only one person of influence in the family is required to gradually bring about a transformation. This book contains sufficient information to effectively plan a more satisfactory, happier lifestyle.

### **Who wins when we argue?**

*“Convince a man against his will;  
And he is of the same opinion still”.*

As a young person I took pride in winning an argument. But as I analyse it today, I wasn't really winning at all. Fighting to win means losing friends, a wife's love, or children's respect. People convinced against their will do not really change. They suffer in hurt silence with a feeling of animosity toward their opponent. As they lick their wounded pride, they resent the other's triumph. What has been achieved? An enemy!

When I learned this fact I stopped arguing. This doesn't suggest that we cannot speak on controversial subjects, nor have a difference of opinion. The difference is in the **way** we handle conflict.

### Be agreeable

Instead of breeding hatred and resentment, it's wiser to demonstrate an attitude of friendship. In the family and to close friends we also show love. We endeavour to see the situation from the other person's viewpoint as well as our own. We enter into discussion, not argument, speaking in quiet tones, rather than high-pitched emotional tones. Even if we cannot come to a point of agreement, we can agree to disagree, and part in friendship. By respecting another person's genuine point of view, we lose nothing. Be prepared to listen as well as talk and not interrupt the other party when they are making a point. Try not to defend your views in anger or aggression. Rather, build bridges. Remember, you are looking for an agreeable solution. Consider the possibility that **you may be wrong!** Be honest with yourself. This attitude will help resolve ill feelings, result in a deeper respect for each other, and establish your influence.

So if you can't win an argument, why argue? Living in peace and cooperation is much better. Be agreeable! You'll be happier and enjoy life more. You will feel more in control, rather than allowing circumstances to control you.

You may realise, however, that some people love to argue or debate and others like to listen. Some talkback radio programs working on this principle are entertaining for the listener. But think about the loser - usually the caller - and how they can be crushed. The announcer has the advantage of talking over people, or cutting them off, often with little finesse or just plain rudeness. These radio programs attract audiences, but also enemies.

Friends are certainly better than enemies are. When establishing friendships, look for 'common ground' topics on which you are more likely to agree. Avoid controversial points. Once a friendship has matured,

differing points of view can be handled without drama. But first build bridges that will lead to understanding and respect for one another.

What can be done if someone picks an argument with you? First decide if the issue is important. If it is not, walk away. There are situations that need to be resolved, but if the person is out of control, and reasoning is impossible, delay any action. Say, "*Perhaps we should discuss this some other time*", and walk away or just hang up the phone. To get involved at that point would be totally unproductive. Then at a later time, seek a calm and open discussion. Look at the situation from both sides and try to come to a resolution. If over time you can't, you may need to seek the help of a colleague, or a professional.

There are occasions when we need to disagree. At such times, we can say so in a non-threatening way, but refuse to get unnecessarily involved. We cannot always expect agreement with our personal view. People can believe as they please. They do have this right.

### **Resolving conflict**

Unresolved conflict ravenously devours and destroys relationships and greatly increases stress. An anxiety atmosphere develops, extending into feelings of deep insecurity. However, conflict is not altogether bad. Rather, it can be an opportunity toward better communication, if handled correctly. But if mismanaged, it results in unpleasant alienation.

Some distance themselves from a conflict situation. There is a feeling of safety, but in reality, harmony and closeness need not be lost through conflict. An equally false concept is the view that a good argument clears the air, then everything can be forgotten. But even though the argument may not be reciprocated, human nature doesn't forget. More likely, the situation is placed in the memory bank as ammunition for further conflict in the future. Why are both these views incorrect? Because both methods have failed to communicate, leaving the matter unresolved. Unless the situation is dealt with constructively by effective listening and

positive, peaceful communication, it's unlikely a solution will be found. Arguing inevitably tends to a much worse situation.

Some resort to asking a third party to referee, but this rarely produces a solution. Because the issue belongs to the parties in conflict and involves personal feelings and doesn't belong to anybody else, it becomes imperative to deal personally with the differences. A third party considers an approach from a different understanding. In some difficult cases where people are unable to reach a verdict, there may be no other way than to call in a capable intermediary or counsellor. The wrong person, however, may make the situation even worse.

One fatal attitude for peace is when one party believes they couldn't possibly be wrong, nor could the other person be right! To close the mind is absolutely fatal. No person is right all the time. This is when we need to attempt seeing the situation through their eyes and attempt a solution for them as well as ourselves. A closed mind blocks communication, which in turn means no solution. Another fatal attitude is to believe nothing will work anyway! A self-fulfilling prophecy begins to formulate causing a person to behave in a way that causes failure to occur.

If the conflict is no more than a power struggle with an attitude of 'I win and you lose' by attempting to force the other person to conform, there will be no true resolve. There may be conformity of a type leaving a brooding of resentment, which almost certainly will resurface at some future time. To make a resolve, the attitude for success is to develop an agreement of, '*You win and I win too.*' An equal recognition is a satisfactory solution, even if the final agreement must be to 'Agree to disagree.'

### **Ten steps to resolve a conflict.**

- 1.** Clearly state the conflict issues.
- 2.** Agree on a discussion time.
- 3.** Agree to initially allow each person to speak without interruption.  
Engage in response discussion after issues are stated.



4. Permit the other person the right to their views.
5. Keep to the subject. Avoid side issues or other conflicts.
6. Finish at an agreed time.
7. Avoid discussion when you are tired.
8. Be prepared to give a little and take a little.
9. Search for a satisfactory solution.
10. If the issue is with your marriage partner and you cannot resolve the conflict within a reasonable time period, seek professional help.

Conflict tends to worsen when incorrect attitudes and techniques are adopted, turning disagreement into full-blown war. Having a planned approach for such occasions can bring peace, even if only one party leads the way. Knowing what to do can make all the difference. Observe the following formula.

### **Respond - do not react**

The natural approach to aggression is to fight back and save face. This is reacting. One person may approach the situation by saying, "You lied to me!" The response could be, "You're the one lying!" Then comes the war of words, which may even lead to physical aggression. A wiser approach could be to respond, (not react) by asking, "Why do you think I have lied?" This will at least begin some communication, which is an important basis for resolving the conflict.

### **Have an attitude to resolve the conflict**

If you don't have an attitude to resolve the conflict, you probably won't find a solution. Correct attitude is absolutely vital.

### **Listen**

Some try to talk a person down in a conflict. This usually makes matters worse. When you listen to the perhaps angry person, you will begin to see the thought processes and be better able to work out the problem, followed by a solution.

### Speak in a calm voice

Speaking in a calm voice helps calm the situation down as well as calming you. Being calm tends to make a person more rational.

### Be prepared to say, "I'm sorry"

If you are in the wrong it is wise to say "sorry" quickly. Admit your error and apologise. If you think well of yourself your pride will not be wounded. Sometimes it's good to say "sorry" even if you are in the right, not to admit guilt, but to be sorry for the situation. For example, "I'm sorry you're upset over this matter."

### Ask questions

When you ask questions you are using two important tools. First of all, asking questions places you in the control position, providing you ask the right questions with a sincere positive attitude. Secondly, questions and their answers introduce effective communication, which is the vital ingredient for a resolution.

Because discussion is vital in resolving conflict, great care is needed to communicate your intentions clearly by what you say. Misunderstandings in an emotional environment are to be expected.

### Look for a solution

Be genuine about this. You may feel like 'giving a piece of your mind', or telling the person to wake up, or even hitting them. But don't, or you'll lose it. If you don't take it personally, your patience and dignity in showing control can eventually produce respect from the angry party.

There are times when we feel compelled to stand up for what we believe and not admit defeat. This is honourable and to be commended. The secret is **how** we do it. We can angrily rave and demand our rights, but the fact is, this type of behaviour has repercussions, causing mostly failure to produce a resolution. More is achieved when we **firmly but calmly assert our rights**. Be determined, but be wise and your chances of success will be much greater.

## Happy relationships

To a large degree, life is about relationships. If they are good, we are more likely to be happy. Strained or conflict relationships are a sure recipe for unhappy living. Here we have explored different ways of finding satisfactory and workable associations with people. If you apply them to your life you will feel and see the difference.

The main ingredient for workable and cheerful relationships is **love**. Love is the most powerful force in the world. We would even sacrifice our life to protect those who are important to us. I remember the husband who stood in front of his wife to protect her from a crazy gunman. He lost his life, but she lived. Then there was the newly married couple on their honeymoon. They were scuba diving when the husband saw a man-eating shark speeding toward his new wife. Immediately he moved in front of her to take the attack. He perished, but she lived. An African mother faced a hungry lion. She perceived the danger and quickly hid her small child in a cave. There was no place for her to hide so she became a decoy for the lion. She died quickly, but her child lived. What was the motivation to cause these people to pay the supreme sacrifice of their lives? It was love.

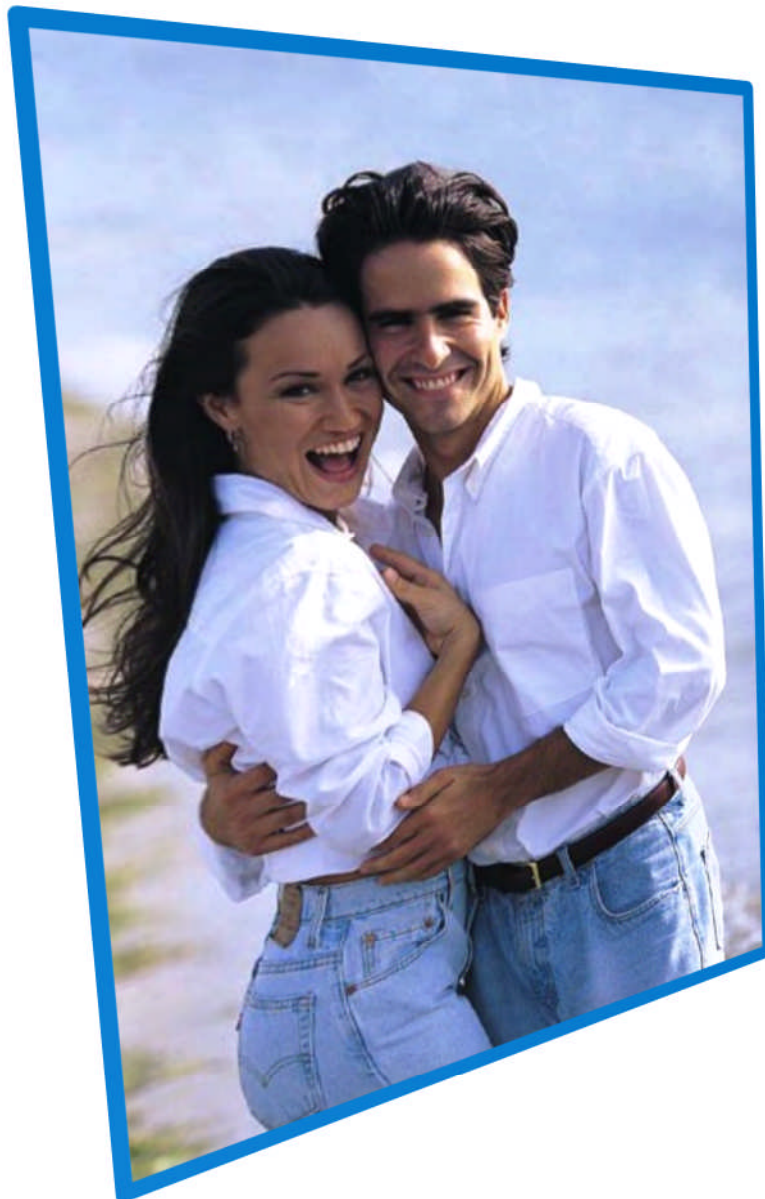
In your life you may never be placed in positions such as these, but the success of your friendships and relationships certainly revolves around this vital ingredient of love. There are different kinds of love. The love for a partner is certainly different from love for children or even friends. But without this important element, there is no satisfactory relationship.

Love in relationships gives life meaning. Give top priority to your loved ones, friends and your Creator and you will almost certainly experience successful, happy living.

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## ***Meaningful Relationships***

This is a companion volume to *Secrets of a Happy Marriage* but is also useful information for developing good relationships with work colleges, relatives and friends. Success in the area of relationships attains success in most aspects of living.



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