

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE: Communicate

Ponder: When has Heavenly Father answered my prayers?

Watch: “Creating Lift,”

Discuss: Why is listening an essential part of prayer?

Read: The following scripture passage and statement by President Nelson:
“I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart” (Doctrine and Covenants 8:2).
President Nelson: “Your soul will be blessed as you learn to listen, then listen to learn from children, parents, partners, neighbors, and Church leaders, all of which will heighten capacity to hear counsel from on high”

Discuss: How can we learn to better recognize answers to our prayers?

Activity: As a group, read the steps below and briefly discuss them.

STEPS FOR LISTENING

1

CONCENTRATE

- Focus on the speaker’s words and body language.
- Don’t interrupt.
- Don’t look at or use your phone.

2

APPRECIATE

- Look at the speaker.
- Use small words like “yes” or “okay.”
- Thank the speaker.

3

REVIEW

- Say, “So, you are saying . . .”
- Then repeat what you heard.

4

ASK

- Ask, “Did I understand?”
- Listen and wait for an answer.

Commit: I will pray individually and with my family each morning and night. I will spend time after each prayer reverently listening for guidance.

1. RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

Read: As we develop loving relationships with others, our physical, emotional, and spiritual health is strengthened. Heavenly Father wants us to love Him and those around us. Our family and friends love us and can provide the support, encouragement, and honest feedback we need to successfully cope with life's challenges. The adversary wants to isolate us from others and wants for us to feel deprived of the blessings that come from relationships.

"The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that 'friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of "Mormonism". That thought ought to inspire and motivate all of us. I think in all of us there is a profound longing for friendship." (Marlin K. Jensen)

Discuss: How do close friendships help you with life?

2. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Read: When building relationships, we must take the initiative to reach out to others and be tolerant of differences. We can build relationships through "small and simple" means (Alma 37:6). Taking time to create quality relationships matters more than the quantity. We will find that we get more joy in life as we develop close relationships with a few people we trust rather than having many superficial relationships. There's nothing wrong with having a lot of friends, but we should not assume having more friends equals happiness.

Read the list below of additional ways to create and build relationships with others.

Become genuinely interested in other people. Learn what other people love or enjoy. You don't have to have the same interests, but you can learn to care about what they are interested in.

Smile. Happiness does not depend on what is happening around you but rather on how you respond to your circumstances. Smiles are free to give and can be a great way of making others feel better.

Remember people's names. A person's name is the most important sound to him or her, whether the person realizes it or not. Learning someone's name can help that person feel valued and important.

Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves. People feel appreciated when someone listens to them. The easiest way to have someone want to talk to you is to become a good listener. To be a good listener, you must genuinely care about what others have to say.

Try sincerely to make others feel important. The golden rule is to treat other people how you would like to be treated. People like to feel important—like what they say or do matters to others. You can do your best to help people feel important by practicing the ideas listed here.

Read: “We build this relationship [with others] one person at a time—by being sensitive to the needs of others, serving them, and giving of our time and talents.” Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Ponder: Think about someone with whom you can build a stronger relationship. Consider the ideas earlier in this section and the counsel in President Uchtdorf’s words, and write down ways you can apply what you learn to build this relationship.

3. BE UNDERSTANDING AND NONJUDGMENTAL

Read: Everyone makes judgments about situations and people, including the actions of family members. President Uchtdorf explained, “When we feel hurt, angry, or envious, it is quite easy to judge other people, often assigning dark motives to their actions in order to justify our own feelings of resentment”. But the Book of Mormon states, “Seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged” (Moroni 7:18).

Discuss: How does being understanding and less judgmental influence our happiness?

ACTIVITY

Step 1: We can remember the Savior’s example of compassion for others when we are tempted to judge or criticize. “When you meet someone, treat them as if they were in serious trouble, and you will be right more than half the time” (Henry B. Eyring,)

Step 2: Below are some thoughts that can help us be more understanding when we are tempted to be judgmental. As a group, take turns reading the following statements and discuss any thoughts you have.

- “They are also a child of God.”
- “They are probably doing the best they can.”
- “I don’t know their situation.”
- “They could be going through a major trial.”
- “We are more similar than different.”

- “I don’t know everything.”
- “Everyone has strengths and weaknesses.”
- “The Savior loves them as much as He loves me.”

Step 3: As a group, discuss other thoughts that help you when you are tempted to judge others

Read: Imagine you see a fellow classmate at school one day who is visibly upset and they are pushing and shoving people in the hallway and their language is **NOT** good.

Discuss: As a group, discuss what a judgmental response would be. Come up with compassionate explanations for why the student could be acting this way. What could you do to be more understanding and less judgmental?

4. COMMUNICATE WITH “I” MESSAGES

Read: Disagreements and differences with others are a natural part of relationships. This can happen because of differences in values, opinions, perceptions, motivations, desires, and ideas. Learning to address these differences in a healthy way can strengthen your relationships with others and help you develop empathy and patience. Healthy conflict resolution is likely to occur when individuals feel safe and valued.

Though differences are normal, they do not have to lead to contention. It is contention during a conflict that causes a problem.

When personal differences occur, you may have difficulty clearly communicating your side without escalating the conflict. Using “I” messages can help you state your concerns, feelings, and needs in a manner that is easier for the listener to hear and understand. An “I” message focuses on your own feelings and experiences rather than **your perspective of what the other person has done or failed to do.**

The first part of an “I” message identifies and expresses your own feelings, which is critical in addressing conflict or disagreement. It helps to lessen defensive feelings and makes it easier to listen to one another.

With a partner read the example of an “I” message and then take the “you” remark and discuss how you could change it into an “I” message.

EXAMPLES OF “YOU” MESSAGES

“**You** never listen to anyone, and **you’re** not really listening to me now.”

“**You** are inconsiderate when **you** don’t let me know **your** plans have changed and **you** won’t be able to go to the game with me”

EXAMPLES OF “I” MESSAGES

“I feel disrespected when I don’t think **my** concerns are listened to”

5. BE CHARITABLE

Read: “Whatever problems you or your family is facing, whatever you must do to solve them, the beginning and the end of the solution is charity, the pure love of Christ. Without this love, even seemingly perfect families struggle. With it, even families with great challenges succeed” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf)

Ponder & Commit

- Who do you know that could benefit from your charity? Why?
- What will I do as a result of what I learned today? (This could be your personal commitment for the week.)

MY COMMITMENTS

- A I will pray each morning and night and I will listen and look for answers to my prayers
- B I will write down one thing I am grateful for each day and thank God for it.
- C I will work on my personal commitment from the Foundational Principle and the “Ponder” section.
- D I will share what I learned with my family or friends.