

# Relationship Matters!

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**W**hat do we all crave? What is that one thing that enables us to feel good about ourselves? Indeed, it is relationships, whether with our family, our love interest or work place colleagues. It is a healthy craving! It's important to form relationships, but it is imperative that we know ways to manage them.

Remember, relationships matter and hence we must be equipped to handle relationship matters!

## Social Beings

Humans are social by nature. We are inherently programmed to form relationships right from our inception

into this world. Healthy attachment with parents and family establishes a lifelong skill of forming and maintaining relationships. It is the consistency of these relationships that enables us to relate to this world, develop coping resources and feel secure. Therefore, a stable upbringing leads to development of our personality, identity and sense of self, whereas, fragmented formative years can make us fragile and isolative.

## Support System

A positive personal background arguably makes us more resilient, although not immune to stress! However, we need ongoing supportive network to improvise with life and its hurdles, and cruise effectively through the waves of experience.

We can't choose our family, but can and do choose our friends and people we relate with. Undoubtedly, our life journey is made more enjoyable and happy in company of people.

It is true that a lot can be said about a person by knowing his/her associates and friends. A great Spanish saying goes as: *Dime quienes son tus amigos y te diré quien eres* (Tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are).

## What is friendship?

One popular advertisement jingle emphasises that friendship equates to sharing: *Jo mera hai woh tera hai..!* (What is mine is yours and vice versa). It represents unspoken feelings of people who recognise this special relationship called friendship. And

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indeed, every friend is important and the people we choose to be around us make our world what it is.

Oxford Dictionary defines friendship as a 'relationship between two people who hold mutual affection for each other'.

There are various kinds of relationships, friendship being an important one. Close and meaningful friendship enhances our self-esteem and helps us emote, share fears, secrets and desires, whereas, the other not so close relationships (acquaintanceships) allow us to learn and grow. But the most important one is wherein we confide, have deep connection, trust and love.

Although friendship and acquaintanceship span across the same continuum, there are differences. An



## 7 Tips For Satisfactory Relationships

These tips can help keep a healthy relationship strong or repair the ones on the rocks.

- ◆ **Communicate effectively:** Remember, the key to healthy relationship is effective communication. And the fundamental of good communication is to listen more and talk less. This will leave the other feeling valued. Speak calmly without losing composure or unduly asserting your thoughts. Learn to accept other's viewpoint without feeling challenged or threatened.
- ◆ **Trust and allow space:** Insecurity breeds possessiveness and creates a claustrophobic feeling, therefore allow space, have basic trust and avoid undue involvement.
- ◆ **Choose humanistic contact:** Technological advances may have connected us to people across the world, but have disconnected us from those around us. Choose direct one to one contact over texting, email and clicking the 'Like' button on Facebook.
- ◆ **Invest more and expect less:** Relationships are an investment. The more you put in, the more you can get back. One needs to be a little patient on the returns.
- ◆ **Use of mind is free:** The new and naïve in relationship, especially a romantic one, can heavily invest their emotion in a relationship and think more with their heart rather than mind, and that can lead to complications. Sometimes, pragmatism in matters of heart can be helpful!
- ◆ **Rejected and dejected:** Break ups may be seen as rejection and failure, more so in younger persons, leading to withdrawal, agitation, depression and even suicidal behaviour. It is important to realise that there are ups and downs in every relationship and nothing is permanent. Continuous efforts are needed for a lasting relationship. Toning down involvement and dependence can help maintain a satisfactory proximity. Also, it will help you to let go when the relationship isn't working.
- ◆ **Leave no loose ends:** Ensure that any rising problems are dealt with promptly, especially in romantic relationships. Understand that relationships are dynamic and deserve proactive response to change. Loose ends in relationship matters increase emotional burden and bury the core issues.

When the core of our existence, our relationships, seem irremediable, then consider professional advice and support in the form of individual therapy, couple counselling, emotional awareness and assertiveness sessions. Seeking help in my opinion is a sign of strength and not weakness.

acquaintance is a person known to one, but usually not a close friend. However, if there is consistent demonstration of certain features such as reciprocity, understanding, compassion, honesty and support, then an acquaintanceship can turn into friendship. The conversion is more likely when one experiences a level of comfort in company of the

other, to be oneself, express oneself fearlessly, to even make mistakes without being judged.

A good relationship is like fuel that strengthens our health, mind and connection with others. However, if the relationship isn't working, it can also be a tremendous drain.