

“Facilitation Secrets” for Personal Relationships

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Our personal relationships can be a challenge in our lives...In fact, I sometimes get the feeling that *relationships* may be one our greatest teachers and opportunity to grow. As a Professional Facilitator and Coach I have asked myself the question...“What ingredients will create the “porridge” of fulfillment that I seek in this area?” This article is both an exploration, and a practical means of outlining what I have learned. I am discovering that there are specific principles involved in building relationships, particularly when our desire is to communicate well and cultivate trust. Below I will share some of the approaches I use in my role as Facilitator, Trainer and Coach so you can apply them to your own every day life. The format below first lists the “principles” involved, and then the descriptions of the approaches that will support achievement:

I. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS:

A) Create a “Vision” for Your Relationship

Whatever is brought forth in life requires a “vision”... We expect to find a vision statement for businesses, for service endeavors and for various projects both large and small, why would there not be a *vision statement* for a relationship? Everything in our lives starts with a *concept*—**When we enter into a relationship the first step is to spend some time determining what each person wants, and then take those desires and blend them together.** Both as an individual and as an expression of your union, it is important to consciously choose what you are joining hearts and lives to “conceive”. When you have co-created the vision of your relationship and have also committed to cultivating that vision so that it will grow...what results only leads to peace.

B) An Original Model or “Customizing your Love”

We are each the key to our own happiness... Although we can learn from others and may find great benefit in books, we are the only ones who will hold the keys to our own happiness. When we embark upon a shared journey of relationship—**The only ones that can decide where you are going and how you will get there are the persons involved.** Every relationship is unique, so it is up to those who have come together to create for themselves a model that will work. Adopting the ideas of others is usually not wise because those ideas were not formulated with any sense of your partnership--as an original expression of loving--in mind. No one else has their finger on the pulse of a relationship like the people involved. Success is invited when we can *customize our loving* and are excited about what we can create JUST for us, based on our own rules!

C) “Fighting Fair”: Difference Can Either Give or Take Away

Conflict is an opportunity to graduate to the next level... Creation is full of difference and human beings are no exception. We come from different backgrounds, we have had different experiences, we may hold different values, and none of us are ever the same. It is a fact that our partners are different from us; however—**Difference is never the problem, it is the way that we choose to be with each other in our differences that determines whether difference will lead to breakdown or breakthrough.** Not only is conflict inevitable, it is natural and even healthy, because it is through conflict that we get to discover what is asking to be refined, revised or transformed. When difference simply

/S, and does not divide us then peace is sustained... It is **UP TO US** to make the idea of difference our good friend and teacher!

II. THE FERTILIZER THAT ALLOWS OUR RELATIONSHIPS TO GROW:

D) No More Halves, only “Wholeness”

‘No one is an island’, instead everyone is complete... Each person, whether part of a couple or not, has everything they will need to be the very best “self” that they can be. Contrary to that old saying, when we enter into relationship our union is made up of two complete selves, not two halves that can only be whole when they are together. **The first step towards freedom in our personal relationship is to know yourself as such, and to view your partner, as his or her own person.** It is a great privilege and blessing to enjoy walking with another, but at no time should we lose sight of the fact that for each person, their destiny is their own. The objective is to truly support and love each other, and never compromise your partner’s selfhood...That is the way of freedom.

E) Organization, Rather than Obligation

Obligations bind us, while organization allows us to BE, with each other... Did it ever occur to you why we might be called human “beings”? When I consider it now I would say that it’s because our greatest right as a human is to “be”. Even in partnership we must still have that right, AND also discover ways to move through life in those ways that help us organize how we are going to be together. **The principle of organization still leaves room for flexibility, spontaneity and the ability to change our minds, so that our partner can remain who they are at all times.** Our partner is very much like we are--sometimes things change or they just don’t feel like it, the practice is to let that be okay. Sharing cannot be legislated or controlled, it only flows forth from freedom.

F) “Freedom” is NOT Conditional

The soil of unconditionality is where true freedom can grow... So what is meant by “unconditionality”? Webster’s dictionary defines unconditional in the following way: *“without conditions or reservations; absolute”*. In relationship there may be a tendency to want to strike a bargain with our partner around the topic of freedom, especially when we are challenged by their desire to choose their own way. After all, we hold them so close that they sometimes feel like they are a part of us, how is it that they see things differently, you might say? **They just do, and in order for relationships to be healthy and enduring, they must allow each partner to live life freely without hindrance or restraint.** The magic is in holding them close, and also being able to let them go...

