

Essence of a Relationship



A loving relationship seems to be a mythical thing that is mind-boggling to many people. It still fascinates me to this day. I can easily pinpoint what is not working in a relationship, how the other person irks me and how the other person needs to change. However, it takes less energy to work on what I can do to make the relationship work. It is during these times that I remind myself that a successful relationship boils down to one simple concept- "every relationship is a working relationship".

We never stop working and nurturing a relationship, be it a romantic relationship, friendship or a familial relationship. It is a commitment and responsibility that we choose to carry with pride the moment we step into the relationship, even those relationships that we step into without knowing the day we were born.

The moment we stop working on the relationship, it turns sour. Perhaps you have a nagging feeling that you seem to talk a lot less than you used to. You start to realise that their friends seem to understand them better than you do. As this slowly dawns on you, you begin to feel that they seem more like a stranger to you. You wonder whether you can trust them. Whenever you think of them, your head is filled with doubts and all the negative things that they have done.

STOP!!

The more you dwell on these thoughts, the further you are leading yourself from the relationship. You

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are only widening the gap between you and the other person. There is no science to a relationship. Keep it simple. The essence of a successful working relationship is but a few simple ingredients that are logical and easy to follow. Remind yourself of the commitment and responsibility you chose to take on with the relationship. Nurture it with trust, appreciation, and communication.

Believe and trust in the other person. Most importantly believe and trust yourself in the relationship. The relationship is not built by chance. How you view yourself affects the relationship, as any negative thoughts or feelings that you have influence your communication with the other person. Learn to love and be comfortable with the person you are.

Always appreciate each other. Relationships thrive in positive environments. It is important to build that environment with the people around you. Communicate in order to understand each other. It is always safest to clarify with the other person to save yourself from all the heartache caused by assumptions.

In human relationships, distance is not measured in miles but in affection. Two people can be right next to each other, yet miles apart. So stay in touch with those who truly matter to you. Not because it's convenient, but because they're worth the extra effort. -unknown

by Jun Teh

Loving the ME Within



by **Armanda Kheng (FST)**

Some days, as you wake up in the morning and examine yourself in the mirror, the thought "There is something not right with me today" creeps in. Not being able to pinpoint what it is, your mind starts wondering: *You think you're ugly because you're not pretty enough, you think you're fat because you're not thin enough and you think you're bad because you're simply not good enough.*

It is like a feeling of falling short of your ideal self. If used aptly, such feelings can drive you to work harder in order to be more competent. However, if such negative feelings persist, one may spiral down the self-esteem ladder and left unaddressed, it could lead to a sense of worthlessness and underserving of any form of love.

Just as the saying, 'life is not a bed of roses' goes, it is normal to feel down once in a while. We will all experience some form of emotional distress at some point in life. However, this feeling of worthlessness and being inadequate can drag a person into a deep and dark valley. I personally have experienced walking down this dark valley.

One of the worst times in my life was triggered by an identity crisis. It happened because a friend criticised every little detail about me. I woke up the next day feeling lost and hating the way I was. I felt lost. I did not know who I was or who I wanted to become. As I stared into the mirror, my reflection felt foreign. As a result, unhappiness and hopelessness filled my mind. The future seemed bleak. Though I knew I was not the most miserable person in the world, I still helplessly felt that I will never be truly happy. Despite my effort to search for happiness, it was in vain. I was never really able to find it. Relief came one night while I was pouring my heart out to my brother.

He told me: "You need to stop. The only reason you are unhappy is because you are constantly thinking about how to please others and how you are not right for others. It is not your job to make



them happy. You, my dear sister, need to learn to make yourself happy."

It was those words that made me realise that self-acceptance was the key to feeling happy and whole. I needed to do things that would make me happy. I needed to be happy with the way I was. While I may fall short of the ideals others have for me, it did not matter because I knew that I am being the best I could be.

Many people often complain about the constant battle they face -friends fight, families argue and lovers quarrel. As for me, I believe that the biggest battle is that which is with our selves. It may not be easy to love yourself just the way you are, but you can take that first step today. I did. Now give yourself a chance too -to love yourself just the way you are.

If you wake up one morning feeling inadequate, try this: Tell yourself: 'I am the best. I am grateful for who I am.' Learn to be comfortable with who you are though others may not like you. All that matters is that you love yourself and you are happy being YOU.

Cherishing the Hidden Treasures in Our Life

by Jess Foong (FST)

If you were to look beyond the mirror that reflects the image of your beloved and yourself, you will see the people that surround your life –your family and friends. For me, these are the people that I feel most at home with. I wonder what life would have been without their great support.

Ann, a friend of mine, once said that “In a good relationship, one should feel comfortable to be who they truly are. They are free to share their thoughts and feelings without any need for pretense”. I took her words to heart. It reminded me of some great friendships and the close bond within my family. If I were to put them under a microscope, I would say that the open communication that we had helped a lot. This bond was further strengthened by the constant effort in keeping each other informed about the latest happenings in our lives. Understanding the purpose of the communication and the intention behind it also helped strengthen this bond.

However, this close bond would only be complete with trust. A relationship would lack meaning if it is built upon suspicion and paranoia. Sometimes, our best friend and family member can be a pain in the neck, especially when they know what your hot buttons are. At times, they just feel the need to annoy you or pull your leg. Nonetheless, it is this ‘fun’ within a relationship that shows the close bond that we have with each other. We still stay together despite the occasional annoyance.



While occasional annoyance is tolerable, even fun; we are tested beyond our limits at times. That is when you see the sparks and fireworks. The hot button becomes too HOT. In such situations, some would prefer to stay away while others would charge straight on. I would personally prefer avoiding such tension. Either way, constant tension is not healthy for any form of relationship. It widens the distance between friends and family members. I have learnt through the many arguments and conflicts that there never is a win-lose situation; either both would win or both would lose. The moment we try to establish the win-lose situation, we are exalting ourselves above the relationship, distancing ourselves from the other person, risking the relationship and losing ourselves in the process.

During such conflict, seeking to see the positive trait in the other person would be of greater help than to engulf ourselves in anger. Reflect on the good old times, appreciate each other and cherish the time spent together. It will help in realigning the relationship into one that is nurturing instead of destructive. Lastly, take the initiative to constantly work on the relationship and to strengthen the relationship further.

Treasure your relationship, not your possessions- Anthony J'DAngelo

Taking the **MYTH OUT** of a Lasting Romance

by Avery Tee (FST)

Whenever the term “romantic relationship” is mentioned, images of movies portraying how the main actor and actress complete each other and the ever classic Disney fairy tales where the characters live “happily ever after” often come to mind. This has become the goal for many in their search for love. As a result, many people are let down and disappointed by this quest. You may have seen couples break up or divorces take place more often than you can blink these days. Does it mean that it’s not possible to have a lasting relationship? No. We just need to clear our lenses in order to discern reality from fairy tales.

As much as I too would like to believe that my loved one will complete me in a relationship, it is faulty to the point. If we were both waiting for the other to complete areas that we both feel are empty, what would that make us? Would we be emptier than we started off with? If we were both unhappy to begin with waiting for someone else to make us happy, wouldn’t we be unhappier than before, because we did not know how to be happy in the first place? Thus it is important to work on ourselves, striving for our own happiness rather than waiting for someone to come along and make us happy. There has to be “me” time for us to look within ourselves. Don’t just lose yourself in the relationship but find yourself from within.

A friend puts it very well, saying “I have now walked into a relationship carrying my commitment and responsibility with pride”. I am committed to the person I am with and have the responsibility of binding us together. Being in a relationship is not just as simple as walking in and out of your life as see fit. The basic understanding that now “I am with you” is very important. I am now a part of your life. Apart from the “me” time, time with family, time with friends, there is now “us” time. We take the other person’s feeling and thoughts into consideration in what we do and keeping ourselves in check for who we are. It’s an art but can be as simple as you make it.

Relationship does not stop with “happily ever after”. We do not stop after courtship or marriage; we



continue to work at it. I do stand by the saying that “every relationship is a working relationship”. The relationship stops when love between both parties stops. Love is nurtured through trust, appreciation, understanding and communication. Trust and communication are the very foundation of a relationship. Despite our belief that the other party is a mind reader, it hardly rings true. It is vital to communicate our love and appreciation for each other in order to nurture the relationship that we have. Do not walk away during conflict or hard times. Love is not just about roses or chocolates. It challenges how we work through our differences and reconnect with our similarities. Trust each other in maintaining the relationship and work through your differences. It is this challenge that will strengthen the bond between both parties.

Good relationships are not just about the good times you share; they're also about the obstacles you go through together, and the fact that you still say "I love you" in the end.- unknown



Courage: Developing the Strength to go Beyond.

Nick Vujicic's talk was one of hope and perseverance; to have the courage to stand up after falling and of self-acceptance. He rightly mentioned that life is not without pain, but it is what you allow these pains to do to us that matters. Will you choose to become stronger or will you allow it to bind you like grave clothes?

Nick also repeatedly mentioned that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. However, created as creatures that appreciate beauty, we have used this gift against ourselves. We always think that the grass is greener on the other side and others always seem to have it easier. In this process of dwelling on what we do not have, we lost sight of what we do have. We seem to have lost the value of learning to be appreciative. Yet learning to be thankful, extending graciousness to others and accepting others, as well as ourselves, is the essence of living.

A very apt phrase Nick mentioned was 'unforgiveness is like drinking poison, hoping that your enemy dies'. This phrase very much sums up our interaction and relationship with others. Besides, this would probably somehow give a little insight into the shocking discovery from the survey conducted in the University Hall. 80 out of 100 who had attempted suicide were driven to do so because someone let them down. Unknowingly, we have bound ourselves in the grave clothes of unforgiveness, hurt and perhaps even anger.

As much as this survey surprised me, it also reminded me that some of our friends still do care. I remember reading about this portal 'Peer to Peer (P2P)' that allows us to write in anonymously. We are free to share our concerns or issues pertaining to relationships, academics, family or any other issue on this portal. This is probably a good way to seek assistance as we learn to open ourselves up to different possibilities of handling our issue. They even have a Facebook page www.fb.com/sunwaypeer. As I was pondering upon the survey results, the thought 'if only more of my friends knew about P2P' came to mind. It is a service that has been made available for us, students. I truly hope we would find this portal helpful.

Through all these, a lesson that I learnt as a student is that seeking assistance and learning from painful experiences is part-and-parcel of the growing process. Much courage is needed if one wants to develop into a wholesome person emotionally. Nonetheless, it would be worthwhile as it lays the foundation towards a more wholesome life and relationships with others.

Developing wholesomeness is a journey towards any wholesome relationship

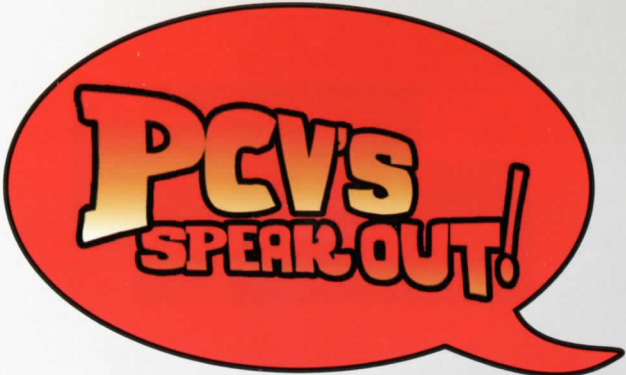
by Evelyn Lum (SUBS)



HAVING CONCERNS/ISSUES? NEED A LISTENING EAR?

You can write to us anonymously at Peer-to-Peer (P2P).

 fb.com/sunwaypeer



PCV'S SPEAK OUT!

Opinions From
Peer Counselling
Volunteers



Christine Anne (FIA)

We all know that trust is fundamental for all relationships. Without trust, nothing will function and everything will crumble. This was the lesson I learnt from my previous relationship. I never trusted my boyfriend then as I feared that he would leave me. I was scared because I wanted the relationship to last. My fear drove me to seek assurance from him almost all the time. My doubts drove him away. I pushed the relationship to the limit and drew an end to it before I even knew it. Learning to trust was the biggest lesson I learnt.



Joey (FIA)

Trust and communication are the very essence of any functioning relationship. Absence of any one element will cause a relationship to crumble eventually. Having no trust is, however the major cause of broken relationships. I remembered my previous relationship back in 2010 where my ex-girlfriend checked on me constantly using all means available - from social media to phone calls to friends. She even had my Facebook password. I felt suffocated by her concern but remained in the relationship until my friend convinced me that distrustfulness had overshadowed love. I regret that the lack of trust and the lack of an open communication came with a hefty price.

Raisa Gabrielli (CIMP)

Since primary school, I was associated with the term coquette. Kindness is often, and easily, mistaken for flirtation. Having spent seven years living abroad, there is a palpable difference in mind-set, such as how signs of friendliness between a boy and girl are easily frowned upon. Affection is affection, whether between a romantic couple or friends - regardless of the gender. In fact, some may think that warmth is healthy for a relationship. It clearly states you care about the person. However, there is often an invisible barrier mildly shrouding the task of unveiling a person as a friend. An example would be the infinitesimal obstacles of race, culture, gender and colour of skin. A person remains a person - nothing less, nothing more - regardless of the aforementioned variances. These differences should not halt you from extending kindness to others. The best antidote for any dilemma is communication, but most importantly the effort of trying. I remember going back to my hometown, Germany, one summer, having lost grasp of the language. Nonetheless, I still moped when necessary to get milk into my bowl of cereals and gesticulated plenty. What do you know, it worked! It does not matter if you are trying to communicate your nation's customs or your personal beliefs, if the person cares for you he or she will stop, listen and take your feelings into consideration.

iCARE VOLUNTEER

8 - 9 MAY 2013 • ENERGY HUB

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY



I dropped by the fair with some friends. The people manning the booths were great! They were very friendly and knowledgeable. It was a good event because we got to know about and learn about the various volunteer organisations around Malaysia and how to go about joining the organisations. Thank you for organising the fair!
- Syazana (FST) -

The fair was very interesting and informative. I have learnt a lot from it. I am amazed that 20 NGOs can come together in one place.
- Amanda (FST) -

'The NGO fair was interesting. It made me realise that there are many volunteering opportunities out there, but most importantly, there are also many people who are in need. It reminded me that we need to be thankful for what we have, and to extend this blessing to others through acts of service.
- Evelyn (SUBS) -

Personally, I was exposed to several NGOs in Malaysia through this fair. That was an opportunity for me to consider which field of volunteerism I want to be part of. I really hope there will be a similar event in the future as I believe there are many students who are interested in volunteerism!
- Margaretha (FST) -



↑ NGO Fair

PAST EVENTS

World Play Day ↓



Fun and never regretting joining it
- TH (FIA) -

Those few hours of giving a helping hand brought out the child in me. It also made me reflect on how much I've grown. It was definitely worth the sunburn when you get to see the kids smile which could have been you when you were a kid.
- Elaine (SUBS) -

Children need a lot of attention from adults to bring out the best in them. As adults we are obliged to offer them advice and inspire them to make ourselves their role models. This way our relationships get strengthened and we will definitely see them as successful leaders in the future!
- Jonathan (ACCA) -

Seeing the children enjoyed and laughed so happily when they're playing made me smile. Every child deserves to play.
- Brenda (FST) -

The smiles on the kids' faces were priceless.
- Jess (FST) -

