

KEYS TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

James 1:19; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 5:14, 22-25

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Introduction:

People, what we have the most difficulty with is usually camped within our subconscious minds. Frequently we can't change a situation; but we can change ourselves. We generally need to work on ourselves because we're not always okay. We act like we're okay; but we're not. In other words, we sometimes need to shift the focus from fixing others to focusing on fixing ourselves.

Many people come from the context of pain because they were abandoned, abused, without a father or a mother, or both. God created us to have a mama and daddy; and when either is missing, it impacts us.

What are the benefits of changing ourselves?

1. It puts us in control of our own emotional lives; regardless of what others do.
2. It causes others to respond differently to us.

When a person changes, the first question we ask is, how long will it last. But when a person stays consistent over time, we begin to explore the reasons behind the change. When permanent change takes place, we interact with people differently and both parties find freedom.

8 Reasons for Healthy and Impactful Relationships

1. The Trust Factor

We can't get others to trust us until we deserve their trust. When we change our outlook on difficult relationships (that is when we change what's on the inside), they will relate to us differently on the outside. When people see a change in our approach to them, they usually respond differently. This doesn't guarantee everything will be better, but usually they will respond positively to the new approach rather than to the old.

2. Humility

Most people see themselves as either better than they really are, or they see themselves worse than they really are and with an imbalanced focus on the positive or negative. Humility means we see ourselves accurately, we accept the way we have been created, and we celebrate our uniqueness. It's easy to see others from a distorted perspective. We'll never be free from their grip until we begin to see each other the way we really are; which requires getting to know them, and getting to know someone takes time.

3. Joy

Life is filled with ups and downs. Healthy people learn how to live with both. They enjoy the good; but they're not devastated by the bad. Joy means appreciating the

positive experiences in life, while at the same time finding meaning during the tough times. Joy means living realistically; no matter what happens.

4. Perspective

Never appoint yourself to be the caretaker of everyone else's behavior and always looking for the negative. This type of perspective keeps people steep in drama. Healthy people distinguish between what they're responsible for and what really matters. You have to pick your battles. As we give up trying to fix everyone, we will develop a credible claim to peace.

5. Patience

Living in a microwave-paced society makes it hard to have healthy relationships. Healthy people recognize that while change is possible, it doesn't happen overnight; no matter who is changing. The more we can accept this reality, the less frustration we'll feel. It's important to embrace the present and find our reality of today because if we don't, we will be driven by uncertainty in our future relationships.

6. Kindness

Kindness is often seen as a sign of weakness rather than one of strength. But in relationships, kindness becomes the social lubricant that minimizes friction between people. If used as a tool to manipulate change in others, then kindness loses its power. But when it genuinely becomes the foundation from which a person interacts with others, it then provides a pathway to freedom. The need for appropriate confrontation is not minimized, but it can be done with kindness.

7. Integrity

Without a basic moral compass, there is no foundation for a genuine relationship to grow or to heal. People learn to trust us when we possess and demonstrate personal integrity. Integrity is what reduces the drama that comes from a lack of trust. Integrity is who we are when we're alone. It's where there is alignment between who we are on the inside and how we come across to others on the outside.

8. Commitment

In our society, we expect people to disappear when things get tough. That's why a person who sticks around when the going gets tough makes such an impact on any relationship. For healthy people, escaping is a last resort; not a first impulse. People know that when there's commitment in a relationship, things happen that don't occur in any other way.

Finally, these behaviors should become a part of the fabric of our spiritual lives. It doesn't matter how people treat us. We can respond in a healthy way. Our true character doesn't disappear under pressure. It takes courage to really love someone, and deciding to love gets harder as we get older.

If your relationship ever gets to a place of demise, understand the role you played in it instead of pointing the finger. Healthy compromise helps bring win/win possibilities to the relationship. We cannot remain so entrenched in our view that we cannot change or adapt. We must know when we've gone too far.