Personal Relationships

*A session from
the Rx CD System*

Rx

Personal Relationships:

The motivation generated by the importance of forming personal relationships with the people with whom you work.

Why is this skill important?

Different cognitive values cause each person to have a different motivation. People with a more balanced value structure tend to have more potential motivators for accomplishing things on the job and in their personal lives. Developing Personal Relationships is one cognitive value that motivates people to action—it is based on the importance a person places on being accepted and recognized as a person, not simply as a professional who is part of a team or group.

Regardless of how much (or how little) you are motivated by friendships with your co-workers, "people skills" are very important in your personal and professional life. Your level of comfort in a variety of interpersonal situations is a great part of how you are perceived by others. Increasing your sociability and being relaxed and available for others will take you a long way in being accepted as a valuable, approachable resource on the job.

People who are strongly motivated by the need for Personal Relationships are particularly focused on developing their relationships with other people on the job. It is important to them to feel that they come to work each day to greet people who like them, care about them, and have an interest in cooperating with them. They may get excessively offended or frustrated by peers who don't seem to want personal relationships on the job.

If you are interested in developing Personal Relationships at work, you will likely see several immediate benefits of your work toward being friends with your co-workers:

1. Your group or department's teamwork will improve dramatically.
2. You will have a built-in support network.
3. You may feel an increased desire to perform well, and you may motivate others to perform better.

Don't be fooled, though. Sometimes developing personal relationships at work can be difficult. Some people acutely feel boundaries established by differences in role or rank within a company. Others feel boundaries based on gender, race, or perceived sexual orientation. And still others are just not extroverted people—and they would rather do what they think is "doing their job," rather than "getting distracted by other people."

And there are valid reasons why all of the boundaries described above really do exist. It shouldn't be your personal mission to destroy all boundaries—rather, it should be

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your goal to communicate warmly and openly with people you interact with. You must remember to be perceptive about people's boundaries, and let them guide your conversations to some extent.

What are skills associated with developing Personal Relationships?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with developing Personal Relationships:

- Has an instinctive understanding that positive, healthy personal relationships on the job will help productivity, teamwork, and morale.
- Recognizes boundaries that other people may have, and is sensitive toward these boundaries when communicating with each individual.
- Obeys company policies and social norms about what is appropriate as regards personal relationships on the job.
- Is honest and trustworthy about friendships developed on the job.
- Does not let personal relationships interfere with productivity and achievement of corporate or departmental goals.

How do you develop your own Personal Relationships?

- Be tolerant of others and their unique points of view—it is critical to establishing rewarding interpersonal relationships. Recognize that others' viewpoints are as important to them as yours are to you!
- Make small talk. Small talk helps people feel comfortable and natural in your presence.
- Be trustworthy. Don't tell lies and don't give away secrets—it's the easiest way to lose friends.
- Be genuine. Don't "fake" smile or pretend to like someone then badmouth him or her behind his or her back.
- Be enthusiastic—both about your own life and others'. Be supportive and encouraging to other people.
- Keep up with current events and pay attention to people's interests and hobbies for sources of conversation.
- Learn as much as you can about people's personal lives without being intrusive. Ask friendly, light questions, and let them take the lead in how much information they want to share.
- Make time to communicate informally with co-workers, supervisors, and people in other departments.
- Take the initiative in planning social gatherings—a group luncheon to celebrate a success, an annual holiday party, etc.
- Never use humor at someone else's expense.

- Be enthusiastic about your ideas, but don't be overbearing or domineering when you express them.
- Don't ever gossip.
- Try not to interrupt other people, and listen to their ideas carefully before you disagree.
- Behave in a relaxed and "available" manner. Smile when people enter your office, and regularly approach other people for conversation or casual lunches.
- Do remember that sometimes work roles take precedence over social relationships. Your boss may not like being called a social nickname at an important business meeting! And your best friend, who is also a subordinate, shouldn't receive preferential treatment.
- Share personal anecdotes and information about your likes, dislikes, and interests. You can't expect other people to share information if you don't!
- Remember that there are boundaries to personal relationships on the job. Don't cross the line into sexual harassment, irritating someone regularly, or being unproductive due to personal concerns.

Personal Relationships Activities

Activity 1: Improving Existing Relationships

Create a list of people with whom you work regularly. Fill in the chart below, evaluating your relationship with each person (on a scale from 1-5 in which 1 is the best and 5 is the worst) and setting goals toward improving your relationships with these individuals. Make sure you list something positive you can do for everyone —even people you already get along very well with.

Person's Name	Quality of Relationship (1-5 scale)	Goals for Improving	Date to Accomplish

Activity 2: Practicing Your People Skills

Make opportunities to practice your people skills. Make a list of upcoming meetings or events. Attend these events with the goal of practicing introducing yourself to people, making small talk, and being relaxed and open to others. If you are a little shy or insecure, take someone outgoing with you, and try to follow his or her example.

List some upcoming events you plan to attend, and make sure the events are on your calendar:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Activity 3: Lessons Learned

What are three things that you think you are already good at related to establishing and maintaining personal relationships?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are three things you think you are bad at related to establishing and maintaining personal relationships?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are the three most important things you learned from this lesson about developing Personal Relationships?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____