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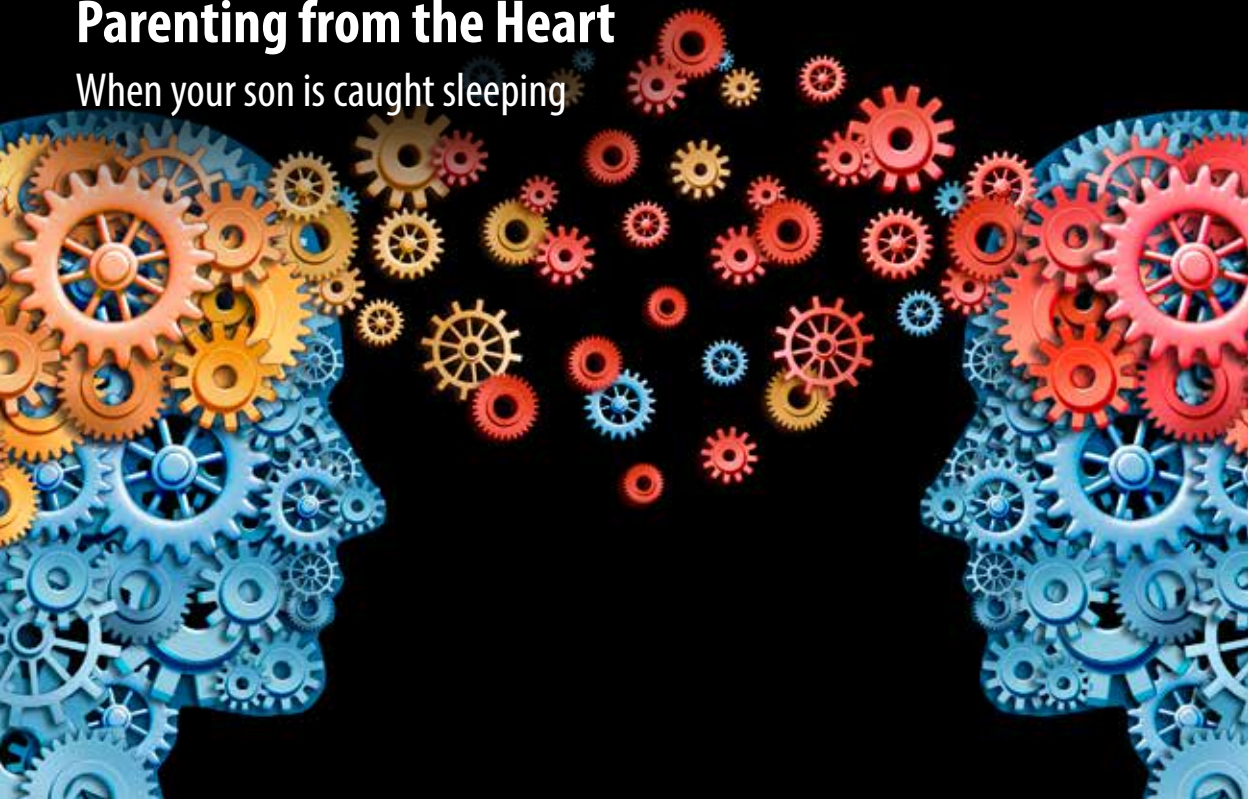
THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Relationships are important and have a huge effect on our lives, and on the lives of those we interact and care about. These relationships can include family, friends, co-workers, or others we interact with on a daily basis.

Our relationships can either help or hinder us, not only in coping with stress and adversity, but also in our efforts to learn, grow, explore, achieve goals, cultivate our talents, and find purpose and meaning in life.

Much has been written about the many facets of building positive relationships with others, so that we will be happier, more fulfilled, and feel supported and connected. In fact, while researching this topic I found so many stories and articles with great advice from both experts and laypersons alike that it was hard to choose which ones to use for this issue of *Motivated*.

The material I finally picked covers a number of different aspects of building good relations with people. I hope that the articles will contribute to creating positive connections with those that cross your path, and those you interact with on a daily basis. After all, when we create a positive connection with someone else, that person in turn will be more motivated to make positive connections with yet others, and ultimately create a larger chain of events that can positively influence society as a whole.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

The Mysterious Text

By Priscilla Lipciuc, adapted

One busy day, I was trying to get my boys to their computer classes on time when we realized that we couldn't find one of their textbooks nor the house key, resulting in frayed nerves and frantic running around. In the midst of it all, my phone beeped. It was a text message from a number I didn't recognize, and I was taken by surprise by what I read:

"I cannot change your past and I cannot promise you a future, but I can assure you of my love and support in whatever you might endeavor. I hope you have a great day!" No name.

I couldn't help but smile and chuckle. It seemed like one of those random "mistakes" to get my mind off my problems.

"Thank you for your encouragement," I replied. "However, I should let you know that you've got the wrong number. Please don't feel bad about it—you made my day."

My phone beeped again. "Oh, it was actually for you! This is my new number, and I just wanted to make sure you know how I feel about you." It was a friend of mine, the mother of one of my English students. Now I was even more surprised, and as soon as I dropped my boys off, I



had to call her back and thank her for her care and thoughtfulness.

The rest of the day followed its normal course, but I definitely had more of a spring in my step. This happy incident got me thinking: Since my husband passed away and I was left to raise our four children on my own, I've tried to go out of my way to make sure I don't burden anyone. Yet there are people who don't want to intrude but who would be happy to be there for me when I need them. Why didn't I consider for even a moment that this message of appreciation could have been intended for me in the first place?

I didn't want to let this lesson pass, so I made sure to let it sink in. I think I am better for it. ■



A Tale of Two Camps

By Mara Hodler, adapted

A friend of mine told me that when she was young, even though her family was close and they loved one another very much, fairness was always an issue. She said that when her mom brought home a pie or ice cream for dessert, she and her brother fought over who got the bigger piece. The quibbling over dessert portions was so stressful for her mom that she kept a scale near the dining table and literally weighed out each plate of dessert to make sure it was even. That was their family policy for years.

This got me thinking about how easy it is to view life through the “there’s only so much pie” paradigm. If your brother gets a huge piece of pie, there’s less for you, right? Of course, that’s actually true when it comes to pie, but that’s not the case with most other things in life.

However, there’s a tendency to be a believer either in scarcity or in abundance.

If you’re in Camp Scarcity, you believe that things like love, ideas, opportunities, imagination, finances, and resources are limited. Each of those things is like a pie

that is being sliced up, and every time someone gets a piece of one, there is less left for you. As you can imagine, there is very little goodwill in Camp Scarcity. People look out for themselves. People aren’t afraid to snatch a piece of pie from someone else, because if you don’t fight for your piece, you might not get any. If you’re lucky enough to snatch a piece of pie, you don’t even have time to enjoy it. You have to scarf it down because someone might be scheming to grab your pie.

Camp Abundance is a totally different camp. In Camp Abundance, everyone shares the belief that love, ideas, opportunities, imagination, finances, and resources are limitless. In this camp, there is a lot of celebration. People enjoy pie all over the place. When someone finds a great pie shop, they recommend it to everyone instead of trying to keep it a secret. Recipes are swapped, improved, and customized. One thing is certain in Camp Abundance: no one is ever going to run out of pie! In fact, most people share the belief that the best pies are yet



to be created, yet to be enjoyed, and yet to be shared.

Oddly enough, in Camp Scarcity, there actually does seem to be less and less pie. Everyone is worried about the day when the last bite of pie will be eaten. What then? You're on your own, and when it comes to getting your pie, you'd better get it while the getting's good.

But in Camp Abundance, no one fears running out of pie. They're constantly coming up with new ingredients to make pies with, new twists on old classics, new ways to transport pies, and better ways to make more of them. No one worries that one day the pies are simply going to run out.

When I first recognized these two camps, I quickly came to the sorry conclusion that I spent a lot more time in Camp Scarcity than I did in Camp Abundance. I seldom thought that the best was yet to come. I more often thought that disaster was looming in the near future. When I saw others blessed, I often felt that meant there was less "good"

left for me. I was definitely missing out on the party in Camp Abundance!

When I realized that, I packed up and moved camps. I found Camp Abundance to be very welcoming. They definitely had a "the more the merrier" take on things. I started believing that the best was yet to come—for me, for my friends, and for everyone around me. All of a sudden, I had a lot to share. I wasn't running out of ideas, finances, resources, opportunities, or love. It was easy to be generous when I knew that there was no need to hoard. It was easy to celebrate others' wins, because I saw there were plenty of wins to go around. Moving to Camp Abundance was a great decision!

Would you rather join a camp where you're always on the brink of famine, with dwindling love, ideas, finances, resources, and opportunities? Or a camp where the greatest opportunity, best ideas, richest resources, and deepest love is yet to come, with enough to go around for everyone? Each of us has the power to choose our attitude and decide which camp we want to live in. ■



8 TIPS FOR DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

By Liggy Webb, adapted

One of the most profound experiences we can have in our lives is connecting with other human beings. Positive and supportive relationships will help us to feel healthier, happier, and more satisfied. Here are a few tips that can help us develop more positive and healthy relationships in all areas of life:

1. Accept and celebrate differences.

One of the biggest challenges we experience in relationships is that we are all different, and perceive the world in different ways. When we try to build relationships, we may think that if people would think like we do, it would be so much easier to create a rapport. We feel more comfortable when people “get” us and see our point of view. Life, however, would be very dull if we were all the same, and while we may find it initially easier, the novelty of sameness would soon wear off. So accepting and celebrating that we are all different is a great starting point.

2. Listen effectively. Listening is a crucial skill in boosting another person’s self-esteem. It is the silent form of

flattery that makes people feel supported and valued. Active or reflective listening is the single most useful and important listening skill we can develop. In active listening, we are genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting, or what their message means. We are active in checking out our understanding before we respond, and when we do we restate or paraphrase our understanding of what they communicated, and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what makes listening effective.

3. Give people your time. Giving time to people is a huge gift. In a world where time is of the essence, we don’t always have a lot of time to give to our loved ones, friends, and work colleagues. Technology has somewhat eroded our ability to build real rapport, and we often attempt to multi-task by texting and talking at the same time. Being present in the time you give to people is very important, so that you are truly with them. Devoting time, energy, and effort

to developing and building relationships is one of the most valuable life skills.

4. Develop your communication skills. One of the biggest dangers with communication is that we can work on the assumption that the other person has understood the message we are trying to get across. Poor communication in the workplace can lead to a culture of backstabbing and blame, which, in turn, can affect our stress levels, especially when we don't understand something or feel we have been misled. Good communication, however, will have a positive effect on morale, and motivates individuals to want to come into work and do a great job.

5. Manage mobile technology. By now, pretty much everyone has a mobile phone, and many people have two or more. While they are a lifesaver in an emergency, and an effective tool for communication, they also can be a serious distraction and hindrance to positive relationships when people exhibit a lack of mobile phone etiquette. Try to be mindful of when to use your phone.

6. Learn to give and take feedback. Feedback is the food of progress, and while it may not always taste great, it can be very good for you. The ability to provide constructive feedback to others helps them to tap into their personal potential and can help to forge positive and mutually beneficial relationships. From your own personal perspective, any feedback you receive is free information and you can choose whether you want to take it on board or not. It can help

you to tap into your blind spot and get a different perspective.

7. Learn to trust more. A long time ago, my brother and I had a philosophical debate about what was more important in a relationship—love, trust, or passion. I was a lot younger and more naive then, and was caught up in the heady rollercoaster of sensation seeking. I have grown to understand, however, that trust is hugely important in any relationship. Years later, I bought my brother a photograph of a little girl who was smiling and staring confidently at the camera with an elephant's foot just above her head. The caption was: "To trust is more important than love." I believe that sentiment is true, because no love will last without equal amounts of respect and trust.

8. Develop empathy. There is a great expression that I learned a long time ago: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Empathy and understanding builds connection between people. It is a state of perceiving and relating to another person's feelings and needs without blaming, giving advice, or trying to fix the situation. Empathy also means "reading" another person's inner state and interpreting it in a way that will help the other person and offer support and develop mutual trust.

Every relationship we have can teach us something, and by building positive relationships with others, we will be happier, more fulfilled, and feel more supported, supportive, and connected. ■

Learning from the Hurt

By Anna Perlini, adapted

It's my 20th year living and working in the former Yugoslavia. I also lived here earlier, right after President Tito died in 1980. His pictures were still hanging everywhere, and though the country was going through a challenging economic crisis, it seemed like nobody questioned Yugoslav unity. Having lived here both "before" and "after," it's still a puzzle how a succession of particularly brutal and bloody civil wars eventually led to the formation of seven different countries.

But I've found out that many of the people who lived through it also have a hard time making sense of it. It's as if they lived through a bad dream, a nightmare of hatred and pain.

I've often heard comments along the lines of "We can't figure out what happened and how we could find ourselves the worst enemies with people who were our neighbors, or even relatives."

Thankfully, although not everyone has forgiven and forgotten, I believe they would think twice or more before getting into another war. They paid the price, and in many ways, are still paying it.

Over the years, Per un Mondo Migliore* has helped to build bridges of reconciliation, and through this process, I was also helped. I have been privileged

to have a peek into the complex matter of war versus peace.

I saw the insanity of war and the hurt and scars it leaves for decades.

I touched the pain of division.

I was convinced once more of the necessity and beauty of unity: what a priceless thing it is, how much power it has, and what a sad state we fall into when we don't appreciate it, and eventually lose it.

I learned how small things, if not addressed, can become big issues.

I realized the danger of getting too familiar with the good things we have, taking them for granted, and eventually being too willing to trade them for some fake promise.

I witnessed the healing forgiveness can bring, and the importance of faith and trust versus despair.

I was amazed at the courage, bravery, and unselfishness some people can show in extreme circumstances.

I was reminded of the quote attributed to Mother Teresa: "What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family." If there is no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to one another. ■

*Anna Perlini is a cofounder of Per un Mondo Migliore (www.perunmondomigliore.org), a humanitarian organization active in the Balkans since 1995.

Talking vs. Listening



By Iris Richard, adapted

The small cafeteria at our workplace was abuzz with chatter. Colleagues sat in groups, and the room was humming with conversation. That morning I felt I had little to contribute and opted to sit alone. Staring out the window, I was lost in troubled contemplation of a recent loss, rough edges in my working relationships, and a nagging health issue, and I wondered when I would finally reach the proverbial end of the tunnel where the sun shines again.

As I sipped my latte, I glanced around the room noticing that everyone seemed to have a story to tell. It seemed that everyone enjoyed saying their piece, but fewer were involved in active listening. I thought I could really use a friend with good listening skills who could help me untangle my troubled thoughts. That's when an idea started to form in my mind. Instead of waiting for that special friend, perhaps I should try to be one to others, and since we had recently started a new year, I could even make "better listening" a late New Year's resolution.

There is so much to be learned about this skill, but the first step is deciding to be the listener for others that I would want them to be for me. Having taken the first few baby steps, I already noticed that my relationships with coworkers and friends have improved.

And by the way, I did find my own personal "good listener" whose undivided attention helped me untangle my thoughts and feel that someone understands. ■

Quick Tips

- Ensure that the relationship you have with yourself is a positive one.
- Accept and celebrate the fact that we are all different.
- Actively listen to hear what other people have to say.
- Give people time and "be present" when you are with them.
- Develop and work on your communication skills.
- Manage mobile technology and be aware of its pitfalls.
- Learn to give and take constructive feedback.
- Open your heart and find the courage to trust.
- Learn to be more understanding and empathetic.
- Treat people as you would like to be treated yourself.

When Your Son Is Caught Sleeping

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



By Jewel Roque, adapted

On the way home after an evening out with some friends, I asked my youngest if he had a good time.

“Sort of,” he answered. “But the kids on the playground were teasing me.”

“About what?” I asked. He sometimes reacts strongly to comments, so I assumed it wasn’t a big deal.

“Eric said he saw a picture of me sleeping while doing homework, and then Leslie said she saw it too, and all the kids started laughing.”

I didn’t know how to respond. I had posted a photo on Facebook of my son sleeping at his desk, his homework beside him. I had thought it was cute. My son puts his all into his activities, but when he’s tired, he’s tired. And he sleeps.

It runs in my family. My siblings and I know that once we reach a certain point of fatigue, we can’t push past it. Sleep is

the only solution. My son has somehow learned that early. When he’s tired, even if it’s when we’re about to sing happy birthday at a party or when he’s supposed to be finishing up his homework, he will sleep.

My husband and I understand that and work around it. Our son’s teachers, for the most part, have also been understanding that at times he might fall asleep at his desk. I try to get him to bed on time when he’ll have an early morning or a long day.

Parents and teachers generally understand these things. Other kids often don’t.

When I posted the photo, I didn’t think about the possibility of parents showing their kids the “cute” post, which in the mind of a child might not be “cute” but “silly” or “funny” or “embarrassing.” Material to tease with.



Something I had done unthinkingly caused my son hurt. It cast him in a negative light in the minds of his friends. They probably forgot about it a minute later, and they were all playing again. But that moment I had to admit to my boy that it wasn't their fault; it was mine.

I pulled up the Facebook photo and showed it to my son, saying, "I posted this photo of you the other day. I didn't think anyone would tease you about it." Then I promised, "I won't post anything of you unless I ask you first." I already have that agreement with other members of my immediate family, but I didn't think it would matter to my youngest. I was wrong.

It's strange I would make a mistake like that. Thinking back to my own childhood, my strongest emotions resulted from teasing. I can remember half a dozen separate occasions, before

the age of five, where I was brought to tears by teasing. Painful moments tend to remain in the mind and the heart long after the echo of the actual words fade.

How often do my own words or side comments have the same effect as those children on the playground? When I'm trying to focus on work, and after one too many interruptions, I snap at the kids, telling them to leave me alone so I can get something done. Or when they're arguing and I can't stand the contention, I tell them I don't care who said what and whose fault it is—I just want peace.

After careful reflection, I vowed to see every moment of life through the eyes of my child. That's not a promise I can make, nor one I can keep, but it is something I can try. Not a once-and-for-all decision, but a moment-by-moment choice. To slow down. To think. To pray. To love. ■

Positive Relationships

NOTABLE
QUOTES



The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.—**Theodore Roosevelt**

A loving relationship is one in which the loved one is free to be himself—to laugh with me, but never at me; to cry with me, but never because of me; to love life, to love himself, to love being loved. Such a relationship is based upon freedom and can never grow in a jealous heart.

—**Leo F. Buscaglia**

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.—**Carl Jung**

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.—**William James**

When you stop expecting people to be perfect, you can like them for who they are.—**Donald Miller**

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.—**Carl W. Buechner**

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate.—**Albert Schweitzer**

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

—**Dale Carnegie**

We can improve our relationships with others by leaps and bounds if we become encouragers instead of critics.

—**Joyce Meyer**

Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.—**James Baldwin**

