

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships are natural functions of human development: we each do it in our own ways. However, if you think about it, the basic moral rules that the majority of people are taught, come through maternal figures at a young age. “Be Kind. Don’t fight. Remember to share. Say please and thank-you.”

In our school systems, we spend twelve years learning various educational processes—and yet seldom, apart from these moral reminders we spend very little time on developing our strengths in building relationship. For this month, we will focus on a few key processes in developing deeper, stronger and better relationships.

Relationship building is a continual process of learning about yourself and the other.

- 1 **Be Yourself:** In the words of one of the greatest philosopher, Dr. Seuss says, *“Today you are you that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.”* As we talk about building and strengthening relationships with others, we need to also see our own human value. That we have been set apart and created differently. My strengths are different than yours and yours are most likely different than mine. At times, we can get caught up in the talents of others, instead of looking at ourselves to see what we have to offer. In the context of relationship building, stop trying to be someone else and start being the best possible you!
- 2 **Be Open:** Be open to meet someone new or try something different. In the context of building relationships, we want to become all things to all people: this does not mean sacrificing your moral and personal beliefs, rather being willing to expose yourself to something that might be new or scary to you. Being ‘open’, tells the person ‘you are important: and I want to be with you’
- 3 **Be Intentional:** In Gentle Teaching, we throw the word “intentionality” around often. But, what does it mean at its truest meaning? To be intentional is to act deliberately: there is no ‘accident’ in what you are doing, rather the things that you are doing and the words that you are speaking have a desired purpose. While your process may change your intention will stay the same.
- 4 **Be Honest:** No one likes being lied to: it makes us feel belittled, devalued and does not us enable us to trust others. Being honest tells the receiver that we value, honor and trust them: that we are in a mutual relationship where one person does not capitalize over the other. To be honest is the most difficult as we need to expose a piece of our own selves, while being tactful in the way we choose to share information.
- 5 **Find a Common Interest:** The truth is that some people will naturally have more things in common than others solely based on their personalities, formative years and interests. However, just because it may come more naturally to others does not mean that others should take a back seat. Common interests may be found around activities, movies, past events, faith or spirituality, education, hobbies etc.

Quick table talk - choose 1

A Part of building strong relationships is knowing that you are valued by others and vice-versa.

Collect enough pens and paper for each team member to write a note of encouragement to every member on your team. These do not need to be made public but can be kept private and anonymous.

B Go around the table and play 20 questions: Ask each support questions about how and why they build relationships the way they do. What works for them?



Questions to ponder

1 Think about your closest friendship/ relationship. What made you and that person connect so strongly?

Are there elements of those relationships that you see that are not currently present in others. Why is this?

2 Think about the men and women you support. If we truly believe that our role in their lives is more than a monthly paycheck: in what ways can you increase your intentionality in your relationship?

What needs to stay the same? What needs to change?

3 In the world of serving others we cannot have a 'savior-complex' and think that only we know how to serve someone. In what ways can you help your team (individually or as a whole) grow in their relationships with those you are serving? (This is not just a team leader question!)