

A Journey of Personal Development (Part 2): Self-Discovery, Healing, and Growth
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Overview

Last week, we introduced a person-centered approach to meaningful living. This approach focuses on how to fulfill our true natures in three realities or three “worlds”:

- (1) The Personal World: Actualize our “true self” through knowing ourselves and pursuing what really matters to us.
- (2) The Relational World: Love our neighbors and engage authentically with people who matter to us.
- (3) The Spiritual World: Transcend ourselves in serving and being connected with someone greater than ourselves.

The essentials of living the good life are available to everyone, because they are within the realm of our human capabilities and the human condition. The challenge is how to discover and realize the essential criteria listed above.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to understand the following:

- 1) We are hardwired for others for survival and happiness.
- 2) How our assumptions and attitudes about others affect our mental conditions and relationships.
- 3) Our own vulnerabilities can hinder our relationships.
- 4) An appreciative and compassionate attitude can overcome relational barriers.
- 5) How to develop meaningful relationships

Introduction

We all know that life is more enjoyable when we can do things together and live in harmony. We also know that even in the same family or in the same work place, people can still live in isolation, with each one locked in their own private hells.

In today’s lesson, we turn to the relational world. We first look at how knowing ourselves can help improve relationships. Then, we consider how we can achieve meaningful relationships.

Personal Weaknesses that can Ruin Relationships

- Insecurity or low self esteem
- Jealousy or envy
- Territorial behavior & the Prima Donna syndrome
- Ego & need for control

- A critical attitude
- Cold & detachment
- Too much intensity & anxiety

Personal Strengths that can Build Relationships

- Consideration
- Generosity
- Empathy & compassion
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication skills
- Being genuine & authentic

Some Other Personal Responsibilities

- 1) Our assumptions about people and our overall attitudes toward them
- 2) Our vulnerabilities from our personality traits and personal experiences
- 3) Our overall stance in life – Are we “takers” or “givers”?
- 4) How we treat others – as a person or an instrument
- 5) The art of dialogue – a form of conversation that is open, civil, & authentic
- 6) An appreciative attitude and a loving heart can go a long way

Characteristics of a Meaningful Relationship

- It is a **deeply satisfying relationship** in its own right
- It is a **valuable** relationship, worthy of your time and effort
- It is a relationship of mutual **appreciation**, respect, and trust
- It is a relationship with **individuals who matter** to us.

How to Achieve Meaningful Relationships

- Stop blaming and start assuming personal responsibility to improve relationships
- Be authentic and vulnerable – put aside our masks and manipulations
- Don't let your past shadows and hidden demons ruin your relationships
- Cultivate an appreciative attitude and a loving heart
- Invest time and effort to understand and support the other
- Use dialogue and problem-solving skills to resolve differences
- Practice forgiveness and gratitude
- Let the others know that they matter a great deal

Conclusion

- We can build on our common humanity and complement each other with our unique talents
- Life would be better for everyone, if we learn how to get along with each other

- When we treat each other with respect, honesty, and compassion, we will co-create a humane environment
- We can become more of ourselves by helping others to become more of themselves.
- Viktor Frankl says, “My meaning in life is to help others find meaning.”

Take Home Message

- To live fully is to embrace the fullness of my life in the totality of my personal & relational world.
- We need to examine our own assumptions, attitudes, and vulnerabilities and make sure that they do not ruin our relationships.
- Make sure that we do not become another person’s hell.
- Life becomes more meaningful, when we are authentically engaged with others that matter to us.
- We become more complete, when we are connected with others in a meaningful way.

Exercises

- What would be your response when others do treat you the right way?
- How do you manage your own emotions so that they would not be controlled by others?
- How many confidants do you have with whom you can share your deepest problems?
- What is your track record in relating to people?
- What kind of conflict do you usually encounter?
- Have you ever disliked someone intensely without any reason?
- Have you ever practiced apology and forgiveness?
- Have you ever reached out to amend a fractured relationship?
- In what ways has your past interfered with your present relationships?
- Think of three persons whom you like most. If you can find the common reasons for liking them, you will discover something about your character strengths.
- Think of three persons whom you dislike most. If you can find the common reasons for your resentment and dislike, you will discover your vulnerability.
- What kind of social situation makes you feel most uncomfortable?
What kind of person makes you feel most uncomfortable?
If you can answer the above questions, you know the area of your vulnerability.
- The best antidote to one's critical spirit is self-examination. Often, criticism of another person is a projection of one's own problem. In what way does this phenomenon apply to you?