



Reinventing Relationships

Congratulations on completing the Breakthrough Training!

Based on the new possibilities you've opened up and your new declarations you most likely would like to transform some things in your life. This is the promise and possibility we at TheFlourishingLife.org invite people into. This document is designed to support you in accomplishing this. It is also offered to help you diminish some of the common mistakes people make after attending the training.

We base these observations on over two decades and thousands of peoples' experiences. Please pay close attention and take seriously the suggestions/coaching offered. Ignore them to the detriment and under mining of the very things you wish to transform. This document will focus mainly on relationships.

Network of Relationships

Let's start this way. You live in a network of relationships. You have beamed out of these relationships for four days and you will beam back. Those you are in relationship with have no idea that you've changed or desire something new. In fact, you have negotiated your relationships to be the way they are for as long as you've had them.

Even if you both don't like the way that it is, you will experience resistance to change. People want you to be the way that you have been. Changing your relationships is going to take a renegotiation process. That's because every relationship is the way it is based by a type of agreement. This agreement may never be formally detailed and signed. It is rather an agreement reached as a result of everyday interaction, and the ways that each partner automatically contributes, withholds participation, and/or allows the relationship to be the way it currently is. Such an agreement may happen silently and without any awareness on the part of either partner, but we are suggesting that in a very real way, all relationships reflect such a process of negotiation and agreement between the partners that determines the way that the relationship works. Think about it this way. In every relationship there are two parties, and there is the relationship they have designed together.

With that in mind, when you notice there is something you don't like or want to change the first step is to **own** that you have had a hand in designing the relationship. In other words take **responsibility** for the way the relationship is. Note that owning/responsibility is distinct from **blaming** yourself. Blame is not the same as responsibility, and in taking responsibility; we actually cease the unproductive tactic of laying blame. We stop focusing on what the other has failed to do (in our eyes) and start focusing on what we ourselves can do, regardless of the other's actions, to bring about the improved relationship we desire. While **blame** is directed toward punishment for the **past**, taking **responsibility** is directed toward stewardship of the **future**.

A common breakdown occurs when one person says that he/she is shifting, looking for new provisions and possibilities, but the other person in the relationship as "just not coming around." So, they move towards a type of control mechanism in order to get them to come around. There are subtle ways and overt ways to externally control another in order to effect change.

A predominant way people coming out of the training attempt to do this is by “training on” ones they love.

This is a major mistake and will backfire 99% of the time. What we mean by training on people is to practice some of the methods of questioning and challenging used in the training. The directness and forcefulness you encountered in the training were necessary because of the shortness of the four days we have together. You have plenty of time with your loved ones. You also gave permission for this type of interaction by virtue of agreeing to being trained by someone else. Even given that you can no doubt remember the resistance and challenge in this approach. You do not have the permission nor the experience to interact in this way.

Another way people attempt to change others is by rewarding or punishing them in some way. A reward can take many forms: One example is being pleasant or excited when it's going the way you think it should. A punishment can also take many forms: One example is by with-drawing or with-holding or being “moody” when they are not responding the way you think they should. In order to effect the change, you must consciously renegotiate your relationships.

It's great that you see there's more available and to desire it but do not attempt to unilaterally dictate changes. Instead **invite** them into a new relationship.

Sample Conversation

“I've been friends with you for x period of time, and I realize that I know very little about what is most important for you. Over the four days of the training I realized how I just took things and people for granted and was unintentional in terms of what experiences were present in my relationships. I also realized in some ways I was afraid to be vulnerable with people in my life and consequently stayed on the surface often and not share what was most important. I'd love to talk about what is important for you and also about in what ways we could change our relationship to make it even more valuable to both of us. Would you be interested in talking about these things?”

You will find this a much more productive approach and even then it will require steadfastness and a constant releasing of expectations and judgments when the other person does not respond the way you hope/expect them to. You get to continue sowing and contributing to the vision you have for the relationship.

Be Aware! Very often when the other does not respond in the desired or expected way you can easily move into judgment of them. Or grow exasperated and disillusioned. This will be counter-productive and may even contribute to damaging the very relationship you are hoping to improve.

In standing for a loving vision of the relationship, and contributing toward this vision regardless of our assessments about the contributions of the other, you are free to give freely. You can contribute toward a vision of the relationship that can prevail regardless of the perceived actions of the other, or the apparent results produced.

Remember the process that it took to get here, not the experience itself.

Whatever new possibilities you opened up in the training were the result of diligence and intentionality and persistence on your part. However you are feeling now and what you are experiencing now **will pass**. This does not mean it wasn't real, just that it isn't permanent. Focusing on the experience can make the training into an idol. Please don't do it.

Use normal language

We developed a special language in order to be distinct and to facilitate working together in a short period of time. We also spent a lot of time creating a context for the language we used. I guarantee you your friends and family will not fully understand phrases such as “I experience you as” or “what was more important than keeping your promise?” or “what I’m committed to cause with you is...” or any of the other ones we may have established in our time together. That is the key: use the language you have established together and that you normally use unless you do the diligent foundational work of contextualizing any new language.

When you disregard this coaching you will sound odd, and they may become concerned or suspicious.

Be the change you want to see

Gandhi said something like this. There is a powerful principle here and that is that the only one we actually have the power and authority to change is ourselves. Consider that the way we talked about the principle of “sowing and reaping” suggests that if we are willing to consistently sow the experiences attitudes and ways of relating we would like to develop in our relationships we will reap them in due time.

For example: If you want intimacy (in-to-me-see) then “sow” that by being vulnerable and allowing the person you are in relationship with to see into areas you may usually guard or keep to yourself. Take the initiative WITHOUT expecting they reciprocate in the time or manner in which you prefer.

Finally, exhibit patience, perseverance, and grace.