

How to Build and Maintain Meaningful Relationships

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Relationships can be challenging. ***The quality of our relationships has a big influence on the quality of our lives.*** Relationships are like a living organism. They require attention and energy to thrive. When they're ignored, they degrade and wither away. How many friends have drifted away from you over the years?

Enhance your relationships and your life:

1. **“Fix” yourself.** The people we bring into our lives are often attempts to patch our own shortcomings. We often use others as distractions. When you raise up your own life, you will naturally raise your standards.
 - Our friends and lovers are often very much like us. If you're routinely having challenges in your life, you'll feel comfortable with others who are similarly challenged. When you have your own life together, you'll find similar people are attracted into your life.
2. **Focus on what you can provide to the other person.** It doesn't take much to make most people happy, most of the time. ***When the other person is happy and content, they'll be in a better position to make you happy, too.***
3. **Do meaningful things together.** If you love art, it's much more meaningful to share it with someone. You'll find that you enjoy watching others enjoy themselves, even if the activity isn't interesting to you. Share meaningful experiences, and those emotions will spill over into your relationship.
4. **Have deep conversations.** If all you talk about are work and the weather, the relationship will never have any depth. While all friendships and romantic

relationships start out at a casual level, things must become deeper over time if the relationship is going to become more meaningful.

5. **Consider important details in their lives.** We all dislike when someone forgets our birthday or doesn't ask us about our first day at a new job. Take notes if you have to, but stay on top of the important items going on in the lives of your friends and family.
6. **People always remember how you made them feel. *They might forget what you said, but they never forget how you made them feel.*** If you can make the other person feel good, your relationship will grow.
 - If you make the other person feel guilty, lazy, ashamed, or any other negative emotion, you're losing ground. Address behaviors and avoid attacking anyone.
7. **Be good to yourself.** If don't love and respect yourself, others will be less likely to. When you're good to yourself, others will respect you and treat you well, too.
8. **Get back to others quickly.** We all have the friend that ignores our emails, phone calls, and texts. Avoid becoming known as the person that rarely returns messages.
9. **Be patient and forgiving.** Every once in a while, you're going to take some damage from a friend or family member that's having a bad day. Learn to forgive and forget the occasional outburst. Hopefully, you'll receive the same consideration.
10. **Get personal.** Social media, text messaging, and emails are amazing inventions. However, ***these are poor substitutes for real conversation.*** Make the effort to talk to someone in person or on the phone. If you want to make good use of

technology, try Skyping. It's free and you can see each other.

Are your relationships everything you'd like them to be? ***Meaningful relationships are one of the key components of happiness.*** Give your relationships the time and energy they require to blossom and flourish. Great relationships can bring new meaning to your life. Be a great friend, family member, and partner.