

Article 3. Relationships: The Dances of Life

author: Michael Greenstein, wholistic educator, www.michaelg.ca | michael@michaelg.ca

I believe the greatest factor in determining how well our life unfolds is the quality of our relationships. Every aspect of our life is influenced by them. We form relationships with our body, our family and friends, our society, the material objects we work with, the food we eat, etc. Wholism is based on the creation of a number of balanced and harmonious relationships.

When we think of relationships we often associate the term with human interactions, i.e. people relating with other people. Yet this is only one aspect of a universal process. To understand relationships from a wholistic perspective, we need to look at the Big Picture.

Energy and Relationships: A Universal Perspective

The Universal Laws tells us that:

- Life is movement or vibration. All things that vibrate are "alive", even if we can't see their vibrations with our physical eyes. Rocks are alive, chairs are alive, etc.
- All movement or vibration involves energy, the animating force of life.
- Energy is constantly moving through the universe to where it is needed. It moves by being transferred from one vibrating thing to another. Relationships are the transfer mechanisms.
- All living things are dependent on relationships to sustain their lives.
- Living things can either act as energy donors or energy recipients during a relationship, depending on their relative energetic state at that moment.
- The energetic state of all living things is constantly changing as a result of our ongoing involvement in the two great processes of life: unity and separation. Therefore no relationship remains the same forever.

The universe is a living system of interconnected and constantly changing relationships. No living thing acts or exists on its own. There is no "them" and "us". We are all here together relating with each other for our mutual benefit.

The vital role of relationships is at the core of wholistic values and practices. Wholism encourages the creation of balanced and harmonious relationships, both within our own being and with all living things around us.

Relationships in Daily Life

Whenever we are in the presence of any living (vibrating) thing, a relationship is formed i.e. a temporary connection is made and energy is exchanged. It doesn't matter whether that form of life is a computer, a bowl of food, a rose, an animal, a human being, etc., energy will be transferred.

The result of these energy transfers is that something within us changes. Wholism encourages us to practice self awareness in order to notice energy-related changes as they occur and learn to understand their nature and purpose. Misinterpreting our reactions to a variety of energies can be a great source of conflict and confusion. Some examples.

Feeling "drained" after interacting with people who are very demanding or needy is about energy loss, not some form of character weakness on our part. Experiencing sadness or anger in the presence of those who are manifesting these emotions is often a reflection of their state of being, not ours. Feeling sleepy after spending many hours among plants and trees is about the effects of absorbing plant energy, not a sign of our laziness and lack of determination. Feeling "powerful" when holding a gun or knife in our hand has to do with the energy vibrating from the object we are holding, not a reflection of our degree of true strength. As part of our human training on Earth, it is our responsibility to try to be aware of the source and nature of the energies we are receiving and emitting and choose our actions in a way that reflects our human identity.

Eventually if we are diligent in the process of self observation and awareness, we may begin to understand the energy transfer patterns that occur in our interactions with others. That point marks the beginning of our ability to really make choices. We can begin to consciously choose which situations and kinds of energies we want to interact with. When we are energetically high, we can choose to be of service to others through acts of compassion, etc. When energetically depleted, we can seek out relationships that we know will nourish us. In this way we are able to maintain energetic balance and harmony.

Through thousands of years of human experience it has been observed that there are certain relationships that are vital in order to live in balance and harmony. Here's a description of four fundamental human relationships.

1. Our Relationship with Our Creator

Purposes; To receive guidance and purification during our time on Earth, to identify, develop, and maintain our human identity, to develop a sense of direction and purpose in our life, to develop our conscience, to create standards of behaviour, to awaken our feelings of love and compassion, to promote spiritual / material balance, etc.

How it develops; Through submission of will, openness to receiving guidance and purification, sincerity in acting on our received guidance, acting with compassion, kindness, and respect toward all living things, etc.

Obstacles; Conscious or unconscious choice not to be open to the process, exclusive attention placed on our material existence, inappropriate or overuse of our rational thinking and personal will, being caught up in the demands and expectations of a materialistic society, etc.

2. Our Relationships with Our Own Being

i.e. our physical body, senses, instincts, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, etc.

Purposes; To identify and understand the roles of the different parts of our being, to learn how to supervise and make best use of these different personal resources during our time on Earth, to feel connected and whole, to experience a full and active life, to self correct, to support our own healing, to identify the energies that affect our being, to be aware of our own various needs and desires, to make accurate assessments, to learn about forming healthy relationships, etc.

How they develop; Through self observation and self awareness, spiritual connection, academic study (biology, psychology, etc.), feedback from others, counselling and therapy, regular periods of mental and physical quiet, etc.

Obstacles; Lack of self observation and awareness, exaggerated focus on the lives of others, self neglect, trauma that leads to internal numbing, lack of spiritual connection, etc.

3. Our Intimate Human Relationships

i.e. with parents, siblings, life partner, children, and friends

Purposes; To develop our human qualities of compassion, self awareness, co-operation, etc. through the joys and strife of relating closely with others, to learn vital communication and social skills, to receive feedback about our state of being and actions, to create feelings of self worth, to develop confidence in our ability to function in the world, to create an awareness of separate and mutual needs, etc.

How they develop; Through regular communication and interaction with our extended family, establishing a life partnership, nurturing children, making a commitment of personal resources to create and maintain intimate friendships, practicing trust, openness, non-judgment, developing good listening skills, etc.

Obstacles; Lack of suitable role models, fear of abuse, criticism, and rejection, lack of social skills, past relationship trauma, low self esteem, lack of spiritual connection, etc.

4. Our Social Relationships

i.e. with our fellow humans and the plants and animals of our natural environment

Purposes; To learn to display compassion for all living things, to give and receive energetic assistance, to receive feedback about our state of being and the nature and quality of our actions, to develop and improve our community and natural environment through the use of our skills and talents, to satisfy our material needs while helping others satisfy theirs, to learn how to work with a wide variety of energies, to increase our sensitivity to the needs of others, to acquire new skills, to develop wisdom, etc.

How they develop; Through active involvement in an enterprise, religious activities, community activities, charitable and social welfare service, political activities, etc.

Obstacles; Lack of suitable role models, fear of failure, discomfort with group energies, lack of social skills, past trauma, lack of spiritual connection, etc.

It is these four fundamental relationships; with our Creator, with our own being, with our family and intimates, and with the members of our human and natural community, that determine the quality of our life. May we all learn to recognize their importance and get them right!

[Michael Greenstein is a wholistic educator, Circles facilitator, and Visionkeeper. He presently lives in Vancouver, B.C. where he works with individuals and groups. You can contact Michael at www.michaelg.ca]