

**Of the Four Ways of Relating To People,
Three Hurt, One Helps**

**It's The Win-Win Way,
For Successful Interpersonal Relationships
At Home, or At Work**

Informative, Interesting, Important, Inspiring

Courtesy of The Win-Win Club
(www.TheWin-WinClub.com)

Index – The **Win-Win** Way for Successful Interpersonal Relationships

The Four Ways of Relating to People

1 – The **Win-Lose** Way (page 3)

Story: *Her Parents Were Dictators*

2 – The **Win-Win** Way (page 5)

Story: *A Kid Cut the Cake*

Story: *A Business Executive Joins the Army*

3 – The **Lose-Win** Way (page 10)

Story: *A Victim Too Long*

Story: *This Enemy Was A Hero*

4 – The **Lose-Lose** Way (page 17)

Story: *This Contract Was That Close*

From **Win-Win To Win-Lose** (page 19)

Story: *A Bluff That Worked*

From **Lose-Win To Win-Win** (page 20)

Story: *Doing the Right Thing Paid Off*

From **Win-Lose To Win-Win** (page 21)

Story: *She Learned How To Teach Children, Not Subjects*

From **Lose-Win To Lose-Lose**, An Experiment (page 23)

What's This Story: **Win-Lose** or **Lose-Lose**? (page 25)

Story: *He Bought A Car for Twenty Dollars*

What's This Story: **Lose-Win** or **Win-Win**? (page 27)

Story: *He Donated \$200 to Charity*

A Shocking Experiment? (page 28)

Your Personal Test – Where Do You Fit On The **Win-Win** Continuum? (page 32)

A Child Learns About **Win-Win** (page 34)

Win-Win – It's A Spiritual Principle in Every Religion (page 35)

What's the Fuel for **Win-Win**? (page 37)

There are four possible ways to interact with people, and that applies both to corporations and individuals.

- 1, **Win-Lose** (I'll try to win at your expense – so you must lose. Most common.)
- 2, **Win-Win** (I want to win in our relationship, and I want you to win also.)
- 3, **Lose-Win** (I accept losing to let you win. Then, I'll justify being your victim.)
- 4, **Lose-Lose** (I'm willing to lose just to make you lose too. Revenge!)

It's very important for you to have a very clear understanding of each. Then you can determine which of the four you are trying to use within any of your relationships. Only one (win-win) can result in the best relationships; the other three will guarantee relationship poverty at best, with utter failure a definite possibility.

What follows is a description of the four ways of relating. A story follows each to illustrate it, help you remember it, and inspire you to search for win-win solutions whenever possible.

“Relationships are a lot tougher than the Tour de France.” (Lance Armstrong)

Win-Lose (I win; you lose)

The win-lose approach permeates our whole society. For example, our legal system is win-lose because it's adversarial to its core. If I'm to win my case in court against you, you must lose. If you win, I must lose – that's the way it works. Whoever heard of both sides winning in a court case.

And frequently the relationship between unions and management, between employers and employees, between bosses and workers is adversarial. Win-lose is usually their default way of thinking – especially when it pertains to money. For one side to win, the other side must lose.

And think of the millions of people in sales – the stereotypical used car salesman for example – who operate from the win-lose kind of thinking. They see their customers as adversaries. Their thinking is: “If I can make you buy that car at my price, I'll win. You may not know it, but you will lose, because only I know that one is overpriced.” Unfortunately, that's how many salespeople think.

Win-lose is reinforced within our school system because grades are nearly always given out according to a normal distribution curve. That means one student can get an 'A' only because somebody else gets a 'D.' Everybody can't get an 'A.' Everybody won't be given a 'D.' Students are graded not against their own ability or their effort, but in how they compare to other pupils.

And win-lose is what sports is all about. In sports, I can't win unless you lose. There isn't room for both of us on the victory stand. But in sports, chess, and poker, that's okay. That's where win-lose is legitimate. Yes, of course, win-lose has its place – on all the football fields, basketball courts, and baseball diamonds, in all boxing rings and hockey arenas. That's where true competition can happen. It's fun both to watch and participate in good, clean competition where skill plus effort can result in winning a game.

But most of us don't spend our lives in competitions, do we? We don't live each day competing with our co-workers, or our spouse, or our children, or our friends, do we? Who's winning in each of your relationships? What a crazy question. If both sides aren't winning, both are losing. If we want satisfying relationships with other people, we must stop thinking win-lose.

Her Parents Were Dictators – A Win-Lose Story

Catherine's parents were always winners in their relationship with their daughter. From the time she was a little girl, her parents won every dispute. They got their way with Catherine by using their 4 p's as weapons against her: their position, their power, their possessions, and their personality (which was authoritarian and dictatorial).

Catherine was not allowed to make choices or decisions for herself. She was told how she must think, feel, and behave, and that was backed up by threats. Catherine grew up compliant, timid, fearful, withdrawn, and with dreadful self-esteem. Her parents were proud of her obedience. "She never causes us any concern," they told everyone.

When she became a teenager, Catherine tried to rebel a little by changing her hairstyle, but she was squelched so harshly she quickly changed it back to what her parents demanded.

When Catherine was 15, she began to drink alcohol heavily because it dulled her pain. At 16 she became pregnant, and nine months later, her baby boy was born. The baby failed to thrive, however, and was later diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. By then, her parents, the constant “winners,” wanted nothing more to do with their “ungrateful” daughter so they disowned her. Of course they blamed Catherine for all her problems and never admitted any fault of their own.

Win-lose relationships frequently have a sad ending like this since complete control of another person always leads to trouble. That’s because you can’t love what you control.

The most common form of win-lose is the ordinary put-down. When you are the victim of a put-down, you may lose face, lose some self-respect. Often that is the intent of the person who uses the put-down, because they believe they will win by feeling a sense of superiority over you. If others are present, they may intend to show how witty they are – at your expense. Examples: “Where were you when they passed out brains?” “Your I.Q. must be a negative number.” “Where have you been all your life?” “Don’t you know anything?” “Why don’t you get a real job?”

“Arrows of hate have been shot at me too, but they never hit me, because somehow they belong to another world with which I have no connection whatsoever.” (Albert Einstein)

You don’t need to be an Einstein to know that put-downs can only hurt you if you let them. “No-one can embarrass you without your consent,” Eleanor Roosevelt famously said. So you don’t need to grant others the power to belittle you, to make you the “loser.” Remember, your happiness depends on the quality of your own thoughts, and that means avoiding those that weaken you.

Win-Win (I win; you win too)

The win-win way of thinking says I want to win, and I want you to win also. As author Stephen Covey describes it in his brilliant book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, “win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit so that all parties feel good about the decisions, and feel committed to the resulting plan of action. Win-win says let’s cooperate, not

compete. Win-win believes that for one person to be successful, another does not need to fail. It's not your way, and it's not my way – it's a better way we want."

If a company wants to be successful, it will ensure that its employees win as often as possible. That doesn't mean the company loses. It will win too because the employees will then work for it, not just with their hands and heads, but with their hearts too. They will give loyalty, not just perfunctory performance.

Think of a car salesman who uses the win-win principle. He wants his customers to win. He wants his customers to get a car that's right for them at a fair price. To that end he, the salesman, is really an assistant buyer. That's the best definition for a good salesman – he's an assistant buyer. It's his job to ensure the principal buyers win. He never sees them as suckers.

Of course the salesman deserves to win also, and he will – by making a fair profit on the sale, a profit he deserves. He is very likely to gain customer loyalty too, and thus also win by getting further business. The best salesmen consistently demonstrate a win-win mind set. They are providing a necessary service – in reality a spiritual service. Yes, win-win is a spiritual principle. It requires genuine integrity to strive for win-win. (Win-lose is easy and doesn't require any integrity.)

Win-win works with parenting. If you parents want your children to be winners, then make sure they don't always lose their battles with you. For if, when the children are young, you insist on always winning the minor battles – like what they wear, how they keep their hair, the music they listen to – then when they are teenagers and become more independent, you risk losing the war. It's much smarter to let children enjoy some "wins" in their negotiations with you, so that when it comes to things that are not negotiable – like whether or not they use addictive drugs – then you can legitimately act from strength. Look for a win-win solution with children at every opportunity. That means accepting their input into decisions that affect them. That means listening hard to what they have to say, not ignoring it. You don't have to agree or accede – parents have rights too – but it means so much to a child just to know he's heard, even if not really understood.

Smart parents learn how to avoid many win-lose conflicts, as in this story.

When mom gave her two young sons anything, both boys loudly complained if they thought the other was being favored in the slightest. Examples: “He got a better birthday present than I did.” Or “Mom, you gave him more ice cream than I got.” So, today, when mom had only one big piece of chocolate cake left for dessert, and announced it would be split between the two boys, each of them hovered over the cake to ensure it would be divided equally. Mom knew if she didn’t slice that cake exactly, precisely – if one piece happened to be even a smidgen smaller – she’d please only one son and have to listen to, “Hey, he got a bigger piece!” from the other.

Then an inspiration hit mom. “Here’s the knife,” she said to the older boy. “You get to divide it. Then your brother will be allowed to choose whichever piece he wants.”

No surgeon ever applied a scalpel more skillfully than that little boy, as he ever so carefully and conscientiously cut the cake while his mom relaxed with her coffee.

“Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy, and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.” (Danny, age 7)

In many interpersonal conflicts – whether between employer and employee, husband and wife, parent and child, salesman and customer, businessman and client, or teacher and pupil – there is a win-win resolution somewhere. Often it's so well hidden that it takes real character, commitment, and concern from both sides to find it. It often seems so much easier to use those 4 p's (power, position, possessions and personality) to get a faster win-lose answer. But to find a win-win is worth the search. It's worth the search because when you accomplish a win-win solution, the stage is then set for future negotiations with the same party. Why? Because the win-win attitude always engenders a spirit of trust, respect and openness, and when you can commence any negotiation with an attitude of trust, respect and openness, then a win-win solution has the best chance of surfacing. This applies to a negotiation between a parent and child concerning sleepovers, or between General Motors and its workers concerning a wage settlement, or between governments negotiating a trade deal. When each side knows the other side actually wants a win-win, high moral and positive expectations result. So mutual trust, respect and openness – that's the way to win-win.

"The true test of whether or not you are thinking win-win or one of the alternatives is how you feel. Win-Win will fill your heart with happy and serene thoughts." (S. Covey)

A Business Executive Joins the Army – A Win-Win Story

Brent was a bright young executive, a rising star in the large corporation where he worked, definitely a cut above the ordinary. The betting was that Brent would become that company's CEO some day because everything about him matched what the company stood for – competing ruthlessly to win in their market.

Then to his shock and disappointment, Brent was called up for military service. Having to become a soldier was a huge step down in his career, Brent thought, for the army could teach him nothing worthwhile. At least it would only be a temporary setback. His company guaranteed a position would be waiting for him.

So there they were on Brent's first day in the army, all the new recruits standing at attention in their barracks, positioned at the foot of their new beds. The sergeant entered. "Here are the sheets, blankets, and pillow cases for your beds," he yelled. "When everybody has theirs, I will order you to start making your beds. And I will give you exactly 60 seconds to do a decent job."

On the sergeant's command, Brent and all the others rushed to make their beds. It was easy for Brent since his mother had had him make his own bed at home as a child. And Brent had continued the practice when he went to college, and later to his own apartment. Brent was an excellent bed maker, and he easily finished in 45 seconds. Many of the other men finished early too. Then they all stood and watched while the "slackers" struggled to finish on time.

At 60 seconds, the sergeant blew a whistle. Everybody stopped, including those who weren't half-way finished, and those whose bedding was still full of wrinkles.

"Everybody strip your beds," the sergeant bellowed. "All of you. Everything off. And then start over. You've got 60 seconds again."

"Hey, wait a minute," Brent thought. "Why should I have to do it again? Or the others who finished early? What a waste of time and effort. If this is the army's way, the army is even dumber than I thought."

If Brent thought that was stupid, he was dumbfounded when the sergeant repeated the same scenario again, and again, and again. He continued to command everyone to strip their beds, and then remake them. Over and over and over. After twenty times, Brent was seething with anger and indignation. His respect for the army was lower than low. "If this army were a corporation," Brent thought, "they'd be out of business in a week."

"And the whole exercise is obviously so unfair," Brent reflected. "It doesn't make any sense that I and the others who can do it right have to suffer just because of the few who can't perform? They have probably never made a bed in their whole lives." Brent looked over at the fat, clumsy, sweating recruit at the adjacent bed who hadn't once succeeded in making it within the time limit. "I don't think he's ever going to do it," Brent moaned to himself. "Because of him, the rest of us could be up all night wasting our time. This is so idiotic."

Then, during the next 60 second rush, on their twenty-first try, Brent noticed something different five beds away from his own. A short guy who, like Brent, had always finished early, was helping a tall guy who was one of the repeat failures. The two of them were working together on one bed. And when, at 60 seconds, the sergeant blew his whistle, both beds – the short guy's, and the tall guy's – were completely made, and made well. Other recruits noticed this also.

Once more the sergeant bellowed his command. "Everybody strip your beds and do it again." This time, Brent really rushed, and finished in 25 seconds. Then he ran over to the next bed and helped the fat, clumsy guy. And other speedsters did the same thing with other slow guys. When the whistle blew again, every bed was perfect.

The sergeant looked around the barracks and nodded his approval. Then he spoke (less gruffly now). "That's how we do things in this army," he said. "We're a team. We take care of one another. If you are ever in battle, remember that. It could save your friend's life. Or yours."

“When you do what’s best for you, you do what’s best for anyone around you. It can’t be any other way.” (Janet Atwood)

The greatest obstacle to win-win is fear. We are literally afraid that if we allow another person to win, we might lose out, because there won't be enough for us both. We have two basic fears: First, that we won't have enough, and second, that we won't be enough – that we won't be able to cope with life successfully. Both fears stem from a scarcity mentality and drive us to a win-lose mindset.

Having enough, and being enough are both subjective. When he was the richest man in the world, Howard Hughes was asked by a reporter if he thought he had enough money now. “Not quite yet,” Hughes responded.

Friendship is all about win-win and exemplifies a prosperity mentality, especially when it goes beyond a surface level such as a sharing of some mutual interest like airplanes or football. The true function of genuine friendship is for one friend to remind the other of his wholeness, his innate worthiness. That's a huge win-win because those who bring some sunshine into the life of another can not keep it from themselves.

“The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but reveal to them their own.” (Benjamin Disraeli)

So win-win can happen for you every day – every time you help someone, every time you bestow a kindness or a sincere compliment without expecting a payback. Then you will be blessed as well as the receiver. For you are made kind by being kind.

“You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Lose-Win (I lose; you win)

Would some people really try to operate that way in a relationship, where they are willing, even wanting, to lose? Unfortunately for them, yes. In the extreme, they are the doormats who let other people wipe their feet on them. They are the rugs who allow others to walk all over them.

They may like to think that they are peacemakers, but they'll go to any extent to keep peace. Wives who continually tolerate abusive husbands are one example. Instead of standing up for their rights, those wives say in effect, "Go ahead, have your way with me. You can do whatever you want to me and I won't resist." That is the attitude that lose-win people have.

They seek their strength from being popular and accepted. They never say "no" when someone asks something of them. They don't have the courage to express their own opinions, and are easily intimidated. Teenagers who smoke, get drunk, do drugs, or beat-up somebody, not because they themselves want to, but to "get in good" with a group are acting in a lose-win way. They'll go against being their best selves to "win" the friendship of others. Yes, for teens, peer pressure and lose-win go hand-in-hand.

If lose-win people happen to be bosses or employers, they will be permissive and indulgent to the extreme, and allow those for whom they are responsible to feed on them, and do practically anything without a consequence.

The same with parents. Lose-win means they are permissive to the extreme, allowing their children to run all over them. When the parents spoil them, they often pretend they are just being kind, misrepresenting their parental lack of authority as warm-heartedness.

Besides being ineffective, lose-win people usually bury their emotions. They may appear normal on the outside, but inside they seethe with anger and resentment. And these feelings that don't get expressed won't just die. They can surface later in the form of various problems, like headaches. (97% of all headaches are psychosomatic with no physical causation according to the American Medical Association.)

Yes, when a person is under the constant stress that results from a lose-win situation, his immune system is weakened so it can't readily ward off a multitude of maladies that it could normally defeat easily.

"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is to try to please everyone." (Bill Cosby)

Emily is an example of lose-win. She is continually being asked to do things to help – by her church, by her children, by her parents, by her community. It seems everybody wants Emily, and Emily never says “no.” It's not that she wants to do it all, and she is feeling highly stressed because of it, but she just can't seem to say “no” to any request. She suffers from the disease to please. Why?

Since she was a little girl, Emily has been bombarded by messages that “service” is the highest mark of virtue, that morality consists in living for others. She has been told that personal happiness and self-interest are ignoble. Doing for others is always virtuous, Emily believes. Doing for herself is sinful.

But acceding to the requests of others is not always desirable, and sometimes it is downright harmful. The truth is it takes courage to say “no” when you need to.

When you manage to assert yourself and say “no” when you want to say “no,” and “yes” when you want to say “yes,” you are asserting that you are not the property of others, and that you are not bound to live your life in accordance with their expectations. It takes courage to cherish your own desires, to have independent values, and remain true to them, to fight for your own goals, whether or not friends or family approve.

Emily needs to realize that her first obligation is not to live up to someone else's expectations. Therein lies her freedom – but only if she is prepared to challenge the teaching of her lifetime, and stop being sacrificial fodder for the goals of others – to stop wanting other people's approval more than her own.

When you say what it is you want, you always run the risk of the other person refusing to give it to you. Fearing rejection is so common, but we must show sufficient courage to take the necessary risk to achieve win-win.

People with a lose-win mentality need a huge dose of self-esteem so that they can come to believe they are worth fighting for. Self-esteem will make them want to protect themselves against win-lose people who seek to take advantage of them. Yes, an inoculation of self-esteem to give them the desire, and then a shot of assertiveness to give them the skill, will do wonders for people who are consistently willing to lose so somebody else will win.

“The number one predator of our children to-day: low self-esteem. It steals your confidence away. It steals your joy. It steals your aspirations. It fills you with self-hatred. It fills you with doubt.” (Spider Jones, former professional boxer, now radio commentator)

A Victim Too Long – A Lose-Win Story

Helda was born in New York City to Polish immigrant parents who were very strict disciplinarians. Helda grew up to be a shy, introverted girl with such a low self-esteem that she had a deep sense of her own worthlessness. Despite this she was bright, got high marks through high school, and after graduating from college became a grade three teacher.

Helda fell in love with Joel Steiner. Joel had been born to wealthy parents, and had had a privileged youth. He too had always been smart in school, and received a scholarship to college where he got a degree in political science. Later he took his law degree at New York University. Then, Joel made a lot of money as a New York lawyer.

At first, when Joel and Helda lived together things seemed fine, but soon Joel began to abuse Helda emotionally. He didn't hit her. It was what he said that hurt. Nothing Helda did seemed to make Joel happy and he always let her know it.

Helda had such low self-esteem that she assumed Joel must be right about her. Despite doing well in school, and being competent at her job, she had always felt worthless, and the fact that she was being treated that way – well, it somehow seemed to fit. She never complained to anyone, or ever tried to leave Joel.

Because Helda had done well both in school and at her job, she had a good self-concept, a decent self-image. She was bright and capable and she knew it, but down deep she never felt good enough. That's the difference between self-concept and self-esteem. You can have a positive self-concept, a good self-image, because you recognize your abilities, and still have negative self-esteem where you never feel worthy, good enough to merit being treated with respect and dignity, whole enough to deserve real happiness.

In fact, no amount of self-improvement can make up for a lack of self-acceptance. No amount of “doing” can compensate for a lack of “being.” Yes, achievement alone is not a solution for low self-esteem which is actually self-hate, the most destructive of all kinds of hate.

Helda suffered psychological humiliation for two years, and then it turned to physical abuse. One day Joel punched her in the eye – hard enough that it affected her eyesight. When she showed up at work with a black eye, she told her coworkers that she had been mugged. The next time she arrived at work with a black eye, she said she had walked into a door.

After that, as the beatings continued, she took to wearing sunglasses summer and winter. To ease her pain Helda took cocaine and soon both she and Joel were addicted to the drug. When Joel got high, he punched out Helda, but she never told anyone. Not even the time he hit her hard enough to rupture her spleen. Helda crawled out of the apartment, took a cab to the hospital, had her spleen removed, and then returned to Joel.

As this was going on, there was a young unwed girl who became pregnant and, instead of having an abortion, decided to put her baby up for adoption. Helda and Joel took the baby who was named Lisa.

Over the next five years Joel continued to abuse Helda. When he became angry, or got high on drugs, he would choke and kick her, but she never complained to anyone who might help. She didn't have enough self-esteem to fight back. It's really hard to resist and say “No” when you have such low self-esteem, because what other people think of you is more important than what you think of yourself.

When little Lisa was five years old, Joel started to abuse her too. Lisa wore long sleeve shirts to school to hide the bruises. Then one day after a particularly bad beating, Lisa stopped breathing. Finally, finally, Helda did something positive. She phoned the police.

When help arrived, they detected a pulse in Lisa and rushed her to the hospital, but three days later, at the age of six, Lisa died of her injuries. Helda's low self-esteem had cost her her own happiness; now it cost little Lisa her life. Joel was convicted of manslaughter and went to prison.

This Enemy Was a Hero – Another Lose-Win Story

While lose-win always hurts relationships, there are times when it is heroic. In this story, seven people were willing to lose their lives for the sake of others. You probably don't know about it, because it was not reported by any media.

It happened years ago during the cold war when the Soviet Union was perceived as the enemy of our western democracies, and many North Americans saw it only as “that evil empire.” This true story is about seven of our “enemies.”

They were crew members on a Russian atomic submarine traveling under the frigid waters near Greenland, not far off Canada's coast. At 4:15 of the morning of July 4, 1961, an alarm sounded on that sub. A pipe in the cooling system had burst, and that sent the temperature inside one of the sub's two nuclear reactors soaring to 800 degrees Celsius. Then, 200 meters under the sea, that reactor caught fire.

The danger was not just to the submarine and its 100 man crew. It was, in a way, to our whole world. With the nuclear reactor on fire, the uranium in the reactor's core might melt, and if that happened there would be a chain reaction and the sub would blow up like a small nuclear bomb. And that would release radioactivity into the ocean currents where it could travel underwater, undeterred, all around our planet. No clean-up would have been possible.

Working frantically, refraining from panic, the crew managed to put the fire out, and to make contact with a nearby Soviet diesel sub which sped to the rescue. After both subs surfaced, most of the crew from the atomic sub was transferred to the safety of the diesel sub. The danger of a nuclear explosion was not over, however. The reactor had to be neutralized. It was decided that new cooling pipes must be built and installed immediately. With what? They would dismantle the sub's weapons and use the parts for pipes. But the pipes had to be installed in the bowels of the atomic submarine where the reactor was spewing its poisonous radioactivity.

Lt. Boris Korchilov, 24 years old, volunteered to lead a repair crew to the reactor. “Do you understand what this means?” the captain asked him.

“Of course,” he replied. He knew he was going to his death, but the job had to be done.

Boris was to die a horrible death. During the hours it took him and his repair crew to neutralize the reactor, the radioactivity caused his face to blow up like a balloon and his skin turned shiny. Six of his helpers were to die also, but not before they had installed the cooling pipes to prevent any chance of an explosion. Then the atomic sub was towed home by the diesel sub.

The rest of the crew spent six months in a hospital in Leningrad but all recovered. And subsequently, all of the nuclear reactor systems on the other Soviet atomic submarines were changed so the same accident could never recur.

For 30 years this story was kept a secret. It only came to light under Soviet president Gorbachev’s openness policy.

We all owe quite a debt of gratitude to those seven men, our former enemy, wouldn’t you agree. They, like our own soldiers who lose their lives fighting terrorists, show that the principle of lose-win can, in cases like this, be truly noble. They lose, so the rest of us can win.

(Just remember not to apply the lose-win principle to your relationships however. It’s not noble there.)

Lose-Lose (I lose; you lose too)

Lastly, there is the lose-lose way where both sides lose? Do you think anybody would be crazy enough to actually want a lose-lose interaction? Well, it’s thankfully rare but, yes, it does happen. Sometimes attempts at win-win are sabotaged by one side that isn’t committed to the win-win principle.

This Contract Was That Close – A Lose-Lose Story

The company’s management was negotiating a new contract with the company’s union. The two chief negotiators, Yeates and Kelly, had been at it hot and heavy now for many months, and deep resentment had built up between the two. Both were competitive and adversarial by nature, and now animosity permeated their relationship. There was zero mutual respect. Instead, they had come to dislike

one another intensely. When it seemed certain they were at an impasse, with no contract agreement possible, a professional mediator was called in.

This particular mediator happened to be very experienced and highly skilled. He began by asking Yeates to list all the things he wanted to achieve in the new contract. And he asked Kelly to do the same thing. Then the mediator took the two lists and went to work.

After a week, the mediator announced to both men that he had found a solution to their impasse and a new contract was now possible. When he explained his solution to them, Yeates stated, "I don't know how you came up with this, but you've done it. You've satisfied everything that I put on my list. All my demands have been met so I will sign a contract."

Kelly, however, said that he would not sign.

"Mr. Kelly," quizzed the mediator, "please tell me which of the things that you put on your list of demands have I not met to your satisfaction?"

"Well," said Kelly, "none of them. I'm surprised, but you've actually addressed all of them okay."

"Then why won't you agree to sign the contract?" said the mediator, genuinely puzzled.

"Because I just don't want him to get everything he wants," replied Kelly pointing to Yeates.

And so this negotiation turned from a potential win-win to a lose-lose. With no contract settlement, the whole company suffered due to the strike that ensued.

"Every human resource specialist knows it's not the lack of work skills that causes most problems on the job, it's the lack of relationship skills. The most important ingredient in the formula for success is knowing how to get along with people." (Glenn Heath)

So, those are the four ways of relating. Maybe you knew them all before; perhaps you understand them better now. Either way, to fully fathom the four

ways of relating, let's examine how changes can occur within a relationship – from good to bad or, conversely, from bad to good. These stories illustrate the possible changes.

From Win-Win To Win-Lose

A Bluff That Worked

After many months of negotiating, the price had been set for Darren to buy William's company upon William's retirement. And both men were now completely content with that price. Each believed the situation was entirely fair for him: William could afford to retire in style, and Darren would obtain a company he deeply desired. (Note: Both men are pleased with the results of their negotiations so the situation is a win-win at this point.)

The purpose of their next meeting – scheduled for later that very day – was to sign all the papers to finalize the purchase. That's when Darren got a phone call from William's secretary. She said that William had had serious chest pains earlier in the week, and was now recovering in hospital from an emergency heart bypass. While the surgery had been successful, William "wouldn't be himself" for awhile so he couldn't attend to-day's meeting. "Not to worry," the secretary said because William had signed the papers with his lawyer at the hospital before his surgery. The lawyer would be bringing the papers to today's meeting where Darren could sign to make their agreement legal.

While he listened on the phone an inspiration, an impulse, hit Darren. "I've been thinking I am paying too much for William's company," Darren said. "I want a million knocked off the price before I will sign. I'm not coming to the meeting today unless that lawyer calls me first to say the price has been adjusted downward by exactly one million." And he hung up the phone.

For a long time Darren had prided himself at his ability to bluff at poker. He was bluffing for higher stakes now. "It's worth a shot," Darren thought to himself. "William won't be in any shape to search for a new buyer for awhile. And I'll bet he's a lot more desperate to retire right now than he was last week. I'll wait until he's out of the hospital, and if I haven't heard anything, I can arrange to sign after that."

Mid afternoon Darren got a call from William's lawyer. He was at the hospital and William had just signed the necessary papers with the new lower price. Could the lawyer please bring them right over to Darren's office for his signature?

"Wow," laughed Darren to himself. "I'm even better than I thought. Who else could make a million within a few hours? What a winner I am."

From Lose-Win To Win-Win

Doing the Right Thing Paid Off

Chris, the new CEO of the company, had a major problem. His predecessor, shortly before being fired, had ordered an elaborate, expensive replacement of the company's outdated software programs. The problem Chris faced was that he was convinced that particular software was wrong for the company. It was a poor fit for the company's needs, Chris concluded. But there was a contract worth millions over the next few years.

Chris arranged a meeting with Josh, the owner of the firm chosen to supply the software. Chris explained his concerns, and then asked Josh what it would cost for his company to get out of their deal.

Josh started to sweat. His was a new company and it really needed that deal with Chris's company. Josh didn't just want the deal, he really needed it to ensure his company would survive its first year. This contract was that important to him. And Josh knew he had the legal right to enforce it. Chris knew that too.

But Josh wanted to do the right thing. He didn't want to force his software down anyone's throat. "I won't hold you to that contract," Josh finally said. He let Chris off the hook completely. **(Note: It seems to be a lose-win for Josh right now – not morally, but certainly financially.)**

Two months passed. By now Chris had had time to adjust to his leadership role, and had reappraised the entire software needs of his company. He now knew precisely what was needed, and it was much bigger and better than any previous order. Chris gave a green light to his purchasing manager – with one stipulation. "Make the buy from that same company we used before – the one that allowed us

to renege on our last order. The owner's name is Josh. He's one in a million. Give him my best regards."

From Win-Lose To Win-Win

Here is a story (as related by author Wayne Dyer) of a relationship between a teacher and one of her students that started as a win-lose, but ended differently.

She Learned How To Teach Children, Not Subjects

Her name was Mrs. Thompson and as she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers she looked at the students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible because there in the front row was a boy named Teddy Stoddart.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy, and that he constantly needed a bath. Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen making bold X's, and then putting a big F at the top of his papers. **(Note: Here we have a win-lose as the teacher happily "defeats" Teddy with her red X's.)**

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's past records, and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file she was in for a surprise. Teddy's first grade teacher had written, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly, has good manners, and is a joy to be around."

The second grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness, and life at home must be a struggle."

His third grade teacher wrote, "His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest. His home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class."

By now Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she felt ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents wrapped with beautiful ribbons and bright paper – except for Teddy. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy brown paper he got from a grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was half full of perfume. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist. Teddy Stoddart stayed after school that day – just long enough to say to Mrs. Thompson, "You smell just like my mom used to."

After the children left, she cried for at least an hour. On that very day she quit teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic and, instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie, became her "teacher's pet."

A year later she found a note under her door from Teddy telling her she was the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school 3rd in his class, and that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she got another letter saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school and gone on to graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was the best and favorite teacher he'd ever had in his whole life.

Four more years passed, and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter

explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he'd ever had, but now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed Thomas F. Stoddard M. D.

The story doesn't stop there. There was yet another letter that Spring. Teddy said he'd met a girl, his father had died, and he wondered if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit at his wedding in the place usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course Mrs. Thompson did, and guess what – she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing, and she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear. "Thank you so much for making me feel important, and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back, "Teddy you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. Before you, I didn't know how to teach. And then I met you."

"The happiness you feel is in direct proportion to the love you give." (Oprah)

From Lose-Win to Lose-Lose

Researchers conducted an experiment designed to test our sense of fairness. They chose subjects who did not know one another and divided them randomly into two equal groups. Those in one group were called the A's, and people in the other group were named the B's. Then all the subjects were paired off – one A with one B.

In each pair, Person A was given \$100 and told he could choose as much of that money to keep for himself as he wanted. The only condition was that after A chose the amount, B got to agree or disagree. If B agreed, person A got to keep the amount that he chose. If B objected, A lost it all, and the entire \$100 had to be returned to the experimenters.

The object was to see how much of the money A would need to share with B, so B would agree to let A keep his portion.

Whenever an A chose a 50/50 split of the money, B always agreed. That seemed eminently fair to the B's. In every 50/50 split, A and B each walked away with \$50 – an obvious win-win.

However, whenever an A chose to keep most of the money for himself, like \$90, or \$80, then the B's generally objected – even though it cost the B's the ten or twenty dollars they could have had. When a B's sense of fairness was violated, and he saw it as a lose-win for him, B was willing to make it fairer the only way he could – by objecting, and therefore denying A his money.

Yes, when B deemed it was a lose-win for him, he would turn it into a lose-lose. Both subjects ended up with nothing.

When an A chose \$70 for himself (so B would get \$30), some B's agreed, others objected. For the objectors, \$30 was not sufficient to overcome their sense of unfairness.

This experiment was done in the USA. To test whether it would apply in a culture where the people were poor, it was repeated in a third-world developing country where \$100 US was a lot of money for the local population. When A's chose to keep \$80 in that country, would people in group B still refuse \$20, which might be more than a month's wages?

Yes, most of the B's did object. Their drive for fairness prevailed. When they couldn't feel a sense of win-win, they opted for a lose-lose. They refused to settle for what they perceived as a lose-win, even though they would have been richer by \$20. They lost their share, but at least they didn't sacrifice their sense of fairness.

Our innate sense of fairness is a powerful motivator. It is the very foundation that supports the win-win principle. If it ever gets conditioned out of us, then our primary principle, our default way of thinking and acting becomes win-lose.

What's This Story, a Win-Lose or a Lose-Lose?

He Bought A Car For Twenty Dollars

Brady was scanning the newspaper looking for a used car for sale when he saw this ad: Nearly new Cadillac, fully equipped and in excellent condition. Only twenty dollars. Phone 416-322-1502.

Brady decided they had probably misprinted twenty thousand dollars, and continued to read his paper. But even as he looked at the other ads, his curiosity about the Cadillac played on his mind and he found himself reading the advertisement again. It hadn't changed: Nearly new Cadillac, fully equipped and in excellent condition. Only twenty dollars.

"Well, it may say that," thought Brady, "but it can't mean that. However, what harm can it do for me to phone and find out what the real price is."

So Brady dialed and a woman answered. "Yes," she said, she had a late model Cadillac for sale. "No," it had not been in an accident, it was in perfect condition. "Yes," the price was only twenty dollars, she said. "No," the car hadn't been stolen – it was a legitimate sale.

The woman on the phone sounded so sincere that Brady's curiosity was intensified. He didn't really want to drive ten miles to look at the car just to find out what the catch was – it would be such a waste of his time – but knowing his curiosity couldn't be satisfied otherwise he soon found himself making the trip.

The whole way Brady was trying to decide whether to laugh or get angry when he finally found out what was really wrong with the car. But when Brady arrived at the woman's house, he was flabbergasted. There in her driveway was the Cadillac just as it had been described: Nearly new, fully equipped, and in excellent condition. Brady confirmed the price was still twenty dollars as the lady handed him the keys, and told Brady he could test drive it.

Brady checked under the hood. He kicked the tires. He drove it around five blocks, then on the highway. Perfect. He stopped to examine the ownership,

checked the serial number, and phoned the Ministry of Transportation to ensure it wasn't stolen.

By this time Brady was beside himself. He couldn't fathom what he had overlooked. It just wasn't possible somebody would sell a very valuable car for only twenty dollars. Well, thought Brady, there's only one way I'm going to find out as he arrived back at the woman's house.

Feeling somewhat foolish, Brady took twenty dollars from his wallet and handed it to the woman.

"Thank you," she said, "you've just bought yourself a car."

"Wait a minute," pleaded Brady. "Please, please tell me why you are willing to sell such a valuable car for only twenty dollars. I just have to know."

"It's simple," said the woman. "My husband, the skunk, ran off with his secretary last month so I'm divorcing him. The judge ordered me to sell this car and give him half. I can hardly wait to see his face when I hand him ten bucks."

Do you think this story illustrates a lose-lose? Or do you think it could be a win-lose because the wife won what she wanted, namely revenge? Because she was able to hurt her husband financially, she derived a sense of satisfaction. She "got him good," and that put a smile on her face. She cost him a lot of money, and the fact that she lost an equal amount wasn't as important as her revenge, so it was really a win-lose, right?

Wrong. The story may appear amusing, but It's strictly an example of a lose-lose. That's because character counts and, since the wife's motive is pure revenge, she is, by her action, hurting herself not only financially, but harming her character also. Yes, this was strictly a lose-lose. If the wife really thinks she "won" by costing her husband half the true price of the car, she is sadly deluded.

We all need to remember that our feelings must not be used as weapons. Joy must mean more to us than vengeance. Otherwise we forsake not only the win-win principle, but our own happiness. Why? Because our happiness depends on us having win-win relationships: First, with ourselves, then with others.

If you doubt the importance of having a win-win relationship with yourself, consider this: During the Vietnam war, 58,000 American soldiers were killed. As a result of the same war, 102,000 American servicemen committed suicide, either during or following that war (recorded as of 1998), mainly due to post-traumatic stress disorder. That disorder destroyed their ability to have a satisfying relationship with themselves to the point they preferred death. (statistics from Fifth Estate TV, Oct. 2009 interviewing General Romeo Dallaire, retired, now Senator, who himself attempted suicide four times because of wartime post-traumatic stress disorder)

“We must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.” (Martin Luther King Jr.)

What’s This: A Lose-Win, or A Win-Win?

You donate \$200 to a charity. Would that be a lose-win for you, or a win-win?

Either of those could be right – depending. If you choose win-win, you are saying you are winning because your donation is good for you as well as the charity. It allows you to feel benevolent, generous, helpful, and loving – all positive emotions, and those emotions (or even just the knowing that you are fulfilling a sense of duty to share with others) will attest that it’s a win-win.

But could it be a lose-win, for it's obvious you are losing your \$200? Suppose you don't really give that money willingly, freely? What if you give it begrudgingly, resentfully? Or give it just so you can appear benevolent to someone else, but you're really faking? What if your self-sacrifice is just selfishness disguised as generosity because you have a hidden agenda?

If you are not being genuine or authentic when you donate the \$200, it becomes a lose-win. You lose \$200, the charity wins \$200.

A question: So what determines the difference between a win-win, and a lose-win when you donate something, or help someone? Answer: Your real intention.

“The shortest and surest way to live with honor in the world is to be in reality what we appear to be.” (Socrates)

A Shocking Experiment

Consider this experiment that was designed by Dr. Stanley Milgram, a psychologist, a distinguished professor at Yale University. Pretend for a moment that you are a student there, and asked if you will assist in this experiment for a scientific study. You'll be well paid for your time. You agree, and are told when and where to report for the experiment.

As you enter the room you see a tall partition with wires coming from it. There's a control panel with a series of switches. The experimenter goes behind a desk and tells you to sit at the control panel where you are to play the part of the "teacher." You are told that a Mr. Brooks, behind the partition where you can't see him, is the "learner" for the experiment.

"Thank you very much for offering to assist me," the experimenter says to you. "I am conducting research to see how negative reinforcement in the form of physical punishment will affect learning. You will read some word-pairs to the learner who can hear you, but will never see you. He will learn and memorize the word-pairs. Then you will read the learner just one word from each pair, and if he forgets the correct matching word, you pull that first switch on your control panel. That will give him a very mild electric shock – just 15 volts.

"After that, continue reading single words, and if the learner should make a second mistake by responding with an incorrect word, you pull the second switch. That shock will be somewhat stronger. Keep on reading words, and if there is a third mistake, pull the third switch for a stronger shock and, if there is a fourth mistake, use the fourth switch for more volts. Just keep on pulling the next switch every time a mistake is made. We'll see how increasing the punishment affects his recall ability, for that is the purpose of this experiment. I will observe and record the results."

And so you start. You read Brooks all the word-pairs from a sheet in front of you, and then you begin again, reading just one word. Brooks keeps answering with the correct matching word until suddenly he makes a mistake. You dutifully pull the first switch and shock him with 15 volts. "That tickles," Brooks says.

You ask more words, Brooks soon makes a second error, and you pull the second switch. "Hey," says Brooks, "that one didn't tickle."

"Continue," commands the experimenter.

You ask more questions; Brooks makes more mistakes; you give more shocks, and Brooks complains of his increasing discomfort and asks you to stop. But you are ordered to continue. When you pull the switch marked 150 volts, Brooks yells, "That one really hurt. Please don't give me any more shocks. They might aggravate my heart condition."

The experimenter looks intently at you from behind his desk. "Continue with the experiment," he commands. What would you do? And what do you predict most others in this situation would do?

Well, let's take a look at what 39 psychiatrists predicted you, and other "teachers" like you, would do now. The psychiatrists predicted most would refuse to go on giving shocks to Brooks, regardless of being instructed to do so by the experimenter. They thought about only 4 percent would go on to give 300 volts, and that only a pathological fringe – about one in a thousand – would ever be willing to pull the last switch for the highest shock, 450 volts. It was labeled, "Danger, Extreme Shock." Those were their predictions.

What actually happened when Professor Milgram first performed this experiment at Yale University in 1963 was most of the "teachers" followed the commands, and kept pulling the switches to give shocks. Even when Brooks, the "learner" cried, and screamed, and pleaded with them to stop, 63 percent went on to pull the switch for the maximum 450 volts, the one labeled "Danger, Extreme Shock." Not that the "teachers" enjoyed hurting Brooks. Indeed they squirmed and sweated from stress when Brooks screamed. But when an authority figure like the professor told them to do it, the majority did so. They believed Brooks' suffering wasn't their responsibility.

"To see what is right and not do it, is want of courage." (Confucius)

Brooks was not really getting shocked at all – he was acting, faking the whole thing. The real purpose of the experiment was to investigate how people will react when perceived authority figures exert pressure on them to perform an action, one that would violate normal morality, one which they would never do on their own.

This experiment was repeated at universities throughout the world with similar results. (In Munich, 85 percent gave the highest shock, 450 volts.) The experiment shows how easily we allow ourselves to be controlled by persons in authority. The lesson for us is important: Do what you know to be right, regardless of who is telling you to act differently. But to do that, you need to be inner directed toward the principle of win-win.

Questions and Answers on This Experiment

Question: After you gave what you thought was the first shock, the one that supposedly tickled the learner, which of the four relationship styles existed between you and the experimenter?

Answer: It was win-win. You were winning because you were being paid to do a job that you wanted enough to volunteer for. The experimenter was winning because you were doing exactly what he wanted, obeying his commands.

Question: Just before the last shock you administered, which of the relationship styles existed between you and the professor?

Answer: If you belong to the majority (like the 63% at Yale), it was a lose-win. Assuming you are not a sadist and enjoy hurting people, you were suffering emotional pain as you violated your moral principles by giving another shock, allowing the professor to win. (The professor wasn't actually "winning," of course because he knew Mr. Brooks wasn't really being shocked, but you believed you were allowing the professor to win.)

That lose-win became a win-lose if, like the minority 37% at Yale, you refused to continue "shocking" the learner. Because you asserted your good character – and that would have taken courage – you won. By daring to walk out of the

experiment, you made the professor the “loser.” He lost all his authority over you. (In the original experiment, I’ll bet that the professor admired those who refused his commands to “hurt” Brooks more and more with increasingly severe “shocks.”)

Question: While that experiment could not be performed at any college or university to-day (because their ethics committees would not allow it), if it were performed to-day, do you think the results would be any different? Do you think to-day’s students would be more or less likely to succumb to pressure by a 21st century Professor Milgram who ordered them to shock someone?

In 2008, I asked that question to business audiences in 16 cities across the country as I presented a seminar on emotional fitness to them. When I asked for a show of hands, my seminar participants were divided. While many thought to-day’s youth would be more likely to refuse the experimenter’s demands, others were equally convinced just as many modern students would succumb to the pressure, and agree to administer shocks like the majority of students in 1963. The participants in my emotional fitness seminars did not reach a clear consensus.

(Incidentally, I happen to believe emotional fitness is even more important than physical fitness, because you can be physically sick and still be happy, but happiness must always elude the emotionally unhealthy. However, a win-win relationship with yourself and others is a guarantee of emotional fitness.)

“Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.” (Seneca)

“Just trust yourself, then you will know how to live.” (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

“Before all else, each of us must take a fundamental risk – to be true to ourselves.” (Jim Webb)

Exam Time – Your Personal Test

You now know a lot about the four ways of relating to others, and why win-win is the best. Maybe you knew all this before, maybe your understanding is clearer now. Either way, it's time for you to rate yourself.

On the continuum below, rate your style of relating to others, the real you that you bring to personal relationships.

The middle of the continuum means you choose win-win solutions in your life whenever you possibly can.

Many people (especially men who, in general, value competition more than women) will be to the right of centre on the win-lose side – it's only a matter of degree. That's because many have learned to jump at win-lose naturally, automatically, even when a win-win is a possibility.

More women than men will be to the left of centre, on the lose-win side, subjugating their own good, to one degree or another, to the benefit of someone else. (That's because women in general are less competitive, more nurturing than men.)

The ideal, of course, is to be centered, with a rating as close to 0 as possible.

This self-test demands that you think about yourself and your relationships which may be hard, for if you reach conclusions that you don't like, that's painful. It's much easier just to avoid thinking. But know this: Of all the thoughts you have in life, none are more important than the thoughts you have about yourself.

In deciding where to place yourself on the continuum, realize it's possible to be on one side of centre within one relationship, and on the other side in a different relationship. Just choose your overall, predominate way of relating to others.

Lose-Win

Win-Win

Win-Lose



10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Scoring – The middle is ideal. To the right or left indicates a problem.

0 = no problem; 1 or 2 = small problem; 4 or 5 = moderate problem
7 or 8 = it's serious; 10 = very severe problem; 3, 6, 9 = between categories

Suppose you gave yourself a rating of 4 (either to the left or right of centre) to indicate a moderate problem with your interpersonal relationships. Here are two questions to ask yourself:

Question 1 – What would it take for me to move closer to the ideal centre? How would I need to change to achieve a better rating?

Question 2 – O.K. so I'm a 4. But why didn't I rate myself an 8 (with a serious problem). With a 4, I've only got a moderate problem, so I must be doing something good, or I'd have a more serious problem. What is it I'm doing right?

That's an important question because if you can identify those things you are doing right now, you can focus on repeating those strengths more frequently in the future.

So ask yourself those two questions. Nobody will know your answers except you.

However, if you judging yourself on a specific relationship, and if you are willing to accept a huge challenge, consider asking the other party to rate the quality of your relationship with them. (It may be hard to ask, because you'll fear what they might tell you. That's normal.) Here are two real life examples:

Man to boss: I've read my performance review. On a scale of 1 to 10, I think my performance rates a 7 which is reasonably good. Do you agree?

Boss: Yes, that's about right.

Man: So, boss, what would it take on my part to make it a 9 or 10?

Mother to teenager: I've been thinking about our relationship lately and I'm not entirely sure where it stands. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low, and 10 high, where would you rate our relationship?

Teen: I think it's a 5.

Mom: Okay, but tell me this. What is it you think I'm doing right that makes it a 5 instead of a 1? I'd like to do more of that – whatever it is. So tell me, how can I love and support you better so our relationship can grow beyond a 5?

A Child Learns About Win-Win

Here is how two clever parents taught their ten year-old son, Bryce, about the win-win principle.

“Hey Bryce,” his dad said, “here is how you can make some money. You and mom have an arm wrestle. I'll pay each of you a dollar for every time one of you puts the other's arm down within 30 seconds. The goal will be to win as much money as you can.”

“Great!” said Bryce, “come on mom.”

Dad shouted “Go,” and they started. Bryce applied his full force. Mom resisted, but not too hard. Bryce took her arm down after a short struggle.

“One dollar for Bryce,” yelled dad. “Do it again. Win as much money as you can.” Again Mom lost after a few seconds of token resistance. “Two dollars for Bryce so far,” shouted Dad encouragingly. “Just 16 seconds left. Win the most money possible.”

Bryce was pumped, and his adrenaline flowed. Thinking win-lose all the way, Bryce forced his mom's arm down three more time before the time was up.

Dad handed five dollars to Bryce, and then asked, “If your mom and I have an arm wrestle now, would you be willing to pay a quarter each time one of us wins in 30 seconds?”

“Okay,” Bryce agreed, exceedingly pleased with his own victory over mom.

When Bryce said “Go,” both mom and dad alternated letting their arms go completely limp – no resistance at all – and took turns putting the other’s arm down. In less than one second dad had “defeated” mom and won a quarter. In less than two seconds, Dad had relaxed his arm, and let mom put his arm down. Back and forth flew their arms for 30 seconds.”

“You see,” said dad to Bryce, “your mom and I decided to cooperate, not compete with each other. We call it win-win. Remember Bryce, the objective wasn’t to defeat the other in arm wrestling. It was to win as much money as possible.

“Bryce,” continued dad, “I counted a total of 40 wins between your mom and me so, at 25 cents each, mom and I have won \$10. Bryce, you won your five dollars by trying as hard as you could. Maybe your arm is sore right now. By agreeing on win-win, your mom and I have each won five dollars, and our arms aren’t even tired.

“So, Bryce, how be you pay your debt to mom with the five dollars you won a minute ago. Of course, you’ll still owe me my five dollars. Do you want me to take it out of your allowance, or would you rather earn it back by helping me wash the car to-day?”

Win-Win is a Spiritual Principle in Every Religion

We’ve been talking about interpersonal relationships – getting along with other people, getting along so that we don’t hurt them, and they don’t hurt us. Getting along so that after we have finished with an interaction, a negotiation, whatever it is, we are both better for it. And that means win-win.

Every major religion in the world espouses win-win as a sacred principle. In Christianity, it’s been called the Golden Rule and expressed as: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. A religious scholar, Paul McKenna, researched other major religions and found they express the same principle using different words:

Islam: Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourselves.

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what cause pain if done to you.

Buddhism: Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

Sikhism: I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.

Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary.

Confucianism: One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct...loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.

Win-win encapsulates the meaning of all those religious expressions.

But win-win is not always easy, of course. And when, after trying hard, it is apparent that no win-win solution is possible, the best thing to do is agree that there is no good solution just then to whatever it is you are trying to resolve or negotiate. Agree on no deal right then. Wait until something changes, something to make it worthwhile to try again for a win-win. But don't resort to win-lose, or lose-win, or lose-lose in the interim.

A Question: If you have a good win-win relationship with yourself, and with all the important people in your life, does that mean you will always be happy? Yes, or no.

The answer is yes. At your core, you will always be happy. And a person who is happy is a gift to this world. That doesn't mean that there won't be times in your life when you will feel sad, perhaps profoundly sad. But happiness and sadness are not mutually exclusive. The sadness doesn't take away the happiness. Not when you are a win-win person.

A Final Question – **What Fuels Win-Win?**

What emotion fuels the desire to seek win-win relationships, instead of the far more common win-lose? What motivates someone to want the other person in their relationship to win? What's the driving force?

Answer: The emotion of **love**.

In relationships, love gets lost sometimes, and has to be rediscovered. If that should ever happen to you, it will require you to think about yourself – to think hard and honestly. And that can be difficult because if, in thinking, you discover things you don't like about yourself, it can be painful. But remember: Of all the thoughts you have in life, none matter more than the thoughts you have about yourself. That's why self-examination is so important. As in this story:

Two strangers sat on a plane side by side, one man, one woman. After some small talk, the woman asked the man what he did for a living. The man responded that he was a relationship coach. "Well," said the woman, "my husband and I have a lousy relationship. That's because he never listens to me." And for the next hour she droned on and on about all the troubles in her marriage because "my husband never listens to me." Her voice was tense and angry.

Finally she stopped talking and asked the man, "Can you suggest anything?"

"I could," replied her seatmate, "but you won't like what I suggest." That surprised the woman.

"Well go ahead anyway," she said.

"I think," said the man, "that your husband is not the problem in your relationship. I think you are."

The woman was startled. And very resentful. She turned to the window and stared out of it for the next hour.

As the plane landed, the lady spoke once more to the man. "So why do you think I'm the problem?"

“Well, let me ask you this,” replied the man. “Do you get angry at your husband before you talk to him, or afterwards?”

“I get angry at him before” she said, “because I know what I say will just go in one of his ears and out the other. He hasn’t listened to me in years. I’m mad at him right now just thinking about that”

“Has it ever occurred to you,” said the man “that the reason your husband doesn’t listen to you is because of your anger? Maybe if you changed your approach, and talked to him in a respectful way – even a loving way – he would listen.” The man got up, retrieved his bag from the overhead bin, and left the plane.

Five weeks later he received a phone call from the lady. “I just wanted to thank you for what you told me on the airplane,” she said. “I certainly didn’t like it at the time, but I really thought about it later. I really went inside myself and asked if it could be true. And then I thought about my husband and all the really good qualities he has that I’ve ignored for years. Somehow, I was able to let go of my anger towards him. And now, when we talk, he’s so different. Our relationship has never been better. He has changed completely.”

“No,” came the response, “you’ve changed completely. Congratulations!”

“I’ll see a better thee, when I become a better me.” (Donald Cumberland)

Since love is the driving force behind win-win relationships – it’s very fuel – here are some love quotes you may find empowering. If you want more quotes (for free of course), just e-mail me and ask. E-mail: winwinrelationships@gmail.com

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Love Quotes

“We are not held back by the love we didn’t receive in the past but by the love we are not extending in the present.” (Marianne Williamson)

“One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: Love.” (Sophocles - 400 B.C.)

“The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather in spite of ourselves.” (Victor Hugo)

“There is a single magic, a single power, a single salvation, a single happiness, and that is called loving.” (Herman Hesse)

“We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence, and its only end.”
(Benjamin Disraeli)

So long as we love, we serve. (Robert Louis Stevenson)

Love is what’s in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen. (Bobby, age 7)

The more anger towards the past you carry in your heart, the less capable you are of loving the present. (Barbara De Angelis)

Love is not blind – it sees more, not less. But because it sees more, it is willing to see less. (Rabbi J. Gordon)

A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world. Everyone you meet is your mirror. (Ken Keyes Jr.)

Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it. (Martin Luther King Jr.)

If you want to learn to love better, start with a friend you hate. (Nikka, age 6)

Love, baby, love – that’s the secret. If lots more of us loved each other, we’d solve lots more problems. (Louis Armstrong)

“Love all, trust some. Do wrong to none.” (William Shakespeare)

“Love is the essence of the universe. It is the glue that holds everything together. God is love is a tautology because the sentence has exactly the same meaning when read forward or backward.” (Marianne Williamson)

“Love the whole world as a mother loves her only child. Hatred is never overcome by hatred. Hatred is overcome by love.” (Buddah)

“Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius.” (Mozart)

“Those who love deeply never grow old. They may die of old age but they die young.” (Benjamin Franklin)

“Those who are hardest to love are usually those who need it the most. (From the Way of the Warrior)

“When we open our heart to love, we open our heart to God. When we experience unconditional love, we experience God.” (Chuch Gallozzi)

“Love is of all passions the strongest, for it attacks simultaneously the head, the heart, and the senses.” (Leo Tzu)

“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.” (Mother Teresa)

“Love is when the other person’s happiness is as important as your own.” (Donald Fraser)

“To fear love is to fear live, and those who fear life are already three parts dead.” (Bertrand Russell)

“The eyes of fear want you to put bigger locks on your door, buy guns, close yourself off. The eyes of love, instead, see all of us as one.” (Bill Hicks)

Love is your best bet for happiness. If you’re not happy, you’ll know that you’re not being loving. That’s because love is the material that happiness is made from. Love is so strong because it is free from fear and judgment. And if you dedicate your life to love, you will be happy. (Robert Holden, paraphrased)

Note: The Win-Win Club is a free membership club for those who want win-win relationships, at home, or work, or school. The Club gratefully accepts sponsorship support from individuals and corporations that espouse and practice the principle of win-win. Details for membership are at: www.TheWin-WinClub.com.