

Getting Along

by **Lou Stoops**

According to the Carnegie Technological Institute, 90% of all people who fail in their life's vocation fail because they cannot get along with other people. Well now, that's a problem! The need is clear. People must learn to develop good relationship skills if they intend to be successful in life.

We can't live unto ourselves and for ourselves if we hope to achieve meaningful and productive lives. There's a resident need in all of us to be in relationship with others. Studies have verified this truth and have shown the practical benefits. Note for instance, that single men are jailed more often, earn less, have more illnesses and die at a younger age than married men. It also has been observed that married men with cancer live 20% longer than single men with the same cancer. Women, generally more adept at developing relationships, live even longer with the same cancers. Leonard Syme, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California at Berkeley, observed that Japan leads the way in global health because of the close social, cultural and traditional ties in that country. He believes that the more social ties a person has, the better their health will be. Likewise, the isolated person has poorer health and a higher death rate.

Building better relationship skills should be high on everyone's agenda. It really isn't that difficult if you think about it. All good relationships depend upon basic common sense and a willingness to be concerned about other people's needs rather than your own. Here are some tips to build relationship skills:

Speak And Smile At People

Get in the habit of greeting people. Don't blindly walk past folk. Acknowledge their existence. Greet them with a smile and let them know that you're approachable. Ask them about themselves. Show them that you're willing to take time to listen. Speak uplifting words that encourage them. Be a refresher for them whenever your paths cross.

Show Genuine Interest

Call them by their name. Let them know that you pay attention when they speak. When possible, take note of special occasions in their lives like birthdays, anniversaries and such. When listening, focus your gaze on his or her face; don't look around like you're waiting for someone better to come along.

Serve People

A mark of true maturity is an attitude of service toward others. We often fail in relationships because we're more interested in what we can get instead of what we need to give. Real relationship skill at work focuses on the needs of others.

Getting along with people takes a concerted effort on our part. As we make the effort we'll soon see the value. We'll prosper in health and we'll do well vocationally. Truly, our whole life will be blessed as we develop meaningful relationships with others.