

Harmony in the Family

Understanding Values in Human-Human Relationships

Family as the Basic Unit of Human Interaction Every human being is born in a family and is part of a family, in which there are parents, grandparents, children, youth, uncles and aunts, cousins, so many relatives and friends. It is the family where we are nurtured and developed from childhood, cared for in sickness and in old age. It is where we start learning to interact with other human beings, to share, and to care. It is the place where we start becoming aware of relationships. The moment we hear the word mother, there is a whole lot of feeling. Similarly, every relationship name has an associated feeling that becomes more and more enriched as we interact. Our basic grooming for living in a relationship starts in the family. The first few years, what we call the formative years, are spent in the family. It is where we pick up a very significant part of our sanskar in living with our family elders and siblings, neighbours and friends. It also provides us with the platform to verify our understanding.

Feeling of Relationship as the Basis for Harmony in the Family

The harmony in the family has primarily to do with the fulfilment of relationship between one human being and the other human being. In order to fulfil relationship, it is necessary to understand relationship

Understanding Relationship

We will now explore into the four important aspects of relationship:

1. Relationship is – between one Self and another Self
2. There are feelings in relationship – in one Self for the other Self
3. These feelings can be recognised – they are definite
4. The fulfilment of these feelings and their right evaluation lead to mutual happiness

Salient Points regarding Relationship

- The family is the basic unit of human organisation for living in relationship and harmony (order).
- To live with fulfilment in relationship, it is essential to understand relationship. Assuming relationship without understanding does not work.
- Relationship is, it is already there. In human-human relationship, it exists between one Self (I) and the other Self. We are embedded in relationship – whether we recognize it or not. When we recognize the relationship, we think in terms of accepting it and fulfilling it. When we don't understand relationship, the relationship is still there but we are not able to see it, we are not

able to accept it and therefore, we don't think in terms of ensuring the fulfilment in the relationship.

- The unhappiness in the family is more due to lack of fulfilment in the relationship, but also due to lack of physical facility. The major issue is that of fulfilment of feelings in relationship; and with that, the minor issue is lack of physical facility. By itself, physical facility cannot compensate for lack of feelings.
- The base of the relationship is feelings – in one Self (I1) for the other Self . Feelings are in the Self, not in the Body. Feelings are fundamental to fulfilment in a relationship.
- These feelings are definite, so they can be understood. There are nine naturally acceptable feelings in the relationship – from trust (foundation value) to love (complete value).
- When we ensure these naturally acceptable feelings in ourselves, we share them with the other and when we are both able to evaluate the feelings rightly, it leads to mutual happiness.

Trust as the Foundation Value

We can see that the fulfilment of the relationship calls for the understanding and expressing these nine feelings so, let us begin with the feeling of trust. Trust is “to be assured”.

Trust is to be assured that the other intends to make me happy and prosperous.

Since our basic aspiration is happiness, prosperity and its continuity, so if we are clear that the other person wants to make us happy and prosperous, we feel assured of him – that's what is meant by having a feeling of trust. On the other hand, if we have even a small doubt that the other person wants to make us unhappy or deprived, we will not feel assured of him. We will have doubt and apprehension or fear. We will have the feeling of mistrust for him.

Distinguishing between Intention and Competence

(The common mistake in relationship is due to confusion between intention and competence) Now if you try to analyse this set of responses, many things will get clarified. Look at the whole situation. Look at your response to these statements, about your intention (natural acceptance) and about your competence (ability). You'll find that while evaluating yourself, you evaluate on the basis of your intention (natural acceptance). You think that you are a good person as your intentions are good.

On the other hand, when you evaluate the other, you evaluate him on the basis of his competence. You find that he is not able to make you happy all the time. Many times, or most of the time he ends up making you unhappy. Therefore, you think that the other wants to make you unhappy. You have a doubt on other's intention. When you find that the competence is missing, you have the doubt. But this doubt does not remain limited to the competence, rather you start concluding about his intention. On the basis of his state of the competence, you start doubting his intention!

Salient Points regarding Trust

- Trust is to be assured that the other intends (has a natural acceptance) to make me happy and prosperous. When I can clearly see that my intention (natural acceptance) is to make myself happy and to make the other also happy and prosperous, I can conclude that the other, who is like me at the level of Self, also has the same intention (natural acceptance).
- I am able to accept the other. he is like me – we have the same intention and, like me, (s)he may also be lacking in competence.
- With trust on intention, I feel related to the other, and with that at the base, I make a programme based on our current mutual competence. I make effort to assure the other. Trust is the starting point of relationship, of mutual development.
- Relationship is founded on trust. In the absence of it, we do not feel related to the other and the relationship keeps shaking. A common mistake in relationship is to evaluate myself based on intention and evaluate the other based on competence. If we go by this, we assume ourselves to be good and the other to be the problem.

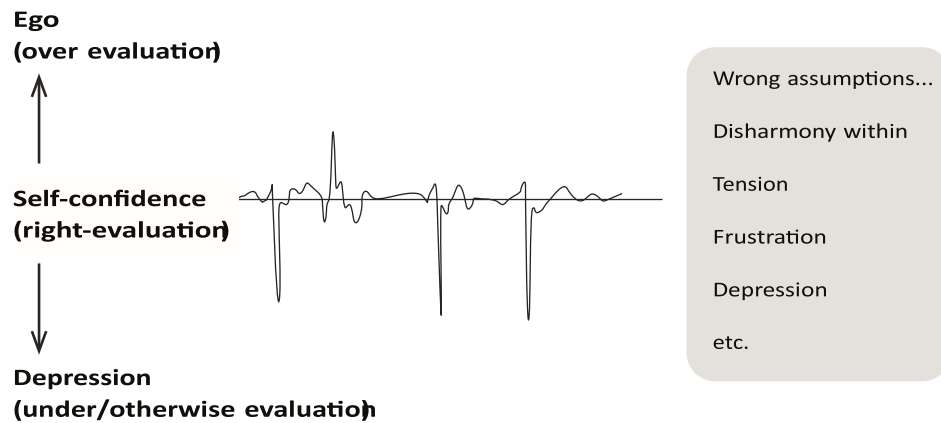
Respect as Right Evaluation

With the feeling of trust in us, we can explore into the feeling of respect. Let us see, when do we feel respected? How do I respect others?

The proposal is: Respect is right evaluation.

Respect means right evaluation. It is as simple as that. When we are rightly evaluated, we feel respected. When we are not rightly evaluated, we feel disrespected. You might find that this is quite different from what is generally considered respect, isn't it? It is true that we are engaged in many activities to get attention, to appear to be different or special. To be in the newspaper or magazine, to win awards, to be in a book of records we are climbing up mountains, diving into the ocean depths, jumping from aeroplanes, wearing all sorts of clothes, getting special hairdos, growing our hair, shaving of our heads, tattooing our bodies and so on. The list is almost endless. Even on an everyday basis, we do so many things to be in the good books of parents, teachers, friends and work colleagues. What is your state when you are involved in such activities – are you comfortable within or uncomfortable within? Also, what do you think all this brings – some temporary attention or anything more than that? Does it ensure acceptance for you in the other? Think about it. Respect is simply the right evaluation.

Right Evaluation	Over Evaluation	Under/Otherwise Evaluation
Self-confidence I am self referential (self organized) Definite Conduct	Ego The other is my reference (enslaved) Indefinite Conduct	Depression The other is my reference (enslaved) Indefinite Conduct

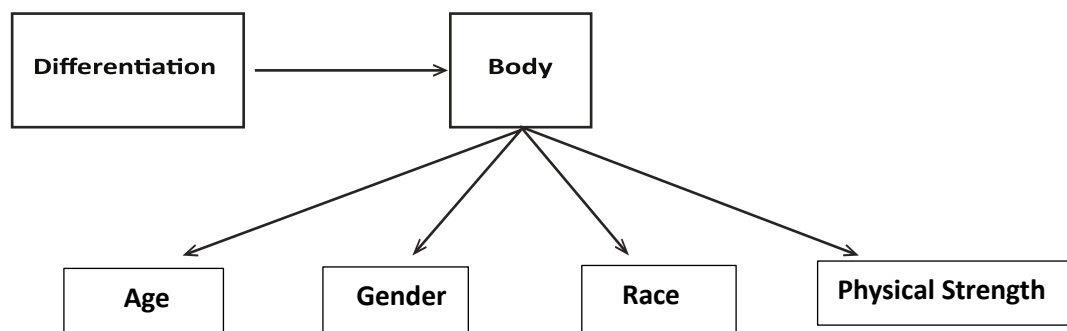


Self-confidence, Ego and Depression

As long as I don't have my own right evaluation (based on the right understanding of human beings), I can't do the right evaluation of the other. Over and above that, this over-evaluation tends to ego, and under evaluation or otherwise evaluation to depression; whether I am the one doing my own over/under/otherwise evaluation or someone else is doing it. When I am in ego, my behaviour with the other is likely to be reactive and not mutually fulfilling. Similarly, when I am in depression, I am unhappy and tend to make others also unhappy.

Disrespect Arising out of Differentiation

Instead of trying to see both the similarity as well as the differences, are we primarily trying to focus on the differences? When we focus on the differences, we try to discriminate on the basis of these differences; and when we are discriminating, it is disrespect.



In general, what we are doing in the name of respect today is differentiating and discriminating.

One criterion for the differentiation is on the basis of body (fig. 8-5). One set of our basic criteria for giving respect is related to body – on the basis of age, gender, race and physical strength. We keep saying – respect elders. What about younger people? What about the children? Do they deserve

respect or not? Since we are not able to see this similarity generally, we are not able to see that children also need respect, just as older people do. Like this, we are differentiating on the basis of age, we are differentiating on the basis of gender. Many societies give higher priority to the male as compared to females or vice-versa; or giving priority to white as compared to brown and black. Similarly, we have been giving respect to those having more physical strength.

In fact, a majority of the problems that we are facing in the society today have to do with the issue of respect and disrespect or the issue of disrespect in the name of respect. The majority of the movements, revolts that you see in the society today have to do with the issue of respect. One simple feeling of respect or disrespect may lead to so many problems in the society. For instance, discrimination on the basis of the race has created so much of problem in the society all around. If you are discriminating between white and black, and it is just an issue of respect or disrespect; the white will disrespect the black on the basis of this criterion, the blacks will not accept it. They will keep complaining about it and then at some point of time it may lead to some movement, it may lead to some opposition and it might even lead to war. So, the simple issue of over-evaluation of one and underevaluation of the other can lead to all this!

Salient Points regarding Respect

- Respect is right evaluation (of intention and competence on the basis of Self). We are similar at the level of purpose, programme and potential and we are complementary at the level of competence. I express this complementarity as follows:
 - o If the other has more understanding, is more responsible than me, I am committed to understand from the other. I make effort for it from my side.
 - o If I have more understanding, I am more responsible than the other,
- I live with responsibility with the other, unconditionally, unperturbed by the behaviour of the other. This makes the other comfortable with me in relationship and then he has a willingness to understand from me. This may take a lot of time.
- I am committed to facilitate understanding in the other (once the other is assured in relationship and not before that). The communication is feasible only when the other person is assured in relationship and is ready to listen from me.
- Disrespect arises out of over-evaluation, under-evaluation or otherwise-evaluation; and also, out of differentiation or discrimination on the basis of body (age, gender, race, physical strength), physical facility (post, wealth) or beliefs (ism, sect, information). Small incidents of disrespect can have long-lasting consequences – from not speaking to each other, to opposition, struggle, break in relationship, divorce, fights and even war.
- When I can see the central role of the Self, I evaluate myself as well as the other on the basis of the Self, rather than merely at the level of Body, physical facility, etc.

Affection

Affection is the feeling of being related to the other.

When I can see that the other has a natural acceptance to make me happy and prosperous, regardless of my competence, I am assured of the other. With this feeling of assurance (trust on intention), when I am able to rightly evaluate our competence (respect), I am able to define my complementarity with the other. In this way, I am able to accept the other as my relative.

Affection is the feeling of acceptance for the other as one's relative. Parents generally have a feeling of affection for their children. The parents are very naturally able to relate to their children, feel concerned for them. Similarly, children feel related to their parents. This feeling can also be seen between friends, siblings, between teacher and student, between husband and wife, or any other relationship. It is a naturally acceptable feeling, and hence desired in every relationship. The feeling of affection is essential for the fulfilment of any relationship. Particularly, for children, it is a necessity for their development. The child feels secure in the early stages of development when it enjoys the affection of its parents. The parents, though having a hectic schedule, take care of the child, and feel happy and fulfilled in the process. But one important thing to note is that the feeling of affection can be there in continuity only if it is based on the feelings of trust and respect. If the first two feelings are not present in the Self, then the feeling of affection can not be continuous.

Lack of affection is seen in the form of opposition or jealousy. Such things too are observed in relationships. If the feeling of affection is missing or lacking, then we feel opposed to the other and tend to have a feeling of jealousy. This can be seen even in very young siblings. For example, if a brother is not able to accept his younger sister, then he would not have a feeling of affection for her and he may keep vying for the parents' full attention. The very feeling of trust is missing, so respect is also violated. Like this, the boy is jealous of his sister and considers her to be his competitor.

The understanding of trust, the feeling of trust as well as the feeling of respect, based on understanding of respect, are essential to have the feeling of affection. If we assume these feelings (rather than understand them), then these feelings keep getting violated sometime or the other and the relationship keeps shaking.

So, the feeling of affection comes naturally, out of the feeling of trust and respect. It is followed by the responsibility and commitment for mutual fulfilment.

Glory and Gratitude

With this clarity about excellence, we can now define the feeling of glory as well as the feeling of gratitude, because only in the light of understanding excellence, it is possible for us to understand both the feelings.

Glory is the feeling of acceptance for those who have made effort for excellence.

We have a feeling of glory for people who have made effort or are making effort for excellence. So, for all those people whom we call great people, we accept them as great people because they invested themselves to achieve excellence. When we can accept the effort made by them, to whatever extent they are able to achieve it, we naturally have a feeling of glory for them.

We want to have this feeling for our family elders and teachers too. We have a natural expectation from them that they would make sincere efforts for right understanding and right living.

Gratitude is the feeling of acceptance for those who have made the effort for my excellence.

It is the feeling for all those who have helped me, in any way, in my own effort to achieve excellence. In our life, there may be so many people who have been of help to us in the process of understanding harmony and living in harmony. So, we have this feeling of gratitude for them. Particularly in the family, we can see such people. We can see that the parents and others have affectionately brought us up, provided us with necessary physical facility to nurture and protect our body.

You may be remembering your parents and elders – they have cared for you and arranged to send you to school and college, provided the necessary physical facility and helped you to utilize it in your effort for excellence. We can also see what the other has done in terms of fulfilling the need of the Self, i.e., to help us in developing right understanding and right feeling. For that our feeling of gratitude continues for a very long time. You must be remembering the guidance received from your mother, father and some of your teachers. Like that, there may be so many people outside the family too who are involved in the process of your development. You may have a feeling of gratitude for them too.

Distinguishing Between Love and Infatuation

The feeling of love is, of course, not based on sensation. On the other hand, infatuation is an attraction based on sensation. The excitement from sensual pleasure is the central issue. Infatuation is conditional on getting the desirable sensations. Also, it is temporary, lasts only as long as one is able to get the sensation. While infatuated, the deeper expectations are not prominent. Once, the effect of infatuation wears off, then the deeper, longterm expectation of feelings become prominent. If these expectations are not fulfilled, they tend to be dis-satisfied, even arguing and fighting. If the basis for our relationship is sensation (beauty, sensual pleasure, etc.), and the feeling of relationship is missing, then sooner or later this is where we may end up.

Most of the cases of adultery and divorce are attributable to lack of fulfilment at the level of feeling, rather than any other reason. When you have the feeling of love on the basis of understanding, you are standing (rising) in love! You are no longer falling in love.

You will have the feeling of acceptance, regardless of the behaviour of the other and will be living with responsibility in the relationship from your side, unconditionally; primarily with the responsibility for mutual development. Over a period of time, the other will also evolve and the feelings will start flowing from the other as well – starting with trust. It is like there is no “best spouse”, “best friend” and so on. Rather it is what one makes out of the relationship. With the right feeling, if one works on mutual development, almost any relationship can blossom.

My Participation (Value) in My Family

(To Make Effort for Harmony in the Family)

The important issue in the family is that of the feelings. These feelings are in one Self for the other Self.

My participation (value) vis-à-vis my family is to ensure harmony in the family, ensure mutual happiness, ensure justice in the family by way of:

- Ensuring the right feelings (trust, respect, affection, care, guidance, reverence, glory, gratitude and love) in myself – this leads to my happiness.

Expressing (sharing) these feelings with the other – when the other is able to make the right evaluation of these feelings, it leads to hi(s) her happiness, thus leading to mutual happiness. My participation is to be of help to the other in their self-evolution, self-development.

Salient Points

- Harmony in the family has to do with acceptance of the other human being and ensuring the fulfilment of the naturally acceptable feelings in relationship. To live with fulfilment in relationship, it is essential to understand relationship. Assuming relationship without understanding does not work.
- Except for the feeling of care, physical facility has a symbolic role in expressing the feelings (majority of complaints in relationship are due to lack of fulfilment of these feelings and no amount of physical facility can compensate for it).
- These feelings are definite, so they can be understood. There are nine naturally acceptable feelings in relationship – trust, respect, affection, care, guidance, reverence, glory, gratitude and love. Having these feelings in me ensures my happiness. Since they are naturally acceptable to the other also, sharing these feelings with the other leads to their happiness, thus to mutual happiness.
- Feelings born out of the understanding of relationship are unconditional and continuous. Feelings or emotions based on incidents / happenings are conditional and temporary. Negative emotions are basically the absence of right (naturally acceptable) feelings.
- Justice in relationship is understanding relationship, acceptance of relationship, having the right feelings, fulfilling these feelings followed by the right evaluation of these feelings, leading to mutual happiness:
- Disrespect arises out of over-evaluation, under-evaluation or otherwise-evaluation; and also, out of differentiation or discrimination by making comparison of body (in terms of age, gender, race, and physical strength), physical facility (in terms of post, wealth) or beliefs (in terms of ism, sect, information).
- Affection is the feeling of being related to the other. One naturally feels related to the other only when there is feeling of Trust and Respect in oneself for the other. Feeling of jealousy or opposition is basically the absence of affection. Responsibility and commitment for mutual fulfilment in the relationship emerges from affection. Thus, I take the responsibility for the Self as well as the Body of my relative.
- Care is the feeling of responsibility and commitment for nurturing and protection of the Body of my relative. Physical facility, in a limited quantity, is needed to fulfil the feeling of care.
- Guidance is the feeling of responsibility and commitment for ensuring Right Understanding and Right Feeling in the Self of my relative.
- Assuming human being to be the Body results in being largely focused on care of the Body and lack of guidance toward the Self.

- Reverence is the feeling of acceptance for Excellence. Excellence means understanding harmony and living in harmony at all levels of being (individual, family, society, nature/existence), thereby, living with continuous happiness.