Relationships 101 by John Maxwell


Relationships can either make or break a leader. John Maxwell understands this reality and tries to help leaders not only survive in their relationships, but to thrive in those essential relationships. Relationships are the fabric of teamwork and help allow the team to function with greater effectiveness. A team without relationships is a team that will quickly fall apart.

1. The nature of relationships
Relationships must be solid to be effective. One of the key areas that many leaders fail to develop is strong or solid relationships. There are several facets of solid relationships: respect, shared experience, trust, reciprocity, and mutual enjoyment.

These facets help leaders to build solid relationships among their team members and with the various members of their team. The reality is that it takes all of these factors working together to build healthy team relationships. When one facet is missing, both the leaders and the team suffer.

2. The Building Blocks of relationships
One of the major reasons that people fail to build relationships is that they do not understand other people. According to Dr. Maxwell, this fundamental lack of understanding stems from a variety of causes. People fail to understand others because of fear, self-centeredness, failure to appreciate differences and the failure to acknowledge similarities.

People need to understand that all other people want to be accepted and feel that they have importance. People want to know that other care about them and their personal needs. Even when people fail to admit, everyone needs other people. The key to moving to new levels of living is to have the support of other people. Nothing builds personal confidence like the support and belief of others. Nothing impacts large numbers of people like individuals reaching out to help people. There are opportunities to make impact like nothing else on earth when we genuinely help other people.

3. The growth of relationships
Dr. Maxwell makes it clear that relationships are meant to grow in order to thrive. The first foundation for growing relationships is to build on the foundation of trust. Trust is created in relationships through integrity. Integrity is simply allowing our beliefs to be integrated with the way we live. When belief and behavior are honorable, we can say we have integrity.

The greatest aspect of leadership is the fact that the best leaders are also servants. Leaders who live with the heart of a servant are incredibly successful. The reality is when leaders place their people ahead of their own agenda success becomes easier. Servanthood and leadership go hand in hand. The goal of the leader is to succeed by helping their people to succeed.

The power of relationships is discovered when people truly grasp the nature of relationships and understand how relationships are formed. Relationships gain additional strength when people place effort in forming on the basic building blocks. Relationships are made stronger when there is investment in other people. Relationships grow when people actually add value to others by listening, living with integrity and leading with service.