

Build relationships with frequent goodwill deposits

Relationship building is work, and our relationships and the trust in those relationships

are in constant change. We maintain and deepen our relationships with regular acts of kindness, consideration, appreciation and service.

Every act of building relationship is as if we are making a deposit into a savings account. We increase our balance by giving a person a compliment, a kind word, or doing a thoughtful deed.



We deplete our relationship accruals by trying to manipulate others, being unkind or discourte-

ous, breaking promises, being self-serving, lying, and holding grudges, to name a few types of “withdrawals.” When we let our ego, arrogance, pride, impatience, need for control, self-centeredness, and need to be right become more important than the other person, we’ll find ourselves confronted with a severely overdrawn relationship balance. We can bankrupt the relationship by taking more out of the rela-

tionship than we put in.

To maintain a healthy relationship we need to make regular and frequent deposits, preferably daily (that daily interest adds up quickly) into our relationship accounts.

How can we make deposits? ASK. Appreciation. Service. Kindness. Ask yourself, and the other person in the relationship, these questions: What can I do to show you that I appreciate you? How can I serve to enrich your life? How can I show you kindness?

Children might have a hard time telling us how they want to be appreciated, how to enrich their lives, and how to show them kindnesses, but ask anyway. You might get some interesting and valuable feedback.

A preschool class discussion about acts of kindness yielded some of these responses:

A five-year-old student said she



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Kids Talk™

knew her father loved her because he always put the peanut butter up to the very edge of her sandwich.

A three-year-old said his night-light from his grandmother made him feel loved.

A four-year-old girl said going to get an ice cream cone with her dad, by herself, was her favorite thing to do.

When asked what they did to make others feel loved, some answers follow:

I eat my spaghetti without crying.

I put my pajamas on by myself.

I kiss my momma.

I help my sister when she falls down.

I say “peas” and “thank you”.

It is in our daily acts of appreciation, service and kindness that our relationships grow and the dividends multiply.

Ask your children two questions: What do I do that makes you feel loved? What do you do to make me feel loved?

Expect accelerated compound interest in a terrific investment.

Kids Talk™ is an award-winning column dealing with childhood development issues written by Maren Stark Schmidt, M.Ed. She has more than 25 years experience working with young children and is the author of Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents. Contact her via e-mail at maren@kidstalknews.

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