

The second vital attribute for happiness, as a human being, is **Relationships**; more precisely, the quality, depth, and extensiveness of our relationships. I have suggested, for some time now, that *the quality of our lives is in direct proportion to the quality of our relationships.*

I define a relationship as an unconditional commitment to the health, happiness, and success of another person. Note, this definition is contextual, not form. The form a relationship takes on is dependent on the nature of the connection between two or more individuals. Therefore, we have a single definition of a relationship which reflects quality and depth. **Unconditional** simply means there is no “quid quo pro,” or “you owe me” in return. When a small act of support is done with no expectation in return, I define it as a “*small act of transformation.*” This means that a quality relationship is dynamically expanding in the mutual acceptance of each other’s’ needs and differences. This is the essence of the word **diversity**—which is grossly misunderstood and misused.

Health, I’ve already discussed. Happiness is the natural result of simply **being** there for another person, in whatever capacity appropriate. Support has many forms, depending on the nature of the relationship. It rarely, if ever, involves giving advice to someone. The various “forms” a relationship takes are: **being** there for someone during difficult times/crises; **facilitating** someone through a realization; **exchanging** mind-expanding ideas/concepts; **asking** for someone’s observations or support; **expecting** honesty, integrity, and compassion (sometimes not appearing to get it when it involves 100% responsibility and accountability!); **enjoying** each other’s companionship; and many other forms.

It’s obvious that no one person can provide all these roles. We simply need as many relationships as is necessary to fulfill the roles we lack in terms of our own self-discipline. The greater the wisdom we possess, the fewer active relationships necessary and a corresponding ability to relate to the world—with understanding, empathy, and compassion. Most of all, wisdom is measured by our ability to relate to the world with a non-ethnocentric, non-judgmental attitude.

My final thought is that **contentment** is not necessarily **happiness**. It may, in fact, be resignation. (I realize this is another complete blog!)

