

# Promoting and Maintaining Harmony with Others



By Eric Vautour, MSW, RSW

**H**umans have marvellous and unique characteristics. Each of us have our own fingerprints, physical features and individual laughter that is easily distinguishable and recognizable by others. Although the biology of the human brain is complex and comprised of many hundreds of billions of cells, we are also molded and influenced by the environmental and cultural factors that form the basis of our upbringing. Our gender, parenting, schooling, culture, faith, successes and failures, as well as our dreams all combine to create models by which we interpret our realities and daily events. Each of us carry our own individual perspective of people, things and events. This can make finding common ground with others emotionally and physically demanding.

The following principles are offered to assist those who may decide to exemplify the genuine concern and empathy it often takes to promote and maintain harmony with others.

- An important first step is to recognize, respect and accept individual differences in others. Although opinions and values may differ, we must respect the inherent dignity of others and value them as such. We can always respectfully agree to disagree.
- Be willing and open to support those who may be less fortunate or subject to difficult circumstances. Rise above the temptations to repeat gossip or unfounded rumours. Rather, treat others with courtesy and find opportunities to recognize the strengths and good actions of others.

- The exercise of self-control is by far the most useful and powerful tool to foster harmony in relationships. Always seek to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and much slower to anger.
- During conflictual periods, be open minded and place emphasis on understanding the other's perspective, rather than defending your own. Harmony in relationships is often founded by one's ability to be comfortable in silence and in controlling our words.
- To promote harmony within a conflictual situation, seek firstly to speak privately with the person, rather than talk about it with others. Should the person refuse to collaborate positively to resolve the conflict, you may want to invite a colleague or friend to accompany you. Otherwise issues should be referred to the appropriate supervisors or authorities.
- Under no circumstances should abuse, bullying, intimidation or discriminatory behaviours be interpreted as purely inter-personal conflicts. They are very serious and adverse conditions that should be immediately reported to appropriate authorities to be addressed.
- Finally, be willing to learn from others. Although our culture seems to value and reinforce the image of people being strong and independent, the fact remains that we are all wonderfully inter-dependant. Maintaining harmony in relationships is not always easy but is foundational for our individual and collective health and wellbeing.

## About the Author

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Mr. Vautour has over 40 years' experience in the mental health field having been a therapist and clinical director with several governmental and

private Mental Health agencies throughout New Brunswick. He is recognized as one of the province's most experienced and qualified child protection mediator and conflict resolution specialists. He has also been a long-time therapist and clinical director in various capacities within the provincial and private care systems. He holds a Masters of Social Work from Sir Wilfred Laurier University, is fully bilingual and highly regarded within the professional community provincially, nationally and internationally.

# Journaling for Maximum Impact



If you keep a daily personal journal, you already know that it helps you focus on goals and directs your thoughts and intentions toward dreams and desires. The positive outcomes that appear in your life are the result of focus.

If you don't keep a journal now, try a journaling experiment to see if this exercise has payoffs for you. Journal in the morning or after taking a 30-minute break from work. Don't journal while watching television or alongside other distractions. You can also journal after taking a walk, a drive, or perhaps after working out. This time gap puts you in a more creative mindset.

Journal four things—and try to do this daily—your ideas and sudden insights; positive statements that you will achieve your goals, plans and strategies; and thanks and acknowledgements for positive outcomes you are experiencing.

## Are You Sabotaging Your Team?



Are you unwittingly sabotaging your team? Whether at work, school, or with your family, examine these disruptive behaviour clues:

- 1) Dismissing another team member's ideas.
- 2) Using coercion (“do as I say”) when a team is under pressure for a solution.
- 3) Refusing to let go of an idea or solution the team believes won't work.
- 4) Failing to value diversity. No one knows where the next insight or best idea will come from or how it will be inspired. The diversity of your team represents untapped riches. Avoid having personal bias prescreen those ideas that could inspire a solution or discovery.

*Life is 10% what happens to me  
and 90% of how I react to it.*

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