



In his book, *Today Matters*, John Maxwell says that “People are an organization’s most appreciable asset.” Because that is true, adding value to other people is one of the most important things a leader can do. The critical question a leader must ask is, “Am I genuinely interested in people?” If you are more interested in accomplishing your own agenda or elevating your own position, you will manipulate people for your personal advantage. Two thousand years ago, Jesus raised the standard for our daily interactions with others: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4).

There are practical implications on a personal level. The Carnegie Technological Institute has stated that 90% of all people who fail in their life's vocation fail because they cannot get along with people. Jobs, however, are not the only casualty of poor relationships. Our physical and mental health can also be put at risk. Leonard Syme, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California at Berkeley found that the more isolated the person, the poorer the health and the higher the death rate. Social ties are good preventative medicine for physical problems and for mental-emotional-behavior problems.

In his research on diplomatic negotiations, Dr. Michael Leary found that trusting relationships are the single most influential factor to overcoming cultural barriers at the UN. While international diplomacy could be characterized as state-to-state communication, it is, in fact, person-to-person. A Russian diplomat said “the number one rule is that you are negotiating with human beings.” An Asian diplomat added, “People deal with people. So you have to smooth out relationships with your counterpart to insure that you attain your objective and he obtains his, and hopefully it ends in mutually beneficial relationships.” A Scandinavian ambassador insisted that such relationships are not a diplomatic nicety, but an absolute necessity. Therefore, he advised, “Treat everybody with respect, and then, from there, start building relationships that could be useful. An African diplomat concurred: “When you make friends you win half the battle.” *Relationships matter...today!*

1. *What principles establish the universal basis for relationships?*

Genesis 1:26-27

Matthew 22:37-40

Matthew 5:43-45

2. *What practices promote positive relationships?*

Philippians 2:1-4

Ephesians 4:32

Colossians 3:12-13

Romans 12:9-16

Galatians 5:13-14

Romans 15:1-2

3. *In your circle of influence, who needs to know that you value them? How will you show them?
In your circle of influence, to whom can you “add value?” How will you show them?*

*“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”*

(The “Golden Rule” - Matthew 7:12)