



The Relationship Bank

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The Relationship Bank

Think of a relationship as a bank account. Every interaction with a child or spouse is either a deposit or a withdrawal.

DEPOSITS = positive, caring, kind words and actions that make the person feel cared for and respected.

WITHDRAWALS = negative, cutting words and actions that hurt and make a person feel unloved and disrespected.

The key to a healthy account is to make many more deposits than withdrawals. Too many withdrawals will overdraft your account. It takes restraint to avoid overdrafts and continual effort to keep a healthy account balance.

Keeping Money in the Bank

Watch your account balance. Remember, children and youth recognize that adults are more powerful and can hurt them. What you think is a small withdrawal may be a big one to them.

Also, remember the same is true for your spouse. Withdrawals with them may be bigger than you realize.

If you make a withdrawal with a negative interaction, balance it out with a lot more positive interactions. By doing this, the balance in the relationship bank stays positive.

When Withdrawals Occur

You do not have to respond to negative behavior with more negative behavior.

You can contribute to the relationship whether or not the other person is behaving appropriately. Of course, in the long run one person cannot make a relationship, so this kind of imbalance can't continue for long, but it can carry the account until the next deposit. Disagreements and problems are inevitable in relationships, but if you take advantage of opportunities to make deposits, large and small, your accounts will stay healthy even when you have serious conflicts.

Benefits of Positive Relationships

The relationships you develop with your children will have lasting effects on them throughout their lives. Your children are likely to nurture their important relationships much like you have.

When relationships are strong your children will come to you with their problems and listen to your advice.

Time together as a family will be fun and long remembered.