

The 4 PILLARS

of Building Good Relationships

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In our article last month in *The Rural Route* on “Improving Mental and Emotional Health” we were talking about how improved physical health can have a positive influence on our mental and emotional health. The opposite is also true that improved mental and emotional health has a positive influence on our physical health.

In operating our two fitness stores we work with a lot of people who improve their physical health with a balanced exercise program, a better nutritional program, and stress reduction. This is very beneficial because research has proven that up to 75% of degenerative diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes can be prevented with lifestyle changes. However, some people overlook the fact that we cannot reach our physical health potential if our mental and emotional

health is suffering.

The biggest factor in determining mental and emotional health is **the quality of the relationships** we have with our family, loved ones, and friends. The secret to improving mental and emotional health is to improve the quality of the relationships we have with our parents, spouse, children, siblings, relatives and friends. Four of the main qualities that are essential in creating and building long-term relationships are **Patience, Kindness, Unselfishness and Forgiveness**. These four qualities have been referred to as the 4 PILLARS of building good relationships.

HOW TO APPLY THE 4 PILLARS

Forgiveness is essential to heal relationships, and to reunite and reconcile people with each other. In all relationships

people can be hurt both accidentally and intentionally. This is because we all have weaknesses and shortcomings, and we can use the other person to get what we want. Without forgiveness people can continue to hurt each other which will damage the relationship even further.

What is forgiveness? Forgiveness means that I am not going to try and get even, and I'm not going to take revenge. Forgiveness doesn't mean that we approve of the hurtful behaviour, but I'm going to overlook it and focus on rebuilding the relationship with patience, kindness and unselfishness. This is not easy to do, nor is it our natural inclination to do this. By nature we want to get even, and we want the other person to suffer, because we are suffering. The problem with getting revenge is that it becomes a 'hurt for hurt' relationship, or an 'evil for

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evil' relationship, and results in more and more damage to both people. There is a saying that goes, "I'm going to get back at that person, even if it kills me". Trying to get even might not kill a person, but it will certainly kill the relationship!

Confession is part of forgiveness. Confession means recognizing where we have gone wrong, and wanting to change that behaviour. If we don't confess our wrongdoings, then we can't forgive ourselves, and we are burdened with guilt. Also, we can't expect others to forgive us, if we don't confess and repent of the ways we have hurt them.

To learn to practice forgiveness a person must first learn how to practice **Patience**. We have to use self-control and self-discipline to not react in anger. It is important to take the time to cool off, and to look at the big picture. None of us are innocent, and none of us are perfect. We all need to confess, and ask forgiveness for our own mistakes, shortcomings and weaknesses, and for all of the times that we have hurt people by our selfishness. Why should we expect to be forgiven if we are unwilling to forgive others?

Practicing **Kindness** is the second

step in learning to practice forgiveness. Kindness involves doing good things for people not because they deserve it, but because we want to contribute to their life and to our relationship with them. Showing unconditional love will help heal the wounds in our mind and heart, as well as in the heart and mind of the person who has hurt us.

The third step in learning to practice forgiveness is to learn to practice **Unselfishness**. By putting the other person's needs and wants first we are freed from the bondage of selfishness and self-centeredness, and a powerful force is released in the relationship to heal the damage that was done to the mind and heart of the people involved.

The more a person practices the 4 **PILLARS** of patience, kindness, unselfishness and forgiveness in their relationships the easier and more natural it becomes. At first it can seem like learning to ride a bike, however with practice it can become an automatic response. Daily practice is best, and it is important to tell all of the significant people in our life that we want to improve our relationship with them. They might resist, and they

might think that it is unnecessary, or even impossible. But don't be discouraged. If you quietly incorporate these 4 **PILLARS** into your attitude and personality, you will see **subtle and positive changes in your mind and heart**, and also in the attitudes of your family and loved ones. It's a process and a journey, but don't give up. You will eventually be blessed over and over again by the improvement in your relationships with the important people in your life.

In the next article we will talk about how to protect ourselves from the 4 "Relationship Wreckers" of impatience, hurtfulness, selfishness and revenge. ✈



Legge Fitness Superstores is located in **Listowel & Fergus Ontario**. For more information regarding their Courses or Seminars call 1-800-695-7338 or email info@leggefittness.com. Visit their website www.leggefittness.com to view their full line of health and fitness products and services.



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