



# Freedom Through Partnering

By: Philip Legge RNC, CH, CDMT

A year ago we wrote a series of articles in the Rural Route Magazine talking about how mental and emotional health is directly related to the quality of relationships that we have with our family, friends and loved ones. Mental and emotional health is an important concern nowadays, so we wanted to revisit that subject, and look at ways to build better relationships and partner with the important people in our lives.

Building good *personal* relationships with family members and loved ones is based on many of the same principles as building good partnerships in business, or in other areas of our lives. Whenever a group of people come together to work towards a common goal, we can call that a ‘partnership’ or a ‘team’. If the partnership is going to be successful there has to be a line of authority to provide direction, to assign responsibility, to provide incentives, and also to give correction when people step out of line or disobey.

Entering into a partnership or team with other people is a good learning experience to see how easy, or how difficult it is for us to come under someone else’s authority. By nature as human beings, it is often easier for us to resist authority, and want to do ‘our own thing’, rather than cooperate with the leadership of the team. Some people think that to be their own ‘boss’, and go against and resist authority will *liberate* them and set them *free*. Nothing could be further from the truth. The habit of disobedience and rebellion can become a serious bondage. In the early stages of ‘wanting our own way’ we can have the feeling that as long as we keep fighting rules and laws and authority, we will eventually find freedom and happiness. But we don’t find freedom, and we never achieve what we are looking for. What we do experience is more and more broken relationships which brings the negative consequences of guilt, bitterness, and

loneliness.

Our natural tendency, or default setting, is if someone wants us to go right, we might decide to go left. If someone wants us to go forwards, we might rather go backwards. If someone wants us to go up, we want to go down. This problem can become so severe that even when we get good advice that is for our benefit, we can ignore it and go in the opposite direction, even if it is to our *disadvantage*. We can do all of this just to prove that we don’t need anyone, and that we will not come under anyone else’s authority or control, no matter what.

Teams and partnerships are always based on a ‘line of authority’ which allows people to work together towards a common goal. Imagine a business environment in a factory or office with no line of authority. All the employees would do *what* they wanted, and *when* they wanted to do it, or even do nothing at all! There would be confusion, conflicts, disorganization and very little would get accomplished. The business would go bankrupt, and everybody would lose their jobs and their income.

The same applies to sports teams. If the players were equal in authority with the coaches, managers and owners, there wouldn’t be agreement on anything. There would be disagreements on when they would practice, and who would play what position, and what they would be paid, etc. Another example is the military. The Private doesn’t tell the Sergeant what to do. And the Sergeant doesn’t give orders to the Captain. And the Captain doesn’t boss the General around. This line of authority, or chain of command, is essential because if all ranks were equal there would be chaos, and the military would fall apart.

The rebellious person thinks that if only they could be a ‘boss’ they would be happy, because then people would have to follow *their* orders. However, they would be miserable. Do you know why? Because most people would

not follow their orders or directions. Why’s that? Because they are setting an example of disobedience and rebellion towards their *own* boss. They haven’t learnt how to take orders. They haven’t learnt how to be obedient. You see every boss, *has* a boss. There is always someone above us that we are responsible to. There is a true saying, “We can’t expect people to follow our orders, if we haven’t first learnt how to take orders.” If we are setting a bad example by being disobedient and rebellious to the authority figures in our life, then all of the people we are trying to lead or direct will tend to follow our bad example.

The reality of human life is that people can only grow and be successful when they work in partnership with other people! This is what it means to be a ‘team player’. People need people. The fellowship of working together as a team gives us fulfillment and happiness, and we will accomplish far more than being alone. We can see from all of this that there are major benefits of learning to be a team player and entering into partnership with other people. We can contribute to the team, and the team can contribute to us, and everyone benefits! An acronym for team is:

**T** – Together

**E** – Everyone

**A** – Achieves

**M** – More

At different times in our lives, most of us have experienced the benefits of partnering with other people. It can give us an intense feeling of satisfaction and belonging when everybody does their part on the team, and as a result a high level of success is achieved for everyone. One of the great benefits of learning to partner with people, and accepting our position in the line of authority, is the respect and recognition we receive from others, which often results in our promotion up the line of

authority. People who can't take orders, and who are disobedient will soon find themselves pushed off the team. As long as they are fighting authority and the leadership of the team, they will not be welcome into other teams or partnerships either. Even gangs and criminal organizations have a strict chain of command with severe discipline and punishment for members who are disobedient. In every situation in life, as long as a person is addicted to disobedience and resisting authority they will become increasingly isolated and alone, and their life will be on a downward spiral.

A word of caution – Don't just join *any* team, or partner with *any* group of people. Some teams and partnerships can be a negative influence in our life. A good place to start in learning obedience and submission is in our own families. The family is a unique partnership that should be based on unselfish love. Therefore, we should learn to obey and submit to the people who love us and care about us. Everyday we can be setting this good example in our relationships with

our parents, spouse, siblings, and our children. These are the most important and permanent relationships in our life. There are many influences in society which can be damaging to the family, and so we should protect and nurture the precious relationships in the family.

What can we conclude from all of this? If we are looking for freedom and happiness by practicing disobedience and rebellion, we won't find it! What we do find is failure, heartache and broken relationships. However, if we learn to practice obedience and cooperation with others, we will grow and mature, and succeed to a higher level in every area of our life. By partnering with others we realize that we gain far more by being part of the team, than what we have given up. And what have we really lost or given up? We have given up, and gotten free from the addictive habit of *trying* to please ourselves at the expense of others. We can never find satisfaction and fulfillment by trying to please ourselves. Experiencing *freedom* from the habit of disobedience is another benefit of learning to build better relationships by partnering with

other people.

Next month we will talk about the family, and how to build better relationships between family members. We will explain how the 'love' relationship in the family is far better, and has a different focus than the 'boss/employee' relationship in business, or the 'coach/player' relationship on a sports team, or the 'sergeant/private' relationship in the military. Don't miss next month's *The Rural Route Magazine*. ✨



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