

◇ Unit 2
Strengthen Your Relationships

Family & Community Involvement

STEREOTYPES

*Before modern printing techniques, each letter or piece of type was individually placed by the printer, who then made a mold of the finished case of type. A metal printing plate, called a **stereotype**, was then created from the mold. This process enabled printers to make many identical plates.*

1. How does the original meaning of the word stereotype relate to the way we use it today?

2. What kinds of stereotypes do you think exist in your community?

3. What do you think causes stereotypes?

4. Do some research in your community. Can you identify three to five organizations or groups that are concerned with eliminating stereotypes? What are their names? Whom do they represent? What are their goals?

5. People can be stereotyped by almost any quality, including age, gender, economic group, religion, or ethnicity. List some ways that society stereotypes teens.

6. Why are these stereotypes unfair? What would it take to change them?

Changing Views

Do you see your peers using stereotypes of particular groups? Habits are hard to change. What do you think it would take to educate people your age about the destructiveness of stereotyping? Ask your family for other suggestions. List your ideas.

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APPRECIATE DIFFERENCES

In 1983, a group of people got together for dinner in Montgomery, Alabama. It might not seem like an important event, except that the dinner guests were a mixture of African American citizens and Caucasion citizens. In the South at that time, integration was still just a dream in many people’s minds. This group of people decided to get together and share a meal as a way to get to know each other better. It seems to have worked. Today many of the same people are still getting together for dinner. In fact, their children and grandchildren are now part of the group.

There are many ways to get to know people who are different from you, and even more good reasons to try. It doesn’t mean that you will like all the people you meet, or that they will like you, but in the process you will come to know the richness and diversity of the world. When you familiarize yourself with new ideas and new people, you are less likely to be threatened by or afraid of people’s beliefs or outward appearances.

Have you ever invited someone from another country, ethnic group, or religion to a meal at your house? You could use the dinner as a chance to become more familiar with each other’s customs and views of the world.

Discuss the idea with your family. Whom could you invite? A coworker of your parent or guardian? A new neighbor? Someone who is new to your school? Someone who goes to a different church?

We live, work, and go to school with many different kinds of people, so it’s important for us to get along. In the midst of all the “differences,” you may be surprised to find all the things that you have in common. And you just may find yourselves, like the people in Montgomery, sharing many wonderful meals together.

Once you’ve broken the ice by sharing a meal, meet with your family to brainstorm other activities you could do with people you perceive to be

different. You might get together to play music, or you might play a neighborhood game of softball. You could also volunteer in an area you might not otherwise consider or with people you might not otherwise meet. Write your ideas below.

A Giant Step

1. What would happen if a group you belong to invited another group to share together in some way? How might this happen? What purpose would it serve? Make some notes.
2. The Internet and e-mail offer new ways to communicate with people in different parts of the world. How might the idea of a global community and your new ability to meet and communicate with people who are different from you affect the kind of work you might like to do in the future?

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THE ART OF COMPASSION

There are many different reasons conflicts arise between people or groups. One way to resolve conflict is for everyone involved to show compassion. Compassion means that we understand what the other person is experiencing and we try to comfort him or her.

When a person is angry, frustrated, or in trouble, he or she often feels alone. By practicing compassion, we find a way to let that person know that we are a friend. We let him or her know that no one is ever alone.

1. How can you tell whether someone is in need of compassion?

2. What can you do to show compassion?

3. How would you teach a younger brother or sister to show compassion in these situations?

- a. A new student enters class.

- b. Your mother is tired after a long workday.

c. Your grandfather is in the hospital.

d. The family pet dies.

e. A friend is worried about something.

4. Now, think about what you would do in the same situations. What new ways could you show compassion at your age?

5. How can you show compassion toward your family?

6. How would you like members of your family to show compassion toward you?

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COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

Directions: It's not always easy to communicate in a positive way with family members, especially when you feel your rights are being violated in some way. Read the sample situation, focusing on the positive response. Then on separate paper write a positive response for each of the situations below, along with the probable result of each communication.

Rudy's parents ask him to babysit for his sister on the night he has tickets to a baseball game. What is Rudy's response?

Negative communication: *"That's not fair; I babysit for her all the time and I never get to go out!"*

Positive communication: *"I want to help, but did you know I have tickets for the game that night? I'll see whether I can change the tickets, or maybe I could babysit another night instead?"*

1. *José asks his parents to borrow the car so he can go to the movies with a friend. His parents agree, provided he drops his younger brother at a friend's house and picks him up later. José is tired of being responsible for his brother so often.*
2. *Colin's father asks him to take responsibility for doing the dishes after dinner each evening. Colin dislikes the chore and would like to trade it for another.*
3. *Angel's brother promised to drive her to her friend's house, but he left in a hurry, forgetting to take her. What should Angel say to him when he returns?*
4. *Brittany and her sister Sherie share a phone line. However, Brittany spends so much time on it that Sherie can't talk to her friends. What should Sherie say to Brittany?*

It Pays Off
How does listening to the needs of other people often allow you to meet your own needs or wants at the same time? Use one of the situations as an example.

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RECIPROCATATE IN RELATIONSHIPS

When someone does something for you, it's polite to reciprocate, or return the favor in some way. Have you ever experienced a relationship in which you did all the giving, sacrificing, or cooperating? It gets tiring and sometimes downright annoying. Without reciprocity, both personal and working relationships are like one-way streets.

How did people reciprocate in your grandparents' day? Ask an older family member or an elderly neighbor to give you examples of how they, or people they know, reciprocated when they were growing up. Ask them about the art of reciprocity in letter writing, barn raising, and farm chores, for example. List their answers below.

One Depression-era family set an extra place at the dinner table every night. It was not saved for anyone in particular, and sometimes it remained empty. Often, however, someone from the community would knock on the door, and he or she would be invited in to share dinner. In this family, sharing what they had was an ongoing act of reciprocity.

1. What do you think they were reciprocating? _____

2. Does reciprocity always mean "paying back" in the same way? Why or why not? When could you do something different in order to reciprocate?

3. How could a dinner guest reciprocate if he or she was unable to return the invitation?

(Continued on next page)

Name _____

Directions: For each situation below, think of a way to reciprocate.

RECIPROCITY AT HOME	
Situation	How You Could Reciprocate
4. Your mom loans you her car.	
5. Your parents spend weeks helping you type and compile information for college application forms.	
6. Your sister drives you to and from practice twice a week.	

Directions: Think of *two* different ways a person could reciprocate in each of these work situations.

RECIPROCITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK	
Situation	How You Could Reciprocate
7. Your brother worked your weekend shift for you on two occasions so you could go out of town.	
8. A coworker helped you type a mid-term report because you are a very slow typist.	
9. Your best friend bought your lunch three times last month because you forgot your money.	

Directions: Sometimes, people forget to do something that says, "I appreciate what you did, and in return I want to do this for you." List what others have done for you and how you could reciprocate.

NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO RECIPROCATE!	
Event in the past	What I can do to reciprocate in a meaningful way