

# The ROCK #8 - Relationship Building

The most important component of success is *strong relationships*.

## What is Relationship Building?

There is not just one definition. However, here are a few examples that will assist you in understanding this component of success...both in your personal and professional life.

- The process of reaching out to other people to develop mutual trust by helping, sharing, and supporting their endeavors with no hidden agenda of your own.
- The process in which two people share a mutual desire to understand, trust, and respect each other.
- Respect and kindness toward each other that will build trust and support. This forms an alliance which brings authenticity and forms a bond between two people.
- Making a connection with another person. Making an association with another person. Being involved with another person in an endeavor. Dependence on another person for progress toward a goal. Alliance with another person to achieve progress.

When building quality relationships, focus on what is mutually beneficial for both parties. (Does that sound familiar?) Try to see the relationship *through their eyes*, and your success will soar! Everyone wants to:

- Be treated with respect
- Feel included
- Have an opportunity to show “their stuff”
- Be relevant
- Know that they have your support

## Relationship Building Components

**Be:**

- + Authentic
- + Comfortable who you are, who you are not, and who you may never be
- + Flexible and open-minded
- + Solution-oriented
- + Steady
- + Willing to compromise
- + Natural
- + Yourself
- + Empathetic
- + Honest
- + Helpful
- + Prompt
- + Open
- + Sincere
- + Yourself

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## Strive To:

- + Act consistently
- + Behave ethically
- + Collaborate with others
- + Display honesty and integrity
- + Do what you say you will do
- + Follow through and meet commitments
- + Give people the big picture
- + **Have fun**
- + Inspire and motivate people
- + Keep promises
- + Keep things to yourself
- + **Laugh-a lot**
- + Let yourself go
- + Listen to understand-not to judge
- + Provide and receive feedback
- + Provide considerate advice
- + Provide suggestions
- + Recognize good performance in others
- + Reflect your integrity
- + Share a positive image
- + Share credit
- + Share information and stay in touch
- + Share your feelings
- + Share your knowledge and experience
- + Share your observations
- + Show people that you trust them
- + **Smile - a lot**
- + Stay calm under pressure
- + Take an interest in others
- + Treat others with respect
- + Trust yourself
- + Work productively and meet deadlines

## Challenge others by:

- + Asking questions
- + Asking for ideas
- + Asking for flaws
- + Asking for recommendations
- + Listening and implementing

*You should be interested-Not just interesting.*

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Building a relationship is a journey, and can be a “long and winding road.”



This is a phrase that every parent has probably heard several times when taking a "road trip" with the family. Relationship building is no different. It takes patience to arrive at the desired destination, but it is usually worth it.

## Tips

- Build relationships for different reasons or situations...some relationships happen because of projects; some relationships are for business; some relationships are about friendship only.
- Don't "Fake It Until You Make It." If you do, you will lose credibility and trust.
- Great relationships are built on give and take.
- Have multiple relationships.
- Use every opportunity to build relationships with diverse types and groups of people.
- Relationships are built over time. One meeting is not enough.
- Six degrees of separation works...the people you know also know people who know people. Everyone you meet knows someone who can help you.
- Make a commitment to help.
- Make sure you know your strengths and weaknesses, and be honest about both.
- Leverage your strengths.
- Always have your "elevator speech" ready. You never know who you might meet.
- Respect people's time.
- Know your skills; know your vision; know your goals; know your values.
- Respect people's time.
- Be short and to the point.

*Teach them how to ride a bike, not how to build one.*

## In Great Relationships, Both People:

- See the relationship as an opportunity to give.
- Are willing to change.
- Are willing to admit mistakes.
- Are willing to listen *first*.
- Support each other.
- Are "open" to each other.
- Have integrity.

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## How to Improve the Quality and Depth of a Relationship

- + Refer business to them.
- + Introduce them to someone who can solve their problem.
- + Introduce them to someone they should meet.
- + Participate in a charitable cause that they have.
- + Share something that might interest them.
- + Ask them for their opinion on something you are doing.
- + Invite them to an event with you.
- + Assist them with a project, and/or invite them to help you with one.
- + Ask them about their family.
- + Plan an activity with both of your families.
- + Congratulate them on being mentioned in the press.
- + Send congratulations on significant life events.
- + Send sympathy cards, always with a hand-written note.
- + Take time to learn their interests.
- + Let them know about your significant life events.
- + Send get well cards.

These are simple yet effective relationship-building activities that you can implement today. Select five of these activities and begin utilizing them with each person with whom you are building a relationship. Watch the positive results that will follow almost immediately.

As you are building a relationship, it is important to realize that there are stages of that relationship. Be aware of the stage that you are in.

### Building a Foundation

- Build a foundation of appreciation and trust.
- Focus on the considerate things a person does or says.
- Do not focus on mistakes. Look for the good!

### Explore What You Have in Common

- Explore each other's interests.
- Learn their activities.
- What are people doing together?
- How can you expand each person's interests together?

### Establish a Pattern in Your Relationship

- Apologize if you hurt someone's feelings or make a mistake.
- Saying "I'm sorry" goes a long way towards healing a rift in a relationship.
- Take responsibility for your words and actions. When you take responsibility people will trust you more.

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## Recognize That the Relationship Evolves

- Relationships tend to change because of outside influences.
- Embrace the change as a way to enhance the relationship.
- Do not fight the change or try to keep it from happening.

When building a relationship, it is not “If” you are going to have a bump in the road, it is “When.” How you react to the bump in the road is what will determine the course of the relationship. If you follow the correct positive steps, you will not only *mend* the relationship, but make it *stronger*!

## Proactive Steps to Take to Resolve a Disagreement or Argument

- + Be the first to reach out to the other person.
- + Be quick...time does not resolve a conflict. However, a "cooling off" period may be needed.
- + Find out what they need rather than what they want.
- + Honesty is not the best way, it is the only way.
- + Apologize. Be the first to say “I’m sorry.”
- + Be prepared to be humble.
- + Reconnect and laugh about the misunderstanding.
- + Ask for advice and suggestions from the other person.
- + Set up an additional meeting.
- + Follow up and follow through.
- + Send a note or a “nice touch.”
- + Agree to disagree. Then move on.

Both parties must want the conflict to be resolved if it is to be rectified. If not, cut your losses and move on. But realize that resolving a conflict constructively will strengthen the relationship.

Congratulations! You are now getting more proficient at identifying and implementing the strategies that will allow you to successfully build lasting relationships. The key to your success will be your ability to recognize and accept that each person and each relationship is unique. This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. You must be flexible and able to access the appropriate strategy. You must learn how to relate to people different from you.

- + Do not stereotype
- + Everyone is different from you
- + Do not make assumptions
- + Do not believe differences are a negative
- + Treating people the same way is not the same as treating them equally
- + Building a relationship with people different than you can be rewarding
- + People that are different than you have different capabilities and skill than you, which can enhance your combined efforts

*You have the ability to build a relationship with anybody, but you must have the desire to do so. You do not have the luxury of building relationships with only people “just like you.”*