

What Kind of Relationships Are We Trying to Build?

Building a Relational Tool Box – part 1

June 6, 2021

This week we begin a new series called, Building a Relational Tool Box. We will look at the different tools that are needed to build relationships, but the first question is ...

What kind of relationships are we trying to build?

DAY 1: What kind of relationships are we trying to build?

1. How would you answer the question in the DAY 1 heading? What kind of relationships are you wanting to build?

Proverbs 15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

2. Solomon looks at words that have two opposite effects? What are the opposite effects?

3. What kind of communication “crushes the spirit?” What kind of communication has “crushed your spirit?”

Prov. 10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

4. How would you describe the effect someone's words that are to you like a “fountain of life”?

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

5. We are not just communicating information, solving problems, and making decisions. Sadly, most relationships consider they are doing pretty well if they accomplish these three things.

6. But this falls far short of what we are trying to do.

We are also wanting to communicate *affection, value, importance, and personal meaning.*

7. Where have you experienced this kind of relationship? If you have experienced this kind of relationship, how did it happen?

8. If have not experienced this kind of relationship, why not? What was missing? What was not happening?

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Building: the necessity of intentionality and initiative

1. What are you building? Relationships. What kind of relationships? Life-giving.
2. Life-giving relationships don't just "happen". They must be built. Great marriages don't just "happen". They must be built.
3. When I first owned a car I never gave thought to the "maintenance schedule" in the owner's manual. The only maintenance I did to my first cars was an oil and oil filter change. I did not change the transmission fluid, rotate the tires, check for tire alignment, or perform brake maintenance—until the squealing of the brakes became too embarrassing. I didn't give enough tender loving care to the paint job, by regularly washing and waxing.
4. Perhaps you've heard the Hollywood actress talking about her disdain for having to "work" at a love relationship. "If you have to work at the relationship its not genuine love." Well, good luck with that!
5. Because we are naturally self-centered relationships will always need life-giving infusions.

"One another"

6. The bible has about sixty "one another" *commands*. Under each of the verses below, jot down the "maintenance" required.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Romans 15:7 Accept one another just as God in Christ accepted you.

Romans 13:8-10 ...love one another...

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

7. These are all commands. They are not just suggestions, things to do *if you feel like it*. The lie that is foisted upon us regarding effort is this. "It must not be *authentic* if it has to be chosen." What strikes you about the necessity of "building" relationships? Of intentionality? Of effort?

8. What strikes you from today's devotions?

DAY 3: Humility.

1. Why does some love grow old or stale? When a couple says, “We just drifted apart,” what is being described?

2. When people become turned in on themselves relationships dry up. It is like trying to water your garden with a kink in the hose. The spicket may be one, there may be a great pool of water, but the kink will shut off the flow of water. Self-centeredness is like the kink in the hose. Water ceases to flow.

Matthew 24:12 ...and because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.

3. “Wickedness” here is simply self-centeredness. When I am more concerned about me than I am about you, I have put a kink in my hose.

4. Couples who have “drifted apart” are two people who have kinks in their hoses. They are waiting and waiting for the other person to pour life-giving water into them before they pour any more water into the other person. Over time, the relationship withers due to a draught of water. Because we are not aware of our natural proclivity to self-centeredness we don't see the real culprit—ourselves. We just see the effect: we “just drifted apart; we just fell out of love,” as if we are just victims of some kind of fate.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...

5. How does the principle in verse 3 jive with the necessity of humility in relationships?

6. How would the principle in verse 4 help relationships?

7. The example of humility is to emulate Jesus, who did not stand on His “rights” of how He should have been treated. How would this kind of humility build relationships?

Rom. 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

8. Having humility toward others is not just to those of “low position” (lower social rank or position in life). Paul highlights the damage down when we come across as superior to someone else. He ties this essential attitude with enjoying “harmony” in relationships.

9. What strikes you from today's devotions?

DAY 4: Others before me

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

1. What does it mean to be devoted to someone?

2, What does it mean to be devoted to one another *in love*?

3. Paul hoped to send Timothy to be with the church in Philippi.

Phil. 2:20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

a. What does it mean to “show genuine concern for your welfare?”

b. Why do you think this quality is so rare? (The first phrase of Phi.. 2:20)

c. Paul describes that everyone else is concerned with their own interests.

d. He also laments that very few people look out “*for the interests of ... Jesus Christ.*” What does Paul mean by that?

Ephesians 4:29 Let no evil talk come out of your mouth but only what is good for edifying, as fits the occasion that it may import grace to those who hear.

4. How would you know if your words:

a. Were edifying?

b. Fit the occasion?

c. Imparted grace to those who hear?

5. What strikes you from today’s devotions?

DAY 5: To the best of your ability.

1. Unfortunately, not all of our efforts will be successful. As my mother used to tell me, “Seth, it takes two to tango.” You may be doing all you can to build relationship, but it may not be reciprocated.

2. Paul understands this concept.

Rom. 12:18 ...If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

3. In the following section from Romans 12, Paul addresses the kinds of qualities needed to build life-giving relationships. Underline the qualities that strike you most.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

*¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:*

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

4. What qualities stood out to you the most? Why?

5. Even with all of this great direction, sometimes relationship wither anyway. One reason is that it does take two to tango.

a. Re-read verse 18.

b. What is the significance of the phrase, “...as far as it depends on you...”?

c. The standard Paul mentions in this verse is not “love.” It’s “peace”. Why is this significant?

6. What strikes you about today’s devotions?