

Ten Tips for Getting Along with People, Using Love as Your Guide!

1. Speak to people

Colossians 4:6a—Let your speech always be with grace.

Every now and then someone takes a poll of husbands and wives to see what are the most common complaints that spouses have about each other. Invariably, “not being noticed,” in one form or another, heads the list. Many husbands cannot understand why a wife will have her feelings hurt because he does not notice her new hat or new hairdo. But the wife believes that his failure to notice the new hat means that he has not really looked at her—that he has not really paid any special attention to her. This, in turn, means that he does not consider her important enough to notice closely.

Don’t underestimate “small courtesies” such as being on time for an appointment. It is by such small things that we acknowledge the importance of the other person. Unfortunately, we are often more courteous to strangers than to home folks. Try treating your family and friends with the same courtesy you show new acquaintances.

Remind yourself that other people are important, and your attitude will get across to the other person.

Starting today, begin to notice other people more.

2. Smile at people

Proverbs 15:13—A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance.

They say it takes 72 muscles to frown; 14 to smile.

All people smile in the same language.

A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.

A smile of encouragement at the right moment may act like sunlight on a closed flower—it may be the turning point for a struggling life.

If you see someone without a smile, give him one of yours.

Your life is bound to affect others! “No man is an island!” Everybody’s influencing somebody—even when you seem to be all alone! Sometimes just a word or a glance or a smile can make a difference. You’re either going to pull people up to your level or drag them down to yours—one or the other!

Be God’s smile

At a mission hall in London, a wealthy lady, who was unfortunately deaf, made good use of her riches by providing for the poor some excellent Gospel services. On one occasion a celebrated preacher said to her, “And what part do you take in this noble work?”

“Oh,” she answered quietly, “I smile them in, and I smile them out again.” Soon after this the preacher saw the good results of her sympathy as a crowd of working men entered the hall and looked delighted to get a smile from her. The Bread of Life cannot be recommended to people by those who look as if that food disagreed with them.

3. Address people by their name

Most people don’t remember names for the simple reason that they don’t take the time and expend the energy necessary to concentrate and repeat and fix names indelibly in their minds. They make excuses for themselves; they are too busy.

Napoleon the Third, Emperor of France and nephew of the great Napoleon, boasted that in spite of all his royal duties he could remember the name of every person he met.

His technique? Simple. If he didn't hear the name distinctly, he said, "So sorry, I didn't get the name clearly." Then, if it was an unusual name, he would ask, "How is it spelled?" During the conversation he took the trouble to repeat the name several times, and tried to associate it in his mind with the person's features, expression and general appearance.

If the person was someone of importance, Napoleon went to even further pains. As soon as he was alone, he wrote the name down on a piece of paper, looked at it, concentrated on it, fixed it securely in his mind and then tore up the paper. In this way he gained a visual impression of the name as well as an audible impression.

4. Be friendly and helpful

Unselfishness—the J O Y formula—Jesus, Others, You

Seeking the happiness of others as God has ordered us to do, is the only way to have true happiness! If you'll try to make others happy, it'll make you happy, and you'll have a little Heaven right here on Earth! You don't find happiness by chasing it. Happiness finds you by your bringing happiness to others. That's God's system, that's God's rule, that's God's way, that's God's Law of Love. God will make you happy if you make others happy. It's that simple!

Love prefers the happiness of others to your own. True happiness comes not in your personal pursuit of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, but in finding God and giving His life to others and bringing them happiness!

If you'll just forget yourself and think more about others, and really try to help and pray for and love them, you'll find that will solve almost all of your problems! If you get your mind off of yourself and on others you'll find that this is what will bring you true joy and happiness. That's the formula for finding joy: Put Jesus first, then others, and then you!—J-O-Y!

First of all, get your mind on Jesus, and then He'll help you get it on to your neighbor, and help you love him as yourself.

5. Communicate

Proverbs 15:23—A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!

Here is a list of key factors needed in order to have good communication with anyone—your husband or wife, your peers, young people, older people, friends and co-workers:

- **Honesty.** Unless there's honesty in communication you're going to get your wires crossed. A good foundation to have if you want to get off on the right foot with someone is to be completely honest and open.
- **Tact.** As soon as you realize you must be completely honest, you must also pray and ask the Lord to help you be prayerful and loving in the way you express things, especially things that are of a sensitive nature.
- **Love.** Love is what motivates you to be truthful and sincere with others, as well as tactful when the occasion warrants it.
- **Wisdom.** In order to know the difference between when you should be as open as possible and when it would be better to be more careful with your words, you need to pray for wisdom.
- **Sensitivity.** The sensitivity we're referring to here is that of being responsive and attentive to the needs of others. It's helpful to try to be sensitive to others' moods and feelings when communicating.
- **Courage.** Having the faith that overcomes the fears and hesitations you have about communicating, and which expects a positive response.
- **Sense of timing.** Timing is vital in communication. Of course, in the smaller matters that you discuss with others on a daily basis, it's important that you simply communicate often. But

when the subject is a little sensitive, requires privacy, or may mean unpleasant news or changes for someone, then it's wise to choose the timing of your presentation—when they're not in the middle of a demanding project, or coming to the close of a hectic day.

- **Prayerfulness.** Mental prayerfulness is good in any situation, constantly praying for wisdom, for “in the multitude of words there lacketh not sin.” But verbal prayerfulness is also a good habit to acquire in communicating with others. If you have a work-related matter or some kind of delicate situation to discuss—or even when it's just fellowship but you don't know what topics are going to come up—pause for a moment and say a prayer. Acknowledging the Lord helps you to go slower, to have more respect for each other and for the Lord, and it also empowers the Lord to make your time beneficial and not hurtful or frustrating.
- **Patience.** Good communication requires patience. Everyone is different and has different ways of looking at situations and solving them, so it takes patience to see things as someone else sees them, and also come to a common ground of agreement.
- **Respect.** You must respect the other person's opinions and feelings. The most obvious way this is manifested in communication with others is in letting them say their piece without interrupting or trying to hurry them along or finish their sentences for them.
- **Sense of humor.** Lighten up! Often people hold things in, so that when they finally do take the plunge to communicate about a matter, they come across too strongly or defensively. It pays to lighten up together if things are getting too intense or unnecessarily “heavy.”
- **Silence.** Yes, surprisingly, the art of being silent is a quality much needed sometimes in communication, or rather the art of listening. It's no use trying to come to an agreement with someone if you are merely thinking about what you're going to say while they're voicing their opinion. Be like the wise old owl: The less he spoke the more he heard!
- **Openness to others.** People will be much more at ease communicating with you if you make a habit of being open to what others have to say.
- **Humility.** It doesn't pay to carry the attitude around that you're always right. Pride stalemates communication more than any other trait. Also, like the fable of the wind and the sun, you will find that as you take the lower seat of hearing people out and sincerely considering their opinions, they will be more open to yours as well.
- **Regular communication.** Good communication should not be saved for special occasions, but should be a part of your everyday life. People who communicate frequently understand each other the best, and are more likely to be able to work through problems when they come up.
- **Clarity.** Explain, explain, explain. You may think others understand exactly what you mean, but it may surprise you to realize that misunderstandings arise every day in people's lives for lack of clarity. If you're not sure whether someone understands what you mean, ask them! It's a lot more efficient than guesswork.
- **Talking.** This may seem humorous to some people, but there are many people who settle for subtle hints, signals, and cryptic messages as their sole forms of communication, whether working together, or trying to iron out some problem. Unfortunately, the success rate for those forms of communication is minimal, and nothing beats talking—both to each other and, most of all, to the Lord. Try it!
- **Willingness.** Communication takes just plain hard work. It takes a lot of effort, but the rewards of friendship, harmony, unity, and mature relationships are well worth the energy spent—as long as you're willing to do it!

6. Be concerned

Galatians 6:2—Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

How do you acquire understanding? It's the realization that we are all human beings. We carry on in unexplainable ways. We often behave according to emotion rather than logic.

Tolerance, in a way, is simply accepting people as they are. Most people come with a lot of virtues and a few defects, some positive and a little negative, always some plus and always some minus. Strangely enough, there is a tendency to expect individuals to be faultless. In one's mind is painted a picture of what the employee, marriage partner, or friend should be. When the person falls short of the expectations, the picture becomes scarred; anger and agitation result.

Practice looking for good in others. Remember that you can have only one thought in your mind at once; if it is a positive thought of another, you have no need to strain for tolerance, you have achieved it!

Being intolerant causes you discontent, misery, even sickness! At the point where you become provoked or irritated with another person, you have ceased to tolerate that person. When this occurs, you are actually burning nervous energy at a rate 3 to 4 times faster than normal! On a day when you are frustrated and upset with people—when your contacts with people are abrasive—then you are often completely exhausted mentally and physically before the day is over.

The individual with no unlikable qualities presents no challenge to an attitude of understanding. The challenge is to love the unlovable, to understand the people who may exaggerate, show off, criticize, be sarcastic, arrogant, selfish, sourly or rude. It's difficult to even want to understand these people. It requires compassion to understand that someone has hurt these people. Someone has made them feel unimportant and unwanted—that they don't count.

A sense of humor helps in dealing with people. If you're going to analyze all your associations solemnly and soberly with unrelenting seriousness, you're going to lose a lot of sleep. People are funny, interesting, fascinating, and lovable, and like snowflakes, no two are alike.

Have empathy. Empathy is the ability to put yourself in the other person's situation. Laugh with those who laugh, cry with those who cry, rejoice in the happiness of those about you, and suffer with others who suffer. Empathy is feeling the feelings of those you love and care about.

In their shoes

It was the custom of an Indian tribe to appoint a judge to go into the Indian villages and try evildoers. One time a young brave was chosen for the task. He wanted to judge righteously. He went into a dense, dark forest and prayed, "Oh Great Maker of Men, forbid that I judge any man until I have walked for two months in his moccasins!"

7. Be generous with praise, encouragement, and appreciation

Philippians 4:8—Whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Praise spurs people to achieve, gives them inner confidence, and makes them grow. But how many flowers go ungiven? How many compliments go unsaid? How many people do you admire for certain qualities or accomplishments but have never bothered saying so? Why not practice praise? When you do, consider these thoughts:

- Be sincere; don't give flattery. Being sincere is just a matter of looking for the good in others. You'll find it if you're sincerely looking.
- Be specific. Don't just say a person is "nice" or "good." Pick out specific things to praise.

8. Be genuinely interested in the feelings of others

There is no quicker way to insult a person or to hurt his feelings than to brush him off or turn away when he's trying to tell you something. How many times have you been right in the middle of a good story only to have one of your listeners turn away or interrupt you and start talking about a brand-new subject?

Learning to listen to the other person with everything you've got means putting aside your own interests, your own pleasures and your own preoccupations, at least temporarily. For those few moments of time it means that you must concentrate 100% on what the other person is saying. You must focus all your attention on him. You must listen to him with all the intensity and awareness that you can command.

Listen between the lines

A lot of times you can learn more by what the other person doesn't say than by what he does. So learn to listen between the lines. Just because he didn't say that he doesn't want to do it your way isn't any sign that he does.

The speaker doesn't always put everything he's thinking into words for you. Watch for the changing tone and volume of his voice. Sometimes you will find a meaning that's in direct contrast to his spoken words. And watch his facial expression, his mannerisms, his gestures and the movements of his body. To be a good listener and to listen with everything you've got means you'll have to use your eyes as well as your ears.

9. Avoid arguments

2 Timothy 2:24—And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out (Proverbs 17:14).

By choosing your words wisely, you can avoid provoking an argument (Proverbs 15:1; 17:9; Ecclesiastes 5:2a).

"Love, humility and prayer solve all problems!" (Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:13).

10. Be alert to give service

John 13:13–15—You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

How sorry are you?

An old Quaker, passing along the street, saw a cartman's horse suddenly fall dead. It was a serious loss, for the horse was the man's livelihood. The bystanders shook their heads and clucked sympathetically. The Quaker took off his broad-brimmed hat, placed a banknote in it, and said, "Friends, I am sorry for this man, ten dollars' worth. How sorry are you?"

God's Hand

In a prayer meeting a man prayed with great fervor. The burden of his prayer had to do with a family that had suddenly been bereft of the father and husband. "O God," pleaded the intercessor, "do send someone to that grief-stricken family to touch them for You!" Suddenly the man lapsed into silence. Quietly he withdrew from the group. Before the prayer meeting concluded, he returned. Asked why he concluded his prayer so abruptly, and why he withdrew without explanation, he said, "As I prayed that God would touch that sorrowing family, He seemed to say to me, 'You are My Hand! You go and touch them for Me!'"