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Building Relationships in a World That Says: "What About Me?"

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Building Relationships in a World That Says: "What About Me?"

By Kim Nassoiy
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I believe one of the hardest things in life is building long-lasting relationships.

I hear all the time about couples going through divorce and I think why? And it's not just couples breaking up. I've seen parents and children, siblings or dear friends have a falling out and not speak for years, if ever again.

What makes us turn away from people who are the very center of our worlds?

I understand there are situations where we have to cut ties with a person. Perhaps we are in an unhealthy relationship and need to distance ourselves from someone for our own emotional or physical well-being. That is different and not the kind of relationship I mean. I'm speaking to the basic give and take and life struggles that happen and effect our relationships.

I think, in part, we have to examine the changes in our society. We are definitely a hurried and throw-away culture. If something requires extra work or time, we often really aren't interested. We tend to want to make a fast buck and get immediate gratification. If something is broken, we don't try to fix it. We simply throw it away and buy a new one.

This philosophy seems to have carried over into our relationships.

There is also the belief that we should be happy, no matter what. Now, don't get me wrong, I want to be happy as much as the next person, but the shift that has taken place is that many people say: "I deserve happiness; I'm entitled to it at any cost."

Part of this philosophy encompasses the belief that the people in our lives should make us happy. I hate to burst that bubble, but that is not their job to keep us happy all the time. We first have to be happy with ourselves and who we are.

Others can increase our joy, for sure, but they aren't responsible for it.

The bottom line is relationships are not a one-sided, what's-in-it-for-me undertaking.

Like anything else of value in life, they require work. A lot of the work isn't even really hard, and oftentimes it's downright fun. It's building each other up, communicating with each other, lending a helping hand, spending time together and supporting each other.

Sometimes it *is* hard work, like apologizing, compromising, conceding or even putting someone else's needs before our own. In the end, these things make us a better person. They make us someone worth fighting for.

And in life's struggles, sometimes that's what it will take to keep a relationship going – fighting the good fight, because the other person is worth it.

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