

# Strengthen Your Relationships

## What to Know

Building and maintaining meaningful relationships is an essential part of life. Strong connections provide you with support, happiness, and a sense of belonging. While the idea of forming new relationships can be intimidating, you can begin by focusing on something less scary: strengthening the relationships you already have. You can learn to nurture and enhance the connections with the people in your life. By working on your existing relationships, you can build a strong foundation for creating new ones in the future.

## What to Do

What relationships do you have that could be strengthened? Write down anyone that is kind to you. Try not to fear rejection, or assume they are not interested in being friends with you.

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Review the list and start to set small goals to increase contact with them. Make sure they are (1) realistic, (2) within your control, and (3) include specific actions. For example, you might send a text to a cousin you haven't heard from in a while, or message a friend to get together. What would you like to do?

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Over the next few weeks, reach out to a few of the people on the list. You might send a text, make a phone call, or start a conversation. Write down the people you will reach out to, what you will do to strengthen each relationship, and the day you will do it.

Person	What I Will Do	When I Will Do It

You can start with small steps and work your way up to bigger steps. If you get stuck, consider this example.

### **Miguel's Relationship Goals**

#### Week 1:

- Catch up with Marcus through a video call and make plans to visit each other.
- Call Cara (who is an extrovert!!) for advice about making new friends.

#### Week 2:

- Bake some cookies for my cousins.
- Ask a friend over for dinner.

#### Week 3:

- Accept my classmates' invitation to play basketball at the park the next time they ask.

Week 4:

- Start a conversation with Jessica about a new art exhibit at the museum. If she seems interested, invite her to come with me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Relationship Goals

Week 1:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

Did you get stuck while trying to do the previous exercise? What happened?

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If you're not sure where to start, you can select an action from the list below.

- Text a friend or relative and tell them about something good that happened in your life.
- Ask an acquaintance you'd like to get to know better if they want to meet up.
- Invite someone to watch a movie with you.
- Follow or send a friend request to an acquaintance on social media.
- Compliment a classmate about something they did.
- Strike up a conversation with your neighbor the next time you see them.
- Reconnect with a friend you lost touch with.
- Call a relative and make plans to visit each other.
- Invite a family member to play a game with you (either online or in person).
- Ask a friend who watches the same television show as you if they want to watch it together and talk about it afterward.
- Pick a relative, friend, or acquaintance who has a social life like the one you want and ask them if they could give you some advice.

Here are some tips:

1. Replace negative thoughts about yourself and worries about what others think of you.
2. Plan what you want to say and then practice saying it until you feel comfortable. Practice role-playing the situation with a friend, trusted adult, or on your own to feel less anxious.
3. Offer yourself compassion and encouragement. It's okay to feel nervous.

What if the person says no? How will you react?

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It's natural to want to avoid rejection. If this happens, know that everyone experiences rejection sometimes. It doesn't mean there is something wrong with you, or that you did anything wrong. The person could be going through a hard time, you two may not be a good fit, or maybe the timing isn't right.

If you try to strengthen your social connections, your mental health will likely improve. You need people for support and friendship, and you deserve strong, nurturing relationships!

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

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What was surprising about this exercise? Be specific.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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