

How Do You Build Relationships? An 11 Step Program

Here are some tips for getting your relationships off the ground. Some of these ideas we learned in the first grade but, as adults, we sometimes forget.

1. ***Build relationships one at a time.*** Fortunately or unfortunately, there are no short cuts. Sending out a newsletter helps you keep in touch with lots of folks, but it's no substitute for getting to know a real person.
2. ***Be friendly and make a connection.*** This may seem self-evident, but a friendly word or smile can make someone's day. Try to find something in common: all of us want to have close connections with our fellow humans.
3. ***Ask people questions.*** People love to talk about themselves and about what they think. If you ask people about themselves and then take the time to listen attentively, they can become your fast friend.
4. ***Tell people about yourself.*** People won't trust you unless you are willing to trust them. Tell them what you genuinely care about and what you think.
5. ***Go places and do things.*** When asked why he robbed banks, the robber replied, "because that's where the money is." If you want to make friends, you have to go where the people are: picnics, conferences, events, fundraisers, parties, playgrounds, bowling alleys, little league games, bake sales, etc.
6. ***Accept people the way they are.*** You don't have to agree with them all the time in order to form a relationship with them. No one likes to be judged.
7. ***Assume other people want to form relationships, too.*** Underneath the crabbiest looking person is often a lonely soul hoping someone will make a crack in their shell.
8. ***Overcome your fear of rejection.*** Most of us suffer from a fear of rejection, and there's only one thing to do about that: get over it. If you want to form relationships, plan on being rejected some of the time. You will be richly rewarded the rest of the time with the new relationships you have made.
9. ***Be persistent.*** People are often shy and suspicious. It takes a while to win trust. You can almost always form a relationship if you stick with it.
10. ***Invite people to get involved.*** People want to become part of something bigger than themselves. Many people are looking for an opportunity to meet other people who share common goals. At the worst, people will be flattered that you invited them to join.
11. ***Enjoy people.*** If you genuinely enjoy people, others will be attracted to your attitude. People will more likely want to be around you.