

Hello, everyone, I am really glad that you are here today. Because this topic healthy relationships and how to create them is critical when it comes to your wellbeing and your wellness, or what I call your Wellbeingness©. And when you have Wellbeingness© you have physical wellness, meaning that your body and your brain are functioning optimally. And you also have wellbeing which means you are experiencing happiness and fulfillment and we are social beings and belonging and connectedness is one of our core needs and motivators and contributes to our wellbeing and to our wellness.

So, we talk a lot about the most important relationship of all in our coaching. And that is the relationship that you have with yourself. How you care for your own body and your own mind and how you talk to yourself and motivate yourself and align yourself with who you really want to be. That is basically self-leadership, and it is your relationship with yourself. So, we talk a lot about that. And today, we're going to look at your relationships with other people. I call those your personal and professional relationships and how you can, in the midst of a crazy life schedule, create awesome relationships.

And we're going to do that first by defining what a relationship really is. And this might surprise you a little bit. And then I want to give you one core concept that we also talk quite a bit about in our program. And it is really a tool of sorts to have in your relationship tool bag, if you will, that will really help you to understand your relationships in a different way. And I think it clarifies how you can level up and show up and thrive in them, no matter how the other person is showing up. Did you hear that? No matter how the other person is showing up. And I mean that.

So, let's start off by defining what a relationship is by defining what it isn't. It is not a third entity. And this is what I mean by that, for instance, you might think of a couple that you know, and you might think they have a really great relationship. Or you might think that relationship is a little strained. And when we talk about relationships like that, it makes it easy to talk about them, I understand that. But it makes it seem like there's this third entity that is the relationship, right? It's like a third party, this person plus this person equals that relationship. But if you think about relationships like that, like that third entity, it makes it hard to know where to start, in terms of fixing something in the relationship or leveling up and making an awesome relationship. And when we do that, we think of a relationship as a third entity, our tendency is to think about what can the other person do to make this relationship better? If they would just, you know, stop interrupting, or if they'd pick up after themselves, or if they would pull their own weight in the office, then the relationship would be better. Then I would feel better about the relationship. And when we do that, when we focus on the other person or think of the relationship like that, then

we can get stuck.

So, what is the relationship? The one general definition that I found that I think is the most accurate, is the way in which two people regard and behave towards each other. And when you break that definition, down, the two key words are regard and behave towards one another, regard and behave. And the way that you regard someone is how you think about them. And the way that you think about them, as you all know impacts the way that you feel about them. And the way that you feel about them impacts the way that you act towards them. So, you have the way that you regard and act towards them. And then they have the way that they regard and they act towards you. And those are two separate things. They have their thoughts and feelings and how they behave. And you have your thoughts and feelings and how you behave. That's it. There's one person and then there's another person. We don't add them together or sum them up to define the relationship. They are two separate entities. And we want to remember that and keep it separate.

And I understand that this can sound a bit elementary, but I really want you to think about it like this. They have their brain in their body and you have yours and this is basic, but it is really important. It's an important distinction to keep in mind especially if you are in a position of influence or if you are in a leadership role or if you're in a relationship where you feel responsible for another person and how they act or behave or even how they feel. And if you are a leader or parent or teacher or trainer or friend you know, how easy it is to get sucked in, you know what it's like to want to arrange the world or that person to do what you think is right. And you also know how incredibly good it feels to be deeply connected with another person.

And I was thinking about this and immediately that movie, the Jerry Maguire movie, in the famous scene where Jerry realizes what a complete, I'm going to just say dingdong, he has been, and how amazing his wife is. And he's like running through the crowd. And he finds her and he's talking to her and he finally says, I love you. And then those fateful words, you complete me. Now we all know that that's when she says, shut up, you had me at hello, that's a great scene. I love that scene. But I just wish I could change that one line, you complete me. And like, no, no one completes you, you complete yourself.

And this is also something that we see with parenting. Nobody, no one likes to see their kids suffer or go through hard times. And so many people will protect them or over protect their kids from insults, or from losing. And it is so easy, I know this for myself to want to jump in and fix the situation or the person or the world. And so, we can get so enmeshed in another person and

another human being that we can forget where they stop and where we begin. I want to really focus in here on the parenting piece, because this is especially difficult to grasp if you're a parent, because it's your job to make sure that your child is taken care of and that they have values and that they behave and grew up to be a contributing member of society. We're all concerned about that. Absolutely. And they still have their own brains and their own bodies. And, again, as simple as it sounds. This is a concept that I wish I had truly grasped when my kids were younger, I had three kids under the age of five. And I have to admit that parenting was really tough. For me, it was way harder than you know, landing a helicopter in a LZ within a two-minute timeframe, right? I found myself picking up Cheetos in a minivan, and I had schedules and plans and I was organized and they had their own plans. And they're supposed to and I didn't quite get that it was really hard for me to understand, as a young parent, why they weren't following along with what I had planned.

Now, I want to be really clear here, I am not suggesting that you don't have plans, you don't have schedules and you're not organized and you don't have chores and rules and boundaries and consequences. What I'm saying is that when I really understood their natural need for autonomy and growth, in their own experiences, when I really understood that I was so much calmer about parenting, it was much more able to let them be their own person. And I remember the first time that I was introduced to this concept, and it was through a poem in a book called *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. And you may have heard of it. It's a classic. And if you have not, I highly recommend it. I'll put it in the show notes here. And there is one poem that speaks about children's called, *On Children* and I love it. And I want to read just a little part of it to you because it is so awesome. And this is the part that I that I want to share with you. It says:

"Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself. They come through you, but not from you. And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you."

I remember reading that and thinking, wait, wait, no, no, no, these kids are mine. And then also knowing no, they really aren't. They are their own people. And that sentiment holds true for your spouse, your partner, your colleagues, your CEO, your younger siblings, the people, you manage everyone. And then towards the end of the poem, he compares your relationship with the child to a bow and arrow, and the archer is life itself. And he says:

"The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite. And he bends you with his mind that his arrows may go swift and far"... and then this is the best part. This is so like on the verge of tears,

this is the best part... "Let your bending and the archers hand before gladness. For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable."

I just think this poem is amazing. And again, I'll put a link to it, but it is so beautiful because it captures both the power of connection and how we are all intimately connected. And also, the essence of individualism and separation and the need for us each to have our own experiences you can bend, you can make requests, you can set examples, you can be a role model. And you do you can do, and you do it to your best to the best of your ability, but where the arrow your children and other people fly is up to them and to the wind, and to other factors that we however hard, we might try to cannot control.

So, the very first step and having amazing relationships is realizing that the relationship is not a third party, that you are the relationship, and the other person is too. And the only one that you have control over is that bow, is you. The only thing that you can do to create a healthy relationship is to manage the way that you show up. And the way that you regard and the way that you act towards the other person or the people, the key to healthy relationships, is you. And this is both amazing and it's also an awesome responsibility.

So how do you show up to your relationships and make them just amazing? And the first answer is that you make yourself amazing, you take care of your mind and your body so that you feel good, so that you can show up and be your best. And that is why the most important relationship is the one that you have with yourself. And that's why we spend most of our time working on that. Because once you have self-leadership and you have an amazing relationship with yourself, all the rest of your relationships will fall in line.

And I also want to give you this key coaching tool that will help you as you learn how to have the best relationship with yourself, it will help you right now in your relationships. And the name of this coaching tool is The Manual. And it is basically like a user manual, or an instruction manual that would come with an appliance or computer or something like that. And basically our manuals, our instruction books that we have written for someone else. It details how they should act, and how they should behave, and what they should do. And we basically have manuals for everyone. We have manuals for our kids, our spouses, the people in the grocery line, the people driving next to us, the people that we work with, we have manuals and instructions and our beliefs about how things should be done.

So, having manuals or expectations or rules or judgments is understandable, right? It's natural for

us to have expectations of other people. It's also natural for us to judge other people. And that's not always a bad thing. We're making judgments all day long. Is this a safe person to talk to and share this information with or not? Should I share with them what I'm thinking or not? Is this person reliable? Can I trust them? Will they do a good job? Do they have the capabilities or the qualities that I want? So, our manuals come from our upbringing, what we have been told is right or wrong, how we have been educated our experiences that come from our culture, the culture of our workplace. And so, we are always having thoughts about what other people are doing. And again, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Except when they don't do what we think that they should be doing. And if they don't follow our manual, then we get to be upset. When our friend or our spouse doesn't remember our birthday, we get to be a little irritated. When someone doesn't take out the trash again, after I've asked them several times that I get to feel disrespected. Or when a client keeps asking for something that they know is impossible, then I get to be annoyed. Or when someone doesn't remember your name, you get to feel minimized or marginalized.

And so, what we do is we use the manual and the rules in it to justify how we feel. And often other people will agree with you. They will gather around the watercooler with you and you will talk about your manuals and band together and agree on how wrong other people are. And so, the manuals can be dangerous because we use them to set expectation and rules. And we believe that when someone follows those rules, then we are happy in this relationship. And when they don't follow the rules, then we are not happy. And that is how the manual is set up. And again, we all have them.

And here's the thing, often we have them and we don't even tell people what's in them, right? So not only do they need to do what we think that they should do, we don't even tell them what that thing is we let it be kind of a guessing game. And they have to figure out why we're mad. They have to figure out why we are giving them the silent treatment or why we are slamming cabinet doors or sending short, curt emails or looking out the window in the middle of the meeting while they're talking. And so, we have our manuals, we have the way that we want other people to behave and then sometimes we don't even tell them what's in them. We don't even make the requests.

And as a little side note, guess what? Other people have manuals for us to. They also have strong opinions about what is right and wrong and what we should be doing social media has made it really easy for people to share their manuals and their indignation, and how they think that you should think and how you should behave. And right in our own homes, we have ideas on the right way to clean up the kitchen, the right way to load the dishwasher, the right way to put the kids to

bed or to do bills to raise kids at the office, we have manuals about how long you should have to wait for an email response. Or if people should be responding after hours, or if they shouldn't be, or if they should be up in the middle of the night responding, what are they doing responding in the middle of the night.

So, we have these manuals, and we truly believe that if other people would just behave the right way, the way we want them to behave, then we'd be happy. And they think the same thing about us. And the problem is that we don't even realize that we're doing this to one another. We think that we have reasonable expectations of people, and that they should behave in reasonable ways, or in ways that are appropriate. But what we think is reasonable or appropriate is not the same as what other people think is reasonable or appropriate. And here's the drumroll moment. Adults have the ability and the freedom to think and behave however they want to, they can wear masks or not, they can get a COVID shot or not, they can show up late to meetings or early to meetings, they can prioritize their family when you are working late, or they can work super long hours while you are prioritizing your family. And this is not always easy to see. Because we feel like we know what is reasonable and appropriate.

So, the solution is to remember that we are not responsible for other adults. We are not responsible for how they behave and how they act. And they are not responsible for us. And we think about this in a more intimate relationship. We are not responsible for meeting other people's needs. And they are not responsible for meeting ours. If you are in a relationship where you feel like you have to meet someone else's needs and they have to meet yours, then you are both going to be constantly trying to control the other person so that you can get your needs met. And it would be so much easier if everyone just took care of their own needs.

Now, I'm not saying that we don't make requests, I make requests all the time, I request that my kids at least acknowledge my text when I text them, even if it's just like a smiley face. And I request that they don't use their phone at the dinner table when they come home. As a side note, they are all adults now. But when they were kids, it wasn't a request, it was a rule. There were no phones at the table. And we're going to talk a little bit more about consequences in the next episode. But so, I now can make that request. But if we're out to dinner, and they pull out their phones at the table, I don't make it mean that they are disrespecting me, or that they don't care about me, I don't give them the silent treatment. I let them be who they're going to be. And this took me a long, long time to figure out and I am certainly not perfect at it. But realizing that they are adults, and they get to make their own choices is so freeing for me. I spend way less energy soaking and a lot more energy, just loving them and enjoying being with them.

And then I will say we also make requests or have requirements at work. And that's a little bit different. We provide standards or expectations. And we can provide feedback on whether or not those are being met. And then if people don't meet those requirements, then you can have consequences. You decide what to do you release them, you have a conversation. But we don't have to freak out about it, we don't have to have a lot of drama or energy around. And again, we're going to talk a little bit more about that in the next episode.

The bottom line is, we cannot control other people we try. But when people don't behave the way that we want them to, and we get upset or angry or feel disrespected. What we are really doing is not taking responsibility for our own emotions. We are not being emotionally responsible. And what we are doing is we are giving our power over to that other person, and we're giving it to them based on their behavior. Talk about powerlessness, we really are giving our power away when we do that. When we think that someone else's behavior causes our emotions, we set ourselves up to feel miserable. And we give them the keys to our emotions and to our thoughts. And we erroneously think that the only way that we can feel better if that other person changes. And that is not true.

All of us, every single one of us all of the time are responsible for our own emotions. No one can hurt our feelings. The way that our feelings get hurt is because of what we think about what they are doing. And I'm not saying that we shouldn't have emotions, or we shouldn't have expectations or thoughts. But what I want to emphasize here is that when we feel angry or upset or discouraged, it's because of the way that we are thinking. If we are upset with other people is because of how we are thinking about what they're doing, not because of what they are doing.

If I started to freak out at the dinner table when my adult kids pulled out their phones, what I am really doing is I'm trying to manipulate them. If I'm annoyed with them, what I'm doing is trying to get them to put their phones away and behave the way that I want them to because I think that if they don't have their phones out, then they then will have better conversations, and I will feel more connected to them. When the truth is, I can feel connected to them and love them and be with them and let them make their own decisions and be who they're going to be and still feel connected to them all without those shenanigans. And if I am aware of that, and I understand that, then I can, if I so choose to call me say hey, can I have your full attention, I want to be with you. Or I can wait a few minutes until they're done and resume our conversation, it opens up so many ways to handle the situation that are separate from me trying to get them to make me feel better and make them act in a certain way so that I will feel connected to them.

Remember that your happiness and your contentment comes from you and what you think. It does not matter what your kids are doing, what your partner does, or what your colleagues are doing. When it comes to your emotional wellbeing. Yes, of course, when they quote unquote, behave in a way that we like, and it's compatible with us it and they are doing what we consider to be right it for sure makes it easier to have positive thoughts. But that does not mean that they have to change in order for you to have wellbeing. That's a really important distinction.

And again, I want to be really clear here that I'm not suggesting that you shouldn't ask your wife or your husband to take out their garbage or to ask them to come to family outings or to load the dishwasher in a certain way, or to make requests of your colleagues or anyone. For sure, yes, make those requests, make as many requests as you can. Because when we do that, we let other people know what it is that we want what we prefer. But when we tie our emotional happiness to whether or not they follow through, that's when we get into trouble. And again, in the next podcast, we're going to talk more about making requests, and the difference between setting boundaries and making threats. That's a really interesting topic.

But for now, all I would like for you to do is to think about your manuals, and don't judge them. Just be aware of them. And consider the possibility of letting go of your rules and your attempts to control other people. And to honestly make requests with no strings attached, and to notice what people do when you don't try to control them. Think about that. What if what if you only focused on controlling you and your responses to that relationship? If we could all do that, think about how much more energy we would have, and how much calmer and less stressed we would be and how we could listen better. And maybe hear that the reason my son has his phone out is because he just got a job offer and he wanted to read the offer out loud to me or tell me about it. Or maybe we could hear something that we wouldn't otherwise hear. If we were busy making judgments about why that person wasn't doing what we thought that they should.

So right now, bring a relationship to mind that you would like to make better. Think of the things that you would like for this other person to do. It could be a colleague, it could be a spouse, or a partner, a parent, a child. Whatever it is, think about them actually following through and doing what you would like for them to do really think about it. Imagine them doing those things. How would you feel? What would you think about them? Would you think that they are being kind and considerate and respectful, diligent, and think about how you would feel towards that person?

Now, here's the question. Do you feel that energy right now? Can you think about them and hold those feelings for that person without them having to do anything? That's a really good question.

And if the answer is yes, you have just experienced a taste of what it is like to be responsible for your own feelings. You don't need to change anyone to feel better, you can decide that the way that you feel isn't tied to how other people behave or how you think that they should behave. This is emotional adulthood. And this is amazingly powerful. It puts you in charge of your emotional life and gives you the space and the freedom to see your relationship and how you show up in it so much more clearly. And when you do that, then you are showing up as your best no matter how the other person is showing up. How they show up is their business and how you show up is yours. And when you can see your manual for other people and take responsibility for how you manage yourself. You are in essence managing the most important relationship there is that one that you have with yourself because you are conscious of your thoughts and your emotions, and your actions and you are taking the lead for yourself and your life. And that's for that relationship.

I remember hearing that we are each 100% responsible for the relationship and the success of the relationship. When I first heard that I was like, I don't get it. It took me a long time I get it now. And I love this concept, I get that I am 100% responsible for my manual for my expectations for my emotions, my requests, my boundaries, and my life. And boy, when I think about it like that, I feel really good. And I'm excited to share myself with other people and to relate with them and to have amazing relationships with them. So, are you willing to take 100% responsibility to give up your manuals and to focus your energy on leading your best life? Are you ready to do that? Are you willing to do that? Yeah, me too. So, let's go forth and do that together. Let's create the healthiest relationships possible. First with ourselves and then with the people that we care the most about. Let's do it. Let's create the most vibrant and healthiest relationships we possibly can.

Hey there if you are ready to take your Wellbeingness© to the next level, come visit thewellness.coach where I've got lots of free resources and make sure that you type in thewellness.coach (not .com) and I will see you there.