



## **Relationship Currency**

### **By Dr. Jim Beaubien**

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Relationships may be thought of as the currency of leadership. As such, they are a critical source of power. Effective leaders use this power to engage people and focus their efforts on achieving desired outcomes. Without relationships, leaders have little appeal to or impact on their followers.

Leadership is often defined as the art of getting things done through others. If we are to be successful in our leadership efforts, we must build good working relationships with the people around us. This includes the people we work for, the people who work for us, our peers, our suppliers and our customers. All are critical to our success. Good relationships don't happen by accident. As leaders, we have to create them and for most of us that's not an easy task. Fact is, we have to work at it. Here are some ideas that will help you develop the habits required to establish strong relationships.

Value people.

Your values set the tone for your relationships. If your approach is based on respect, caring and consideration, people will sense your motives and respond with warmth and openness. The absence of these values will often trigger defensiveness. Nearly everyone you meet has a strong need to know they are valued.

#### **Take time**

Relationships develop in real time. There are no short cuts for developing relationships. Spend time with people, get to know them, find out their interests, celebrate their triumphs and be there for them in their times of need. Visit them on their turf. Simply making yourself available will greatly enhance your relationships.

#### **Show you care**

Listening is one of the keys to showing you care. Let people see you are interested in them and their welfare. Acknowledge special events like birthdays and employment anniversaries. Find out what they want to accomplish - their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations - and support them in their efforts. Let them know you are in their corner.

#### **Add value**

People are attracted to leaders who add value to their lives. Value can take many forms. For some it may be challenge, growth and advancement and for others it may be security, structure and routine. It will always be particular to the individual.

#### **Build communities**

Human beings are social creatures with inherent needs for connectedness. Good leaders capitalize on these needs and foster a sense of community. Communities may be thought of as a relatively enduring set of relationships grounded in common interests. Good leaders build strong communities in which people can meet their needs. Work on these five points until relationship building becomes part of your character. It will pay amazing dividends.