

How Do You Sustain Relationships?

Relationships, like any other living thing, need care to keep them alive and healthy. So what do you do with them to keep them going?

1. ***Pay attention to people.*** Check in with people when you need to. This may take only a few minutes a week, but those few minutes can make the difference in helping your friend or co-worker remember the importance of the work you are doing together.
2. ***Community openly.*** People need to communicate. It's a good idea to set aside some time just to talk about the way things are going. When people don't have a chance to talk about important issues, misunderstandings can occur and tensions often build up. Communication is a discipline that has to be practiced regularly; it's like taking vitamins or doing push-ups.
3. ***Appreciate each other.*** Everyone needs to be appreciated in order to keep relationships going. If you notice that someone did a stellar job of collecting the necessary data for the committee, say so. If you enjoy working with someone, let them know. We are all human beings and appreciation helps us thrive.
4. ***Extend yourself.*** Go a little out of your way, at least once in a while. If your co-worker needs to spend some extra time with his daughter, you might tell him go home early and you'll finish up the grant proposal.
5. ***Volunteer to do some work for their organizations*** (if they are not already in yours). If you lend them a hand, they are likely to think well of you and give something back in return.
6. ***Challenge each other to do better.*** We all need a buddy to help us stretch ourselves beyond what we think we can do. We can also build stronger relationships by challenging our work partners to take on bigger challenges.
7. ***Back each other when things get tough.*** Loyalty is essential to keeping relationships healthy. We may not agree with a co-worker or friend, but we can stand by him or her when they are in a jam.