



Winning With People

Discover the People Principles that Work for You Every Time

by John C. Maxwell
Thomas Nelson © 2005
272 pages

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Take-Aways

- Five factors determine your character and worldview: genetics, self-perception, life experiences, how you interpret the past, and your acquaintances and friends.
- People who believe in themselves can make dramatic changes in their lives.
- Poor self-awareness is often the greatest obstacle to forming good relationships.
- You can achieve more and be more open with people you like.
- Building a quality relationship takes time.
- Before you engage in an argument, determine if it will undermine your friendship.
- Having someone express interest in you is a big compliment.
- Some people don't recognize others' talents because they have elitist attitudes.
- When people stop putting themselves before others, they can build relationships.
- When customers quit buying a product, usually the problem is service, not price.

Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
7	8	5	6

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Relevance

What You Will Learn

In this Abstract, you will learn: 1) What the 25 key “People Principles” teach; 2) How to build good relationships based on these rules; and 3) How to correct relationship problems by changing your attitude or actions.

Recommendation

Author John C. Maxwell follows his solid *17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* with this book, which provides 25 essential “principles” for fostering interpersonal relationships. Maxwell uses poems, quotations and stories about such varied individuals as Benjamin Franklin, Martin Luther King Jr., Dale Carnegie, Barbara Walters, Pete Rose and Billy Martin to enliven his short chapters about the small, important steps that build better relationships. Unfortunately, the book seems slightly forced, stretching its theme to cover overlapping and somewhat arbitrary principles. Still, its broadly based, motivational stories make it spiritually uplifting. While this entry is not as compelling as Maxwell’s work on leadership, *getAbstract* believes it will be very useful to those who want to build stronger friendships and aren’t sure how to start.

Abstract

To create good relationships, begin by shaping your own attitude so that you are supportive and open to others. Follow these 25 “People Principles” to boost your relationships:

1. “The Lens Principle” – The problems in most relationships often stem from how the people involved see themselves. Generally, you view other people the way you view yourself. Self-perception determines your outlook on life, that is, whether you are pessimistic, optimistic, friendly or suspicious. Five factors determine each individual’s character and worldview: genetics, self-perception, life experiences, how you interpret the past, and who your friends and acquaintances are. To change the way you form relationships and to make your relationships stronger, try to reshape the way you view other people.
2. “The Mirror Principle” – Self-awareness is one of the most difficult traits to develop. People are often unaware of who they really are. That is unfortunate, since when you know yourself and you have become comfortable with the person you actually are, you can be more relaxed with other people. Self-image determines how you relate. Being best friends with someone else is difficult if you are not best friends with yourself. Poor self-awareness can be the greatest obstacle to forming relationships, often because people have idealized expectations about how friendships should work. When events fail to meet those unrealistic goals, their expectations are dashed and problems result. The solution: reassess yourself and change the perceptions that provoke problems.
3. “The Pain Principle” – Psychological or emotional problems impede the daily lives of many people. A man or woman with a painful problem might in turn hurt others, particularly those who seem to embody some characteristic that the troubled person dislikes. People who are in pain are also very sensitive to being hurt by others. They tend to overreact. When you are dealing with a troubled person, don’t take his or her emotional outbursts personally. Try to find the source of the problem. Restrain

“I may not be able to change the world I see around me, but I can change what I see within me.”

“All of life’s successes come from initiating relationships with the right people and then strengthening those relationships by using good people skills.”

“As you interact with others, remember this: anytime a person’s response is larger than the issue at hand, the response is almost always about something else.”

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

“Whenever you give to another person, you will receive something in return that affects your valuables, your values or your virtues.”

“Approachable people are honest about their abilities and shortcomings. They are willing to be told not what they want to hear but what they need to hear.”

yourself and do not fight back if you are emotionally attacked. Then, decide if you need to get help or support.

4. **“The Hammer Principle”** – Overreacting is a common response to many emotional situations. Softening your approach can produce great relationship benefits. To avoid overreacting, take a broad view of the total problem. Do not jump to conclusions. Listen to the other person’s questions and grasp the situation before you offer answers. Saying the right thing, or leaving things unsaid, is important. Do not resurrect past arguments. Before you argue, determine if the clash will undermine your friendship. Know when to stop fighting and admit your mistakes.
5. **“The Elevator Principle”** – You really can make someone else feel better or worse. You can build a relationship by downplaying the other person’s faults or detract from it by exaggerating his or her flaws. It is harder to be supportive in a relationship than to be destructive. People naturally gravitate toward those who add something to their lives. People enjoy being with “lifters,” friends who exercise kindness and try to elevate negative environments.
6. **“The Big Picture Principle”** – To build relationships, put the interests of others ahead of your selfish concerns. If you generally put yourself first, you must break this habit to move ahead in your relationships. Self-centered people lose the capacity to consider other people’s feelings, but you can deliberately change this trait as you mature. Many people upgrade their priorities during the second half of life, becoming more responsible and more responsive to others’ needs. Keep yourself in perspective, keep your ego in check and focus on what makes your life fulfilling.
7. **“The Exchange Principle”** – What would you do in another person’s position? Asking that simple question can change your perspective dramatically. To change your point of view, listen to other people’s concerns. See problems from their eyes. As you recognize their concerns, check your attitude. Do you share any of their perceptions?
8. **“The Learning Principle”** – Everyone has something to teach other people. The key is to be receptive. If you harbor an elitist attitude that only certain people are worth learning from, you could fail to recognize the talents of those around you. Arrogance erects a barrier. Instead, acknowledge that education can come from anyone. As you pursue learning, recognize what others offer. Value your mentors.
9. **“The Charisma Principle”** – Dale Carnegie said that someone else’s interest in you is the highest possible compliment. People respond favorably when someone smiles or demonstrates that they care. Encourage people to talk about themselves. Manifest an interest in what they do. Heed the Platinum Rule, which says to treat other people as you want to be treated. Showing people that you want to help will open doors.
10. **“The Number 10 Principle”** – People want their achievements recognized. When others see that you believe in their capabilities, you start a ripple effect. You help your friends believe in themselves, enabling them to change their lives radically. Trust is the key to believing in people. Sometimes you may be disappointed, but believing in others will make you healthier and will enable you to develop stronger bonds. Spouses who believe in each other have better marriages.
11. **“The Confrontation Principle”** – Conflict is a constant companion in life, yet most people avoid it. They are afraid of showing emotion, and of being stigmatized or misunderstood. Confrontation tests how you handle difficult situations. Typically, you should confront people if you care about them, and you want to help them correct a bad behavior or rectify a problem. Set up an encounter where you both emerge as winners. When a problem arises with someone, meet promptly. Instead of trying to

“All the significant battles are waged within the self.”
[– *Sheldon Kopp, psychotherapist*]

“Change is always the goal of learning. You cannot have growth without change.”

“The happiest people don’t necessarily have the best of everything. They must make the best of everything.”

“You should be willing to fight for any friend whose help you would request. That’s what friends do.”

find an immediate solution, first develop a basis for understanding. Then, define your position, ask for a response and agree on a plan to resolve the dispute.

12. “The Bedrock Principle” – The basis for any relationship is trust. People have to believe what you say. If you have integrity, others will see that your words and actions align. They will come to trust you over time, as you continue to meet their expectations and fulfill their trust. To build a trusting relationship, start with yourself. Are you honest with yourself? Can you meet commitments? Are you trustworthy at home and work? On the other hand, if you trust someone who lets you down, offer your forgiveness but explain that you will not tolerate another violation.
13. “The Situation Principle” – Do not let a temporary setback jeopardize an entire relationship. While there are exceptions (such as in abusive situations), temporary conflicts should not determine the course of long-term relationships. This often happens when people lose their perspective. Marriages are long-term commitments, but many people get divorced because they become temporarily unhappy. Keep situations in perspective. Tell people you believe in them despite short-term issues.
14. “The Bob Principle” – Someone who does not get along with most other people usually has his or her own problems. For example, the New York Yankees fired Billy Martin five times, and other teams also dismissed him because he could not get along with fellow players, team owners, his coaches and even some fans. The problem was not with anyone else; the problem was Billy Martin. This type of person generates problems, and passes them along. If you must deal with such a person, try to facilitate solutions, be positive and don’t question his or her motives.
15. “The Approachability Principle” – People will do and say more with those they like than with people they dislike. That’s why it pays to let other people know you are accessible. To make them feel comfortable, show that you care and that you respect their individuality. Be welcoming, even-tempered and honest about yourself. Show your strengths and weaknesses.
16. “The Foxhole Principle” – Difficult times can put stress on any relationship. When you face a conflict or an unexpected crisis, work with a friend who can share the burden. You may have many friends, but you must learn over time which ones you can rely upon in difficult situations. These special friends will be supportive and will have the ability to see the problem you are facing from your point of view.
17. “The Gardening Principle” – Relationships have a life of their own. Cultivate and renew them. The type of relationship determines how much care you should devote to making it grow. Some relationships are short and occur for a specific purpose. Others are part of a particular period in your life, and may involve teachers, coaches, co-workers or bosses. Other people are with you for life. Cultivating a relationship requires a commitment, communication and friendship as well as creating shared memories and learning together.
18. “The 101 Percent Principle” – When you build a relationship, look for common beliefs and interests. This is contrary to the way most relationships are built, since people tend to emphasize differences. Really nurturing a relationship by giving more than 100 percent is time-consuming. You have to decide if the person is worth the investment in time. Making this kind of commitment to someone else is very powerful. It can prevent conflict, neutralize an enemy or reverse a negative situation.
19. “The Patience Principle” – People who travel in groups move more slowly than those who travel alone. So, if you are making a journey with others, be patient. This is part of life. It helps to identify your own idiosyncrasies, so people will know how to be

“He who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the grief which he purposes to remove.”
[– Samuel Johnson]

“Good relationships are more than just the icing on the cake in life. They are the cake.”

patient with you. If you want a long successful journey, you need other people. This is a fact of life, so relax.

20. “The Celebration Principle” – People need to be supported when they fail and they need to share the celebration when they succeed. When you reach a goal, of course you want your achievement to be recognized and celebrated. Turn to your family and close friends for this kind of support. Often average people do not like to celebrate the above-average achievements of others. Sometimes it reminds them of things they could achieve if they applied themselves.
21. “The High-Road Principle” – You have three choices when you decide how to treat people: the “middle road,” which is the way you want to be treated; “the lower road,” which is worse than you want to be treated; and “the high road,” which is better than you want to be treated. Following the “high road” requires special effort, but traveling it can transform you. Treating people well can elevate your spirits, build relationships and make you a better person, since you are putting others above yourself.
22. “The Boomerang Principle” – When you recognize that someone has value, you have found a relationship that is worth your investment. Investing in someone else is a type of giving, of helping other people grow and expanding their abilities to have meaningful relationships. To create mutually beneficial relationships, invest in others. That means placing their needs first and focusing on helping instead of worrying about what you want in return.
23. “The Friendship Principle” – Friendships are important in all social situations, including business. Knowing what motivates and rewards people is essential to building good business relationships. In some cases, good people skills can trump other forms of business knowledge. Alternately, a lack of people skills can harm your business. When people stop buying a product, usually price is not the reason. Some 70% to 90% of the time, the reason is poor service. Friendship cures these breaches; people like to do business with their friends.
24. “The Partnership Principle” – Two people can accomplish more than one person, and teams can accomplish even more. People who build partnerships get more done. Benjamin Franklin started a self-improvement club when he was 21. His club required its members to make presentations, and ask questions on scientific and social issues. Realizing the benefits of organizing small groups, Franklin soon formed other teams dedicated to volunteer firefighting, starting a hospital, sharing risk in an insurance company, advocating public sanitation and establishing local police protection. He later expanded his partnership concept to helping the U.S. build relationships with European nations. He never abandoned his belief in the value people create by working together.
25. “The Satisfaction Principle” – Sometimes people find that the value in a strong relationship is based on simply being together. Sharing common experiences creates the foundation for a lasting relationship. Long relationships often go through three stages. They start with excitement and move on to mutual commitment, followed by the shared enjoyment and contentment of being together.

About The Author

Leadership expert John C. Maxwell founded the Injoy Group, an organization that helps people fulfill their potential. He has written more than 25 books, including *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, *Developing the Leader within You* and *Falling Forward*.