

## Relationship Tips

*Valentine's Day is the day to celebrate love. Most of our attention on this day is paid to the love of romantic relationships.*

*But love extends far beyond the container of "romance." How about friends, siblings, colleagues, teachers, and communities...all those other relationships that keep us going and growing??? Can we find a way to honor them too? Instead of chocolates, let's think of ways to promote good relationships. Instead of a dozen red roses, how about a dozen ways to build better relationships?*

**Think relationship** - Move from the "me" and the "you" to the "we."

**Honor the desire for good connection** - Research shows that people need relationships like they need air, food, or water.

**Radiate respect** - Respect is a gateway to healthy, hopeful connection.

**Emphasize empathy** - Empathy is the "wireless connection" that creates an empathic bridge between others and ourselves.

**Listen with love** - When we listen with love, we communicate how much the relationship matters to us.

**Be present** - Being present and real in our relationship allows others to be more present and real in the relationship. Your presence can be the best present.

**Make it mutual** - Healthy relationships are always moving toward mutuality—each person affecting the other and being affected by the other—which leads to actions that benefit *both* people.

**Build resilience** - Resilience is not an individual attribute; resilience grows through engagement in mutually-encouraging relationships.

**Respond, repair, reconnect** - When a "disconnect" occurs, see if re-connection is possible. Remember: relational pain means something needs to change in the relationship, the relationship needs to move in a new way.

**Laugh liberally** - "We" who laugh, last.

**Grow together** - Good relationships contribute to the growth of both (or all) people in them. They allow us to grow together even as we grow in different ways.

**Say yes to zest!** - Relationships deserve our very best energy, and good relationships actually replenish our energy. Zest! Energy! Creativity!...all arise in a healthy relationship. These relationships provide the energy of our lives.



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The  
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Women at Wellesley College, studies  
the characteristics of relationships that  
facilitate growth throughout people's lives. It  
seeks to find ways to alleviate personal suffering  
and bring about positive social conditions based  
on justice and on an acknowledgement of human  
beings' ultimate interdependence. In this  
way it seeks to lessen the suffering caused by  
isolation and increase both creativity and a  
sense of possibility for all people.