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# **Chapter 9 Assignment**

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Interpersonal relationships inject value in peoples lives through a wide variety of advantages. Ranging from increasing self-awareness to, at times, helping to resist illness, relationships in which we commit ourselves to can drastically increase not only our overall quality of life, but also our level of happiness. However, relationships can be equally disadvantageous and put a strain on these aspects of our lives just the same.

For me personally, I think that the profitability, or rather the advantages minus the disadvantages of my relationships has been the most determinant factor of their longevity. The reason I think this to be the case is because upon examination of the most relevant relationships in my life today, the ones that are growing in both depth and breadth are the ones that I feel have more advantages than disadvantages, and the relationships that are deteriorating are the ones that cost more than the rewards are worth. Examples of this are my relationships with my fiancé Allison, my buddy Joseph, and my Mom.

To me, the advantages of a romantic relationship can be greater than any other type of relationship. For instance, in my relationship with Allison I benefit from the advantage of being able to communicate with her on a deeper level than anyone else on a variety of highly personal topics. Being able to confide in her and know that she has my best interest in mind has resulted in an emotional liberation that I had never experienced prior to us being together. Because of her, I have inner self that were previously unknown through self-disclosure which has undoubtedly improved my level of happiness. Additionally, knowing that I get to end every day in her company has made it immeasurably easier to keep a positive outlook when difficulties arise.

Just as romantic relationships offer the most impactful advantages though, they can at times also be paired with the greatest disadvantages, such as a loss of autonomy and freedom. An example of this would be found in the way I spend my nights and weekends now as compared to before her and I were together. Prior to her moving in with me, I would spend most of my nights hanging out with friends either watching the game or going out for drinks after work. Now, I rarely engage in those activities and spend most of my nights at home. To be fair, she has never indicated to me that she disproves of me doing those things, but rather since being with her my priorities have changed. I now feel as though our future goals, both financial and familial, are more important that those nights out with friends. In addition to my changed priorities, I expect that she would share my priorities, and in the interest of keeping our relationship equitable, I cannot consciencely undermine those priorities without an underlying sense of guilt. So as a result, I am happy to stay home and work on things that help us to achieve our goals, because the cost of not spending every night out with friends is far outweighed by the rewards of a happy, satisfying relationship with the woman I love, and because of the profitability of our relationship, we have continued to repair any deteriorations that it has faced over the years.

Similarly, close friendships tend to grow deeper when they are profitable for both parties, and that they can be highly advantageous to those involved. Where they differ, at least in my experience, is in the contrast of advantages and disadvantages. Likely the reason that relationships with friends tend to outlast romantic ones, is the margin of profitability that they have. For example, my friendship with my friend Joseph. The relationship that him I have offers the advantage of always having someone that I can talk to, plan a vacation with, get advice from, or otherwise count on in just about any way I can imagine, but with virtually no disadvantages outside of the occasionally reaching out to maintain our friendship. Because of this, my relationship with Joseph is without doubt, the most profitable relationship that I have.

Lastly, family relationships are also dependent on profitability. An example of this is the relationship that I have with my Mom. Over the past couple of years, the relationship that I have with my mom has been repaired several times. For context, when I was younger, my mom and I were not close, in fact, we were quite distant- especially after high school when I dropped out of college after a single semester and moved to Texas, which created some conflict between us. As a result of that conflict, her and I have grown closer. I think that this is because doing those things went against what she thought was best for me (not that she was wrong), but I did it anyway. Since then, her and I have maintained a more equitable relationship – as two adults, rather than a parent and child. Although it took years to fully repair, our relationship has since been filled with insightful conversation about things that we share viewpoints, as well as the mutually respectful debate about topics on which we do not agree. This has made our relationship more profitable than before and has resulted in our communication being broader and deeper.

While these relationships have avoided dissolution, most of my relationships has dissolved in one way or another. One of these relationships is the one that I had with a once good friend of mine, Dave. Dave, to this day, was one of the funniest, empathetic, and although he would never own up to it, caring individuals I have ever met. Unfortunately, these great characteristics that Dave possessed have been consumed by his battle with alcoholism, and a couple of years ago I had to force myself to stop answering his 2 A.M. drunken phone calls. Although I genuinely valued him as a friend, and enjoyed his calls for the most part, I had to establish boundaries. For eight years I entertained his calls, and throughout those years attempted to get him the help that he so desperately needed before realizing that he genuinely did not want to be helped. At that point I told him to stop calling until he got help, because seeing him destroy himself was costing me more happiness than seeing him get healthy could repay and I have only spoke to him one time since. My relationship with Dave is a quintessential example of what can happen when the costs of a relationship outweigh the benefits.

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