

RELATIONSHIPS

By Tony Johnson

A relationship is defined as “a particular type of connection existing between people related to or having dealings with each other”.

To me, life is really just one big relationship.

Everyday, our lives are filled with business, personal, social, family and spiritual interactions with others. Learning to get along with people and having the ability to manage relationships across a diverse range of people is essential. The opportunities to practice relationship skills are endless.

As I write this month’s article, I am sitting on a red eye flight from Honolulu to Denver after an exciting Pirates road game win over the Hawaii Islanders.

Reflecting back on our four-day road trip, I thought it would be interesting to look at the relationship building practice I had:

Day 1:

The Family: A 6 am team departure from the airport meant waking up Chris, Missy and Trent 4.00am. (Ever try talking sensibly to your kids at 4.00am?)

The Team: In the coming days I would get to spend a lot of valuable time with the guys in an unusual social setting. I get to know them better ... and they know me better. A lot of stories, some of them true! (Ever see a 6’6” 315 pounder on a surf board?)

The Flight Attendant: A full flight that left two hours late had San Francisco based Angie pretty stressed out. A few kind words and some humor got her smiling. (She wished the Pirates good luck on the speaker before we land.)

Day 2:

The Gift Shop Lady: “I have 2XL Hawaii shirts made special for you” says the voice from behind a pile of clothing. We discuss the price she wins! (I come home in a loud red floral shirt).

The Hostess: All You Can Eat Seafood \$24.95 says the sign at Today’s Seafood. “One hour wait” says the hostess. We strike up a conversation with the manager while waiting in line. Our wait was less than 10 minutes then! (Thank goodness they didn’t charge by the pound.)

The Marks Family: Several of us attend a luau. We sit at a table with the Mark’s family from Whittier, CA and end up spending the evening with our new friends. (They’re the “other” people in all the luau photos).

Day 3:

The Referee: A relationship with an af2 referee is heavily dependent upon the number of yellow flags they throw around. On this night, there were a few that seem to be “mysteriously” dropped. (Coach Cowdrey offers his insights directly to the ref, if you know what I mean!)

The Beach: A post-game dinner at Duke’s and a quiet walk by myself along the beach at midnight. (My worries, concerns and problems disappear for a few precious hours.)

Day 4:

The USS Arizona: Thanks to Congressman Ray LaHood, we get a special tour of Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona. The normally boisterous group is quiet and reserved. The guys and I talk about the events all the way back to the hotel. (I realize we have a respectful and caring group.)

Remember, “Treasure Life ... Everyday!”



Quote to remember:

“Through the Treasure Life message, I emphasize the importance of communication and understanding in building strong relationships for life. Life is about working with, and getting along with others!”

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“Treasure Life” is a positive life message created by Caterpillar manager and Peoria Pirates coach, Tony Johnson. The program encourages students to be “pirates” by filling their “treasure” chests each day with some of life’s most valuable traits, values and experiences. The “Treasure Life” program has been recognized as one of the Arena Football League’s best community relations program.