6 Ways You Can Build and Maintain Strong Relationships With Your Partner

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In a world of increasing digital connection and physical separation, it is important to prioritize your relationships with others. Accordingly, good partnerships offer many unique benefits in various spheres of life.

Similar to all great things, it does take time and energy to cultivate good, strong relationships. In business, strong interpersonal skills will result in networking opportunities, customer satisfaction, successful negotiation and unmatched leadership. In romantic or platonic relationships, one may foster deeper feelings of connection, authenticity, empathy, compassion and an overall sense of happiness and well-being.

But how do you build and maintain good partnerships?

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1. Be responsive

According to the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, responsiveness is one of the key components to building a relationship where the other person feels understood, valued and validated. It is one of the determining factors in how long romantic relationships will last, how long employees will stay in a workplace and how loyal customers will stay to a business. Responsiveness is more than just being kind,

however — it is a genuine demonstration of empathy in challenging or charged moments.

To become more responsive, you must equip your communication toolkit with understanding, validation and care.

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2. Active listening

A large part of being a good partner, whether it is a business or romantic situation, is being able to listen. In turn, listening will allow you to build authentic relationships where you have come to know the individual or you have come to understand their perspectives or goals. As Harvard Business Review discusses, most people operate from an internal listening standpoint. They focus on their thoughts and priorities while the other person is speaking, even without fully realizing as much.

Fortunately, it is possible to learn how to be an active listener. According to Boston University, it involves listening for both content and feelings within the speech of another.

3. Ask questions

Many people feel like asking questions causes them to appear uninformed, when in fact, the opposite is true. Asking questions can bring greater clarity to a situation, accuracy to decisions and precision to tasks. In a business scenario, it can ensure that employees view others in authoritative positions as leaders, striving to understand the workforce and engaging with the work at hand.

Asking questions can also mean that others feel heard and understood, which is an essential part of building and maintaining a good relationship. By asking questions, you will

let others know you care more about the situation and the person than your ego and opinions.

4. Build trust

Apart from interpersonal communication skills, certain elements must be consistently built over time between people, contributing to long-lasting partnerships. One of the most important factors is trust, created from credibility, reliability and intimacy

In a business scenario, it may be easy to distinguish who is credible. A management leader who possesses the skills to organize, delegate and motivate their team efficiently will be trusted with those tasks. Naturally, they will also be more credible and trustworthy if they are reliable. Reliability is the ability to carry out tasks consistently. Likewise, in romantic and familial relations, reliability helps maintain trust between parties.

Furthermore, intimacy refers to the understanding that trust needs to be earned over time.

5. Develop mutual respect

If there is a lack of respect between people, relationships can never be built or maintained on authentic foundations. The Harvard Business Review notes that a large portion of the workforce ranks respect as significantly important and impactful, yet simultaneously report feeling disrespected at work. Likewise, as Psychology Today theorizes, mutual respect may be even more crucial to a strong romantic relationship or friendship than love itself.

There are two types of respect: owed respect and earned respect. Owed respect is the belief that everyone is inherently valuable and therefore, deserves respect on that

alone. Adopting the mindset that you naturally owe another respect is an excellent way to set up a solid foundation for a relationship. Additionally, it will allow for assumptions, stereotypes and judgments to be placed on the wayside. As a result, you open yourself up to experiencing and learning about different kinds of people.

On the other hand, earned respect is the belief that people deserve respect based on merit. It is important to provide recognition or reward when people meet or exceed expectations; in a partnership, it can set the precedent that impressive work or care is recognized and appreciated. In general, a relationship should have a healthy dose of each type of respect and it should be tailored to the specific relationship.

6. Resolve conflict intelligently

Although conflict is generally regarded as a damaging or threatening factor to relationships, the important element is in how the disagreement is approached and resolved. It is said that how a person reacts in a tense situation will show how they view the other individual and how they value their relationship. If you react with active listening, understanding and genuine willingness to move towards a compromise, the bond between you and another person will strengthen.

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