

# PILLARS OF CONNECTION: ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Using the G.R.E.A.T acronym will equip you with critical qualities and strategies to enhance your bonds and create lasting, fulfilling and healthy relationships with your family, friends, and colleagues. Cheers to having more G.R.E.A.T relationships!

## G - GRATITUDE

- Showing genuine appreciation for them on a regular basis.
- This will promote positive emotions, encourage helpful behaviors and increase relationship satisfaction.
- 5:1 ratio: A healthy relationship has five positive interactions for every one negative
- Practice: Compliment them and generously share your thanks often. Write them a thank you note.

## R - RESPECT

- Being genuinely interested in their world view. This includes respecting their feelings, boundaries, beliefs and individuality.
- Treating the other person with kindness, consideration, and support, while honoring their perspectives, needs, and goals.
- This is essential for building trust, and fostering emotional intimacy and safety.
- Avoid criticism, belittling, not listening to, dishonestly, ignoring, put downs and controlling behaviors.
- Practice: "Loving Kindness" meditation. Viewing a situation from their perspective.

## E - EMPATHETIC LISTENING

- Giving someone your full attention and listening to them with the intention to understand their feelings, thoughts, and perspective.
- Acknowledging their emotions and emotional content builds connection and helps them feel heard and understood.
- Use words and body language to show you are genuinely paying attention and interested in what they are saying.
- Practice: Paraphrasing, summarizing, clarifying, validating and asking open ended questions.



## A - AVAILABLE

- The act of being accessible and showing that you are willing to make time for, and be present for, that person.
- They can count on you being there for them, emotionally or physically.
- Responding when they reach out, or contacting them proactively.
- Maintained emotional closeness through check-ins and expressions of care.
- Practice: Ask them “Am I there for you?” or “What can I do to show you support?”

## T - TRUST

- The confidence they have that you will be honest, respectful and reliable. That you will act with integrity and consider what is in their best interest.
- Trust takes time to build, through repeated consistent interactions, such as keeping commitments to them and having certain conversations stay private.
- Trust is a two way street, so you also assume the best in them and in their actions towards you.
- Practice: Apologize when you make a mistake; Take a risk and be vulnerable by sharing a personal story, feeling, or insight.

## NOTES

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