

## Typical Problems That Interfere With Relationships

**Surface Problems:** Most problems exist on the surface (others go deep). A surface problem is when a person has a solid foundation — a strong core — enabling a peaceful, pleasant, and purposeful life. What is missing is a skill — or a set of skills — in some area, the lack of which is causing a particular relational problem. One example is parents who are having a significant relationship problem with a child or teenager because the parents have failed to find a proper balance between authoritarian and permissive discipline. They may have lost all rapport with their child because they lack competence in certain parenting skills.

**Fighting for Control:** In interpersonal conflict, the main contention is often one of control. Both husband and wife, or parent and child, or employee and supervisor want the other to act according to an ideal image each holds. When that doesn't happen, one often tries to control and change the other by withdrawing, or nagging, or belittling, or pouting, or raging, or abusing — all counterproductive. Such strategies cause emotional distancing. The Win-Win Club is about creating closeness, using win-win for mutually beneficial and satisfying relationships.

### Deeper Problems:

Deeper problems occur when one's internal guidance system is out of whack. The person's foundation needs rebuilding, at least reinforcing. Although deep problems may not be remedied quickly or easily, have no doubt of this: When the suffering person seeks help, and shows a sincere, strong desire to move to a higher level of being, the result can be life-changing. With a fortified foundation, the person is ready for new and better relationships. The following conditions can result in the need for foundational change before existing relationships can improve.

### Depression

Depression is often an unconscious retreat to escape from something that seems even worse to us — such as lashing out in a rage and assaulting someone. Or confronting a difficult situation without the ability to cope. Know this about yourself: you have all the resources residing within you — and the creativity to use them — to meet life's challenges successfully. And a win-win relationship (with oneself and others), can lift a depressive mood and turn sullenness to sunshine. From this to this

### Self-esteem

Of all the thoughts you ever have, none are more important than those you have about yourself. Self-esteem (which is essential for healthy relationships) comes from one thing: the belief that you are worthy. Self-esteem has nothing to do with conceit. You can't have too much self-esteem (just as you can't have too much health). We are not meant to tiptoe through life feeling rotten about ourselves. (It has been said that despising oneself is the ultimate failure.) If you have low self-esteem, then know this: The Win-Win Club would be honoured to have you as a member.

## Stress

Excess psychological stress injures good relationships. One can choose to do nothing (and continue to suffer). Or remove the stressor (e.g., quit a job, or leave a marriage, or kick the kid out). Or, learn to cope with the stress. Effective coping is what the Win-Win Club's 12 step program is about. It teaches that while we often can't prevent our stressors, we can always choose our responses to them. The motto of The Win-Win Club is: It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it that counts.

## Addictions

Whether an addiction is to alcohol or gambling, or to something else ruling and ruining a relationship, the new 12-step program unique to the Win-Win Club can help.