



Building RELATIONships

In the Digital Age | 8 Strategies & Steps

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Physical Contact



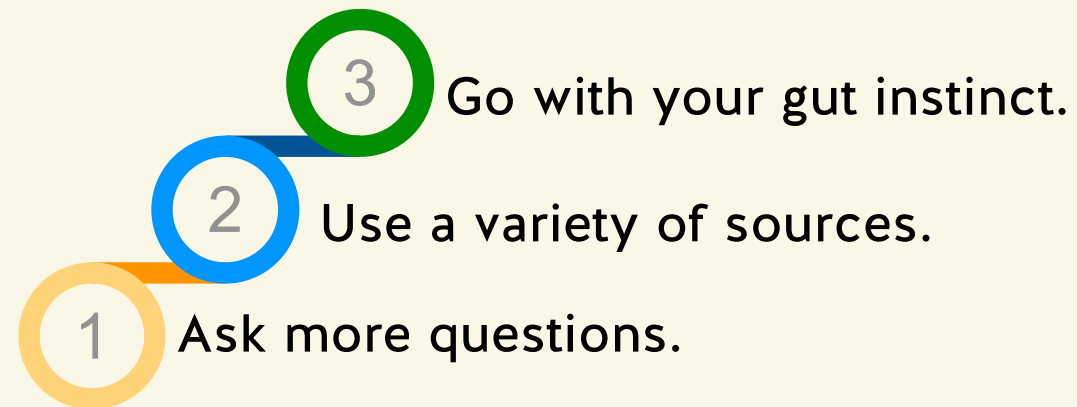
Eye Contact



Verbal Contact

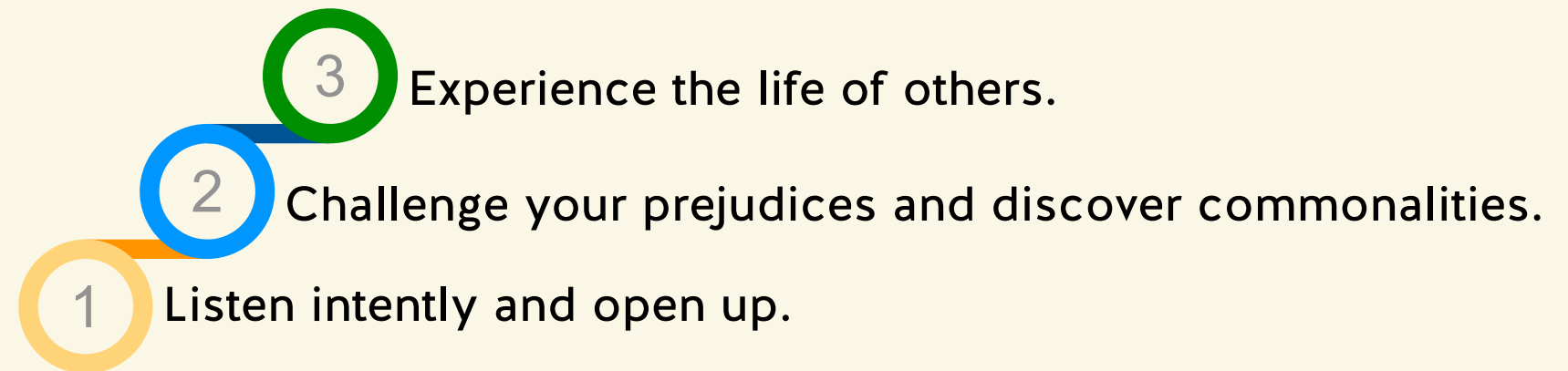
Physical, eye and verbal contact are essential for growth, development and communication. As technology provides the modern convenience of connecting with others digitally, it is slowly eroding our dependence on using these important tools to maintain and grow our relationships. How often do you see people gathered together and everyone's eyes are on their electronic devices, or even using non-verbal communication via text message to speak to someone that's a few feet away? Relationships are desperately needed in today's digital society. How can we reconnect with each other? The Building Relationships guide will help you to improve relationship building through 8 practical strategies and steps.

Strategy #1 | Gather facts from all sides.



When we make a judgement about a person, often it is a perspective that is from past experiences or information gathered in pieces. Our perception can shape our reality and leave us with a partial view of a person's character or actions. We must collect past and current facts from all sides that can support a holistic viewpoint. Lucius Seneca once said, "We are more often frightened than hurt; and we suffer more from imagination than from reality." Have your thoughts ever kept you from trying to rebuild a relationship with someone? Technology can help us to quickly gather facts and use many resources to support our findings. Use these steps to gather facts from all sides.

- 1 Asking why is an important step in the questioning process. Engaging in more questions can get down to the root cause, not just what is on the surface.
- 2 The more sources used in gathering information can help organize facts from truth, opinions, assumptions or false claims.
- 3 When all the facts become available, going with your gut instinct can be helpful when you are unsure. Learn to trust the process, ask for guidance if needed.

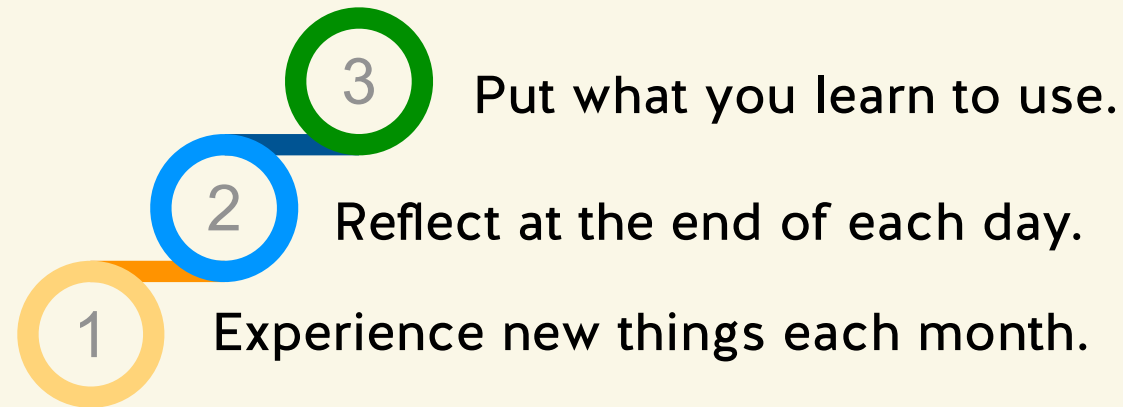
**Empathy**

Have you ever heard the statement, “They just don’t get it?” When people seek for their side of the story to be heard, or to get their point across; there can be a lack of understanding. Activating empathy helps us to first seek to understand, then be understood. We learn from a young age to “feel what others feel.” When taught specifically and modeled, empathy teaches us to understand another person’s point of view, while using the information to guide our actions. Whether we lend a helping hand, offer our shoulder to cry, or just listen; compassionate action takes shape when empathy is enacted. Seek first to understand.

- 1 Ensuring that we are actively listening to someone when they speak is important. Limit distractions, make eye contact and restate what the other person speaks for clarity.
- 2 Become aware of what you do not know about a person or situation. Knowing your biases allows to you actively work toward discovering the common bond that is present in all of us.
- 3 Spending time with someone can build a greater understanding of that person’s life. Eating a meal, working on a project, or having a conversation are great ways to build understanding.

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Lifelong-Learning



Living in the technology age, information is constantly evolving. Everyday is a chance to learn, unlearn and relearn. History's greatest pioneers, inventors, and leaders have utilized continuous learning to create and improve important human advancements such as transportation, agriculture and technology. Through trial and error, defining and redefining, lifelong-learning provides us a wealth of knowledge on how to continually develop. Continuous improvement encourages an endless pursuit to understanding the world around us and how to make it better, including ourselves and our relationships. Learn from life everyday.

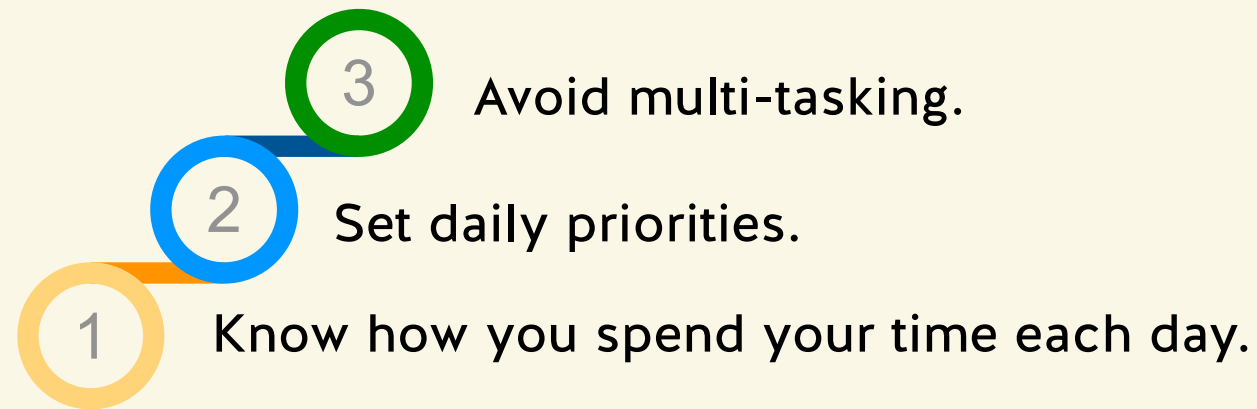
- 1 Plan different experiences to open up new learning opportunities such as: reading a book, volunteering in the community or exploring new places you have never been before .
- 2 Reflecting is an important process in learning. Being able to make meaning of what we have experienced each day builds self-efficacy in continuously improving.
- 3 Just like muscles, if you do not use it, you will lose it. Take the time to incorporate new learning into your current experiences.

**Action**

- 1 Move at least 30 minutes per day.
- 2 Participate in critical thinking activities.
- 3 Take daily brain breaks.

Modern conveniences have developed a sedentary lifestyle in our society. On average, people in the US sit eleven hours per day, while two or more of those hours are spent watching television and engaging with an electronic device. Daily activity that includes mental and physical experiences are needed to support a balance in our overall health and wellness. Taking active brain breaks during the day allows the brain to retain information and focus attention. Being mentally and physically active benefits the body and mind through reducing stress, improving mood and mental health. Be active, mentally and physically everyday.

- 1 Take a walk, going to the gym or playing a sport can help support physical movement. Spending time with others in these activities can additionally build relationships.
- 2 Activities that keep your brain sharp include: reflecting, word puzzles, brain-based mobile applications, and exercise.
- 3 When you have spent a number of hours on a particular project or activity, taking a brain break and relaxing your mind can support an improvement in focus and attention.



There are only 24 hours in a day, but often we try and cram as much as we can into our daily schedules. Technology, work, school, social activities, family obligations, etc. are all things that can distract us from what truly needs to be accomplished each day. Yogi Berra once said “You don’t have to swing hard to hit a home run. If you’ve got the timing, it’ll go.” Taking a step back from our daily routine and focusing our attention on what is important in our lives will shed light on what we truly value. Attention on building relationships should be one of those values. Spend time on what really matters.

- 1 Keeping a time log or daily planner is a helpful way to determine how you are using your time. It will also provide a way to keep appointments and activities organized.
- 2 Determine what is important versus what is urgent. Most important tasks are usually not the most urgent, so prioritize your tasks by importance and urgency first.
- 3 Start and complete the same tasks when possible. Routine multi-tasking hinders concentration and focus. Productivity is lost when switching from one task to another.

08 Strategy #6 | Become a positive impression.



Influence

- 1 Be authentic around everyone.
- 2 Increase trust with those around you.
- 3 Treat others as you want to be treated.

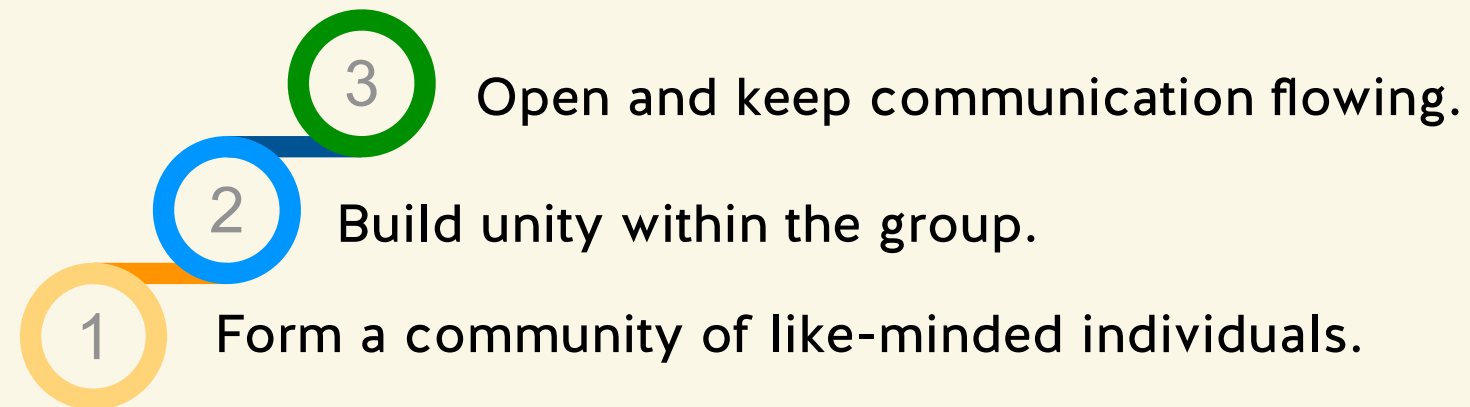
Do you remember when you went on a first date, job interview, or the first day of school? The goal was to make a good first impression. Although there are some experiences that provide a “one shot” opportunity to make that impression, we should focus on how our daily actions impact others, whether positive or negative. How do your daily actions reflect how people see you? Do your influences whether family, societal, religious or cultural have an impact on your actions? We must always remember people are watching us. Character and competence go hand-in-hand in determining a person’s intent, motive and deeds. Take the time to become a positive impression.

- 1 While we may adapt to certain situations (i.e., speaking in a formal setting versus a social one), always be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.
- 2 Trust comes down to a person’s character and competence. Character includes integrity and intent. Competence includes capability and results. Both are needed to increase trust.
- 3 The “Golden Rule” is present in some variation in all religions and cultures. When followed, respect for each other can be developed and sustained.

Strategy #7 | Collaborate with others.



Organization



There is no “I” in team. Jerry Reinsdorf says, “Teams that consistently perform at the highest levels are able to come together and be unified across the organization - staff, players, coaches, management, and ownership. When everyone is on the same page, trust develops, and teams can grow and succeed together.” People in an organization grow through an interdependence on one another. Relationships are at the center of this interdependence, as each person understands their role and how they fit into the system. In an organization, everyone must not just participate, but be active through collaboration. Collaborate with others.

- 1 Becoming a part of a community of like-minds builds active participation within a group. Trust, respect and value increase as a result of the common bond.
- 2 Everyone in a group must feel valued and a part of the team. Participation in the group must be active and expected as a part of building unity with each other.
- 3 Communication is critical in collaborative relationships. Set and follow expectations for communicating. Build consistency so all voices are heard, understood and valued.

**Networking**

- 1 Share information and ideas with others.
- 2 Focus on the common vision.
- 3 Give often (time, energy, or money).

In order for students, families, communities and businesses (stakeholders) to thrive, we must network with each other to uphold the vision that unites us all - serving. Whether you are the giver or receiver, learning how to serve one another is vital in building sustainable relationships. Leading by serving is built into our values and belief systems and is most evident when challenges arise, such as a natural disaster. People from all ethnicities, backgrounds and communities come together to support those in need. We all have the ability to lead by example and it is accomplished through serving.

- 1 Serving propels us to share information and ideas with others. Sharing can additionally open up solutions to challenges that are hard to overcome when completed in isolation.
- 2 Revisiting our purpose often can keep everyone going in the same direction, especially when we may get distracted with the details of the day-to-day work.
- 3 Giving is not just financial. Time and energy are equally as important so service can be carried out anytime, anywhere and by anyone.

Building Relationships: 8 Strategies & Steps



Reality - Gather facts from all sides.

1. Ask more questions

2. Use a variety of sources

3. Go with your gut instinct



Empathy - Seek first to understand.

1. Listen intently and open up

2. Challenge your prejudices and discover commonalities

3. Experience the life of others



Lifelong-Learning - Learn from life everyday.

1. Experience new things each month

2. Reflect at the end of each day

3. Put what you learn to use



Action - Be active; mentally and physically.

1. Move at least 30 minutes per day

2. Participate in critical thinking activities

3. Take daily brain breaks



Timing - Spend time on what really matters.

1. Know how you spend your time

2. Set daily priorities

3. Avoid multi-tasking



Influence - Become a positive impression.

1. Be authentic around everyone

2. Increase trust with those around you

3. Treat others as you want to be treated



Organization - Collaborate with others.

1. Form a community of like-minded individuals

2. Build unity within the group

3. Open and keep communication flowing



Networking - Serve.

1. Share information and ideas with others

2. Focus on the common vision

3. Give often (time, energy or money)

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