
Enriching Your Relationships



BY RHONDA

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Don't Carry That!

My back's not what it used to be. Three children later, a car accident, and the march of time produces the "x factor" which refuses to let you sit for hours in front of a computer without backache or to let you carry more than three full grocery bags at once, pain-free.

It's the wear and tear of life; it grabs hold of your physique, your concentration capacities and certainly, your precious relationships. Relationships are like your white Cons or Vans – constant use wears them out until the day arrives when you can no longer show them off in public!

1. Recollections:

When it comes to not carrying anything detrimental into your valuable relationships, I practise a habit I developed after many years of crying, shouting and being let-down: don't carry a picture of a knight in shining armour or of a quiet, obedient child in your mind's eye. Why? Because so often our expectations are nothing like what real life is about!

By all means carry mental snapshots of numerous acts of kindness that have been done to you (even cold toast and lukewarm milk on Mother's Day), soft touches, amazing insight and thoughtful words. These can all be easily gobbled up by a mood that refuses to be grateful and then, somehow becomes lost in your memory bank. Yet these could be some of the most valuable recollections you may have! Through these recollections, there will be glimpses of perfection, and these add value and warmth to your relationships. And this is a good start to strengthening your existing relationships - remembering the good things that still exist.

It's not that we are living in failure when there is strong conflict, despair and disappointment present. Every soul goes through these situations in their lifetime, and of course, these are not always broadcast to others. Mostly, we see only a snapshot in time of how others are living, but never the fights behind closed doors!



2. Allow time to develop maturity:

In your 30's, one has to constantly remind oneself of your significant other's attributes as the children swarm past, leaving a mess behind. He/she lives in an important but not uppermost corner of your mind. Be aware of this and bring out this relationship, dust it off and rekindle the flame. There may be some surprises in store! In your 40's, you'll live what could be described as a 'conflicted life.' Your world is expanding and chaos and conflict increase. But with it comes success in areas of life which are being stretched and maturing. At this point, one either snaps from the pressure or stretches into someone stronger. There is great advantage in seeking support, and even counselling, to maintain good relationships during this time of self-development. And, in your 50's and 60's, you come to a place of understanding of how relationships work, and there is a deep sense of having lasted the distance successfully.

Your significant others have remained as loved ones and there's now no regret in having invested so much in them. Repeated conversations, pleadings, prayers and robust conflict management have all worked in your (and their) favour, and the results are here to stay. You will look back and agree that is so. Other friendships, despite expecting them to stay and strengthen, have moved out of your life's story and that's part of relationships' ebb and flow as well.

Today, it's a matter of deciding which relationships are worth pouring your best self into. There are tinges of sadness as people move on, but our choice is not to carry disappointment, or to impose it on those you love. Your shoulders, and theirs, were never strong enough, and never will be, to carry what they were not designed for. Let's add strength, truthfulness and courage to those you value. But let it begin with myself and yourself.

