

7 Things Every Recovery Ministry Should Know about Relationships



Insights for . . .

- Executive Directors ● Mentors ● Coaches
- Teachers ● Discussion Group Leaders
- Pastors ● Counselors

7 Things Every Recovery Ministry Should Know about Relationships

Relationship skills are essential for successful recovery leadership

A few definitions:

Relationship: A particular connection existing between people who have dealings with each other; a continuing attachment or association between individuals; a connection between an individual and a group.

Leadership: Guiding self and others to worthy destinations or achievements.

Synopsis:

1. **Better relationships bring profound benefits for everyone involved in recovery ministry, including clients, residents, mentors, families, and communities.**
2. **Poor relationships contribute to costly consequences for individuals, families, schools, churches and society.**
3. **Many people never learned basic principles for relationships.**
4. **Even though most people would agree that relationships are important in their lives, few will take the initiative to learn and apply principles for better relationships.**
5. **There are Very Important Persons (VIPs) in each person's sphere of influence. Each VIP has *their own* sphere of influence, and thus the benefits of better relationships can be multiplied to many people.**
6. **Wise recovery ministry leaders take positive steps to build and maintain excellent personal relationships, and they seek to help others do the same.**
7. **Positive influences toward good relationships need to be ongoing and consistent.**



1. Better relationships bring profound benefits for leaders, for their organizations, and for everyone associated with their organizations.

Better relationships . . .

Help people grow:

- Promote character development of all involved
- Decrease stress in working together
- Increase fulfillment and satisfaction
- Build stronger families and friendships
- Help build better neighborhoods and communities
- Make a positive difference in the culture

Help build a quality, highly productive organization:

- Develop an excellent ministry workplace culture
- Attract dedicated, values-oriented staff and volunteers
- Decrease staff and volunteer turnover
- Increase quality of services to those served
- Increase teamwork
- Make more progress on vision, mission and goals
- Create goodwill among donors and prospective donors
- Get more churches and other ministries to refer people to you who need your services



“Whatever else we do to help people in recovery, if we fail to help them develop good relational skills, everything else we do may be weakened or lost.”



“Restoration of families is one of the greatest blessings of successful recovery.”

2. Poor relationships contribute to costly consequences for individuals, families, schools, churches and society.

A few of the costly consequences of poor relationships . . .

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| • Family dysfunction | • Job stress |
| • Separation & divorce | • Low productivity |
| • Hatred | • Job turnover |
| • Estrangement | • Wasted time & resources |
| • Crime and violence | • Resistance to authority |
| • Learning problems | • Failure to attract financial support |

3. Many people never learned basic principles for relationships.

Families, schools, communities and even churches often fail to train in the basic values and lifeskills that lead to better relationships.

Leaders should not be surprised that there are so many poor relationships and consequences today. Today, many leaders are working with staff members, volunteers, clients and others who have grown up in environments in which they never learned values and lifeskills for good relationships. Furthermore, the media and much of today’s culture persistently portray poor values, poor lifeskills and poor relationships.

For example: In the past we took for granted a basic principle like *respect*. Today, many people don’t even know what *respect* means, why it’s so important, or how to practice it. Some people seem to know more about *disrespect* than they know about *respect*.

4. Even though most people would agree that relationships are important in their lives, few will take the initiative to learn and apply the principles for better relationships.

Leadership is needed. Many people need motivation and direction to learn and practice values and lifeskills. They may not realize the benefits for themselves and for people around them. The values-oriented leader takes the initiative to promote and provide relationship training, resulting in valuable personal benefits that also benefit the ministry.

A wise leader develops and promotes quality relationships *with* and *among* people – and helps others do the same.

*The quality of a person's relationships reflects the quality of a person's life.
A person may have good physical health and vast wealth,
but if relationships are poor, life is not really very healthy or very rich.*

5. There are Very Important Persons (VIPs) in each person's sphere of influence. Each VIP has *their own* sphere of influence, and thus the benefits of better relationships can be multiplied to many people.

Very Important Persons . . .

Clients or Residents– *The people you serve, who benefit from your ministry's services.*

- Current and former clients or resident
- Families of your clients or residents

Staff, Associates & Others – *The people who provide time, talent, effort and resources to make your ministry successful.*

- Staff & Volunteers
- Families of staff & volunteers (and, of course, your own family)
- Churches, ministries and other entities who refer clients or residents to you
- Suppliers & Outside Contractors
- Community Leaders, neighbors and others
- Donors and Friends



Also, each VIP in a leader's sphere of influence has their own sphere of influence. This multiplies the impact of a leader's focus upon better relationships!

Wise leaders know that a relationship with an individual extends beyond that one individual – often far beyond.

See box at right →

For example, the impact of Larry Leader upon an individual in Larry's sphere of influence, such as Pete Person, is much greater than simply Larry's influence upon Pete. Pete has his *own* sphere of influence – which can also be thought of as his sphere of relationships – consisting of many people with whom Larry Leader has no relationship or contact at all. But if Larry builds and maintains a favorable relationship with Pete, then Larry has the potential to have a favorable indirect influence upon – *and perhaps even direct relationships in the future with* – people in Pete's sphere of relationships.

Joe Girard's "Rule of 250"

Each person you meet knows, on average, 250 other people, some of whom may need your services.

Joe Girard has been called the "world's greatest salesperson." He developed a simple principle that he used very successfully in developing favorable relationships and getting profitable referrals.

A few calculations demonstrate this concept . . .

If you have 250 people in your own sphere of relationships, you potentially are able to relate with and influence 250 people directly.

However, if *each* of the 250 people in your sphere has 250 people in *their* spheres, you have the potential to have an indirect influence upon more than 62,000 people!* If you have 500 people in your sphere, the total jumps to 125,000 people! And if you have 1000 people in your sphere, the total potential zooms to 250,000 people!

* Obviously there will be some overlap, but the basic principle still holds.

6. Wise leaders take positive steps to build excellent relationships.

They understand . . .

- How vital relationships are for success – they know it's easy to be too busy with more "important" things, such as putting out "fires."
- Many of those "fires" are the result of, or are fueled by, poor relationships.
- The importance of giving attention to the time-related dimensions of relationships (see box at right).
- That it is wrong to assume that people *know, remember and will practice* the basic principles of healthy relationships without leadership direction.
- That they themselves may need to develop better relationship lifeskills.
- That their relationships impact many others – either positively or negatively.
- That people can change.



"Some pessimists would say that no one changes, that the leopard never changes his spots. But in fact everyone is changing every day, either for better or for worse . . . Of course they change, and we can influence, to some extent at least, how they change."

– Dr. Alan Loy McGinnis

- That it's a myth that "some people are just 'lucky' at relationships." The truth is that most people who have good relationships practice proven values and lifeskills for quality relationships.

Time-related Dimensions of Relationships

Present Dimension

Wise leaders never forget the great importance of VIPs with whom they are currently involved. However, some leaders, anxious to *add* people – such as customers – to the "present" dimension, forget how important it is to maintain favorable relationships with people who are *already in* the "present" dimension.

Prospective Dimension

These are prospective clients, residents, staff members, volunteers, outside contractors, vendors, donors and others. Because of attrition in the "present" dimension, people must be added from this dimension. Furthermore, to increase the number of people in the "present" dimension requires adding even more people from this dimension. Thus, both maintenance and growth of people in the "present" dimension comes from this "prospective" dimension.

Past Dimension

People in this dimension are frequently neglected. Some "forward-thinking" leaders will ignore or even disrespect past members of the various VIP groups. While "past" members have the potential to move back into the "present," perhaps of even greater significance is the fact that "*past*" members of VIP groups may have direct or indirect influence upon people who are in the "present" and "prospective" dimensions.

7. Positive influences toward good relationships need to be ongoing and consistent.

Some reasons for ongoing positive influences:

- Negative influences abound in our society.
- Repetition impresses upon people the importance of what is being repeated.
- Repetition helps people learn.
- People forget. Even after learning, we all need reminders.
- Consistent positive influences help people make good values part of their thinking so that good values become part of their lives.

Wise leaders make positive influences abundant.

"People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."

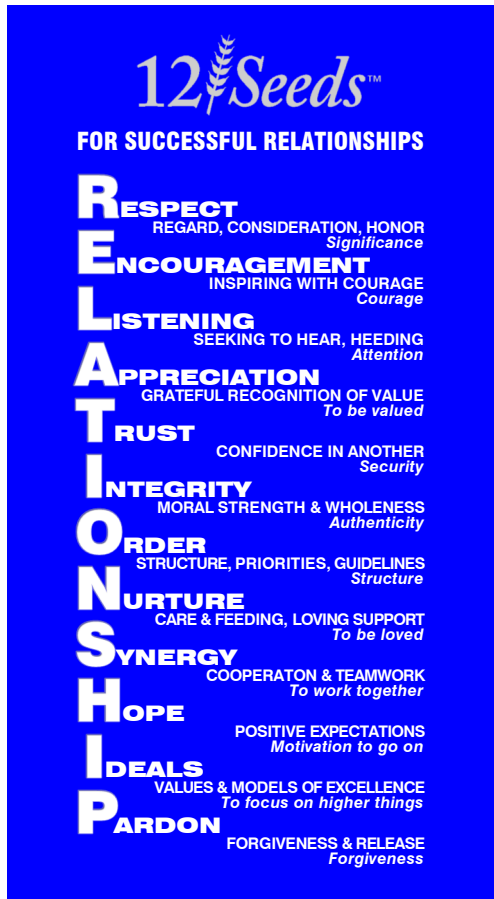
– Samuel Johnson

Note: the quote above was cited and affirmed by another great thinker and professor, C.S. Lewis



Wise leaders . . .

. . . promote quality interpersonal relationships
with and among people in their spheres of influence!



12 Seeds™
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RESPECT
REGARD, CONSIDERATION, HONOR
Significance

ENCOURAGEMENT
INSPIRING WITH COURAGE
Courage

LISTENING
SEEKING TO HEAR, HEEDING
Attention

APPRECIATION
GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF VALUE
To be valued

TRUST
CONFIDENCE IN ANOTHER
Security

INTEGRITY
MORAL STRENGTH & WHOLENESS
Authenticity

ORDER
STRUCTURE, PRIORITIES, GUIDELINES
Structure

NURTURE
CARE & FEEDING, LOVING SUPPORT
To be loved

SYNERGY
COOPERATION & TEAMWORK
To work together

HOPE
POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS
Motivation to go on

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The 12 Seeds Acrostic is shown above, with a brief definition for each seed. Also, the human need each seed helps fill is in *italics*.



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