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10 Ways to Improve All Your Relationships

Tension is real. Baggage is destructive. And relationships can be outright difficult. But, it’s possible to improve every one of your relationships this year!
Relationships are gifts from God that make life worth living. Imagine if your relationships as a wife, mother, friend, child, or employee got dramatically healthier and closer. What a beautiful thing that would be!
Although it will take work, there are so many tangible changes every person can make. Here are some simple ways to care for yourself in a way that ultimately helps you care more for others.

Here are 10 ways to improve all of your relationships.

## **1. Rely on God to Meet Your Emotional Needs**

* Relationships become strained when you look to others to meet certain emotional needs that only God can meet.
* When you seek your affirmation, sense of identity or purpose from someone else that becomes a burden too heavy for them to bear. Find your identity and reason for living in who you are in God’s eyes and all that you have when you are His ([Ephesians 1](https://www.biblestudytools.com/ephesians/1.html)).
* Don’t expect someone else to relieve your fear of being alone. Find your security in the fact that God will never leave you nor forsake you ([Hebrews 13:5](https://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/13-5.html)).
* When you depend on God to fill your emotional tank, you’ll have the reserves to build up others and affirm them rather than drain them dry with what you need. Someone who sucks the life and energy out of others is not someone others enjoy being around.
* Make sure you are [letting God meet your emotional needs](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/letting-god-meet-your-emotional-needs/), not putting an unrealistic expectation on those closest to you.

## **2. Cut the Worry**

* Seriously. No one wants a worry wart in their life.
* To adult children, a parent who worries is exhausting. To a spouse, one who worries is all-consuming. To a friend, one who worries can be downright annoying.
* [Philippians 4:6-7](https://www.biblestudytools.com/philippians/passage/?q=philippians+4:6-7) specifically tells us “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus” (NLT).
* Instead of being a panicked worrier, be a [prayer](https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/) warrior and show others that when you--or they--have a concern, you will not worry, but immediately take it to God in prayer. Who wouldn’t want a friend, spouse, parent, or child like that?

## **3. Take Care of Yourself**

* No one wants to be around someone who is stressed, over-worked, and [running on empty](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/when-youre-running-on-empty/). If you’re not exercising proper boundaries around your time, schedule, and relationships, you can come across as someone who is distant, too busy to care, or high maintenance without realizing it.
* If you’re constantly scrolling through your phone when you’re in the presence of others, you are letting them know your work, your social media networks, or constant interruptions from others are more important than they are.
* Take care of yourself by giving yourself permission to be away from work, your phone, or distractions. Invest in your self-care with some physical pampering like a massage or meaningful time away with those you love.
* You may even choose to see a biblical counselor or therapist to “unload” on so you don’t unload on others.
* People who don’t take time to rest, slow down, and take care of themselves physically can tend to drain others.
* So be a builder, not a drainer, by taking time to care for yourself so others don’t have to spend their time and energy caring for you.

## **4. Be Grateful**

* If you are one who constantly sees the glass as half-empty, waits for the other shoe to fall, or points out why something is not a good plan (without coming up with a better one), you may be seen as a critical person or negative energy in the room.
* [1 Thessalonians 5:18](https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-thessalonians/5-18.html) tells us to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (ESV).
* Do you realize you are actually living out the will of God simply by being grateful in all things? You can also be improving your relationships at the same time because a positive attitude and grateful spirit can lift others’ moods and change the perspective and overall tone of an entire meeting, conversation or relationship.

## **5. Be Humble**

* Pride offends, injures, and can even devastate relationships. Pride often leads to [resentment](https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/proven-steps-for-overcoming-resentment-letting-go-of-bitterness.html) and bitterness which separates friends.
* Pride rears its ugly head when someone tells you something about yourself that you don’t want to hear or when you feel slighted in some way. The opposite of pride is humility.
* I’m not implying you should tolerate cruel treatment or inconsiderate behavior. Rather, I am suggesting you maintain a humble heart that seeks to be Christ-like and [drama free](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/drama-free/) in your actions and reactions.
* Scripture tells us: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves” ([Philippians 2:3](https://www.biblestudytools.com/philippians/2-3.html)).
* That’s the ingredient to a healthy relationship…one in which you give, rather than take. A person of pride takes, must always be first, and constantly feels entitled. A person who is humble is a servant and habitually gives. Another way to say this is “treat others as well as (if not better than) you’d like to be treated.”

## **6. Be a Listener Who Is Willing to Change**

* Anyone can talk another person’s ear off. But being a true listener is rare.
* Learn to listen with an open heart that hears, and therefore really sees others. Every relationship encounters tension, pressure, and issues that need to be talked through. If you are confronted with an issue someone wants to talk about, listen with an open heart to learn what you can.
* Don’t be quick to justify or excuse yourself (or worse, try to get even by saying “but remember that time you did the same?”).  Listen with a heart for how you can change and it will draw you closer to the person you’re having difficulty with.

## **7. Confess, Don’t Complain**

* In his devotional, God‘s Best for My Life, the late Pastor and Author Lloyd John Oglivie wrote that we should confess every time we’re tempted to complain.
* When someone does something you don’t like, rather than complain about it confess your heart that is critical and wants to complain, and then confess to the Lord the times that you have been guilty of doing the same thing that you’re complaining about.
* It’s possible the things that bother you about other people are the very same things you do, yourself, but just don’t notice or want to admit. When you complain less and confess more, others just may find you are more pleasant to be around.

## 8. **See beyond One’s Hurtful Words**

* People who hurt, hurt people. Therefore, if someone lashes out at you with angry words it is very possible it is their hurt that is lashing out in response to pain that someone else inflicted.
* It used to be my default response to feel the need to set someone straight when they hurt or offended me. But lately I’ve been asking God to give me a heart to see the wounds behind another person’s hurtful words.
* That causes me to feel compassion rather than contempt toward anyone who offends me.
* [Proverbs 19:11](https://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/19-11.html) says, “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense” (ESV). Learning to let go of an offense so that you can really see the hurt behind one’s actions or words toward you will improve any relationship--especially with someone who often hurts you or with whom you tend to hurt without realizing it.

## **9. Stop Comparing and Start Complimenting**

* It’s natural for women to compare themselves to others so we can come out ahead or so we can belittle ourselves.
* Both of those reasons for comparing are damaging as well as tiring to other people. You can improve your relationships when you give up your desire to be perfect and your tendency to compete or compare, and simply be happy for others’ accomplishments.
* Seek to sincerely compliment, rather than quietly compete.

## **10. Love like Jesus Does**

* I know it sounds simple and almost trite, but it’s still the most practical relationship advice.
* Try it. Jesus loves without condition. Jesus loves sacrificially. Jesus loved without expecting love in return.
* When you love your spouse, friend, child, or parent that way it can’t help but improve your relationship because who doesn’t want to be loved the way God loves them? If it doesn’t change them, though, it will always change you and make you a person who is more familiar with Calvary love.
* I’m not advocating love without boundaries. Jesus apparently knew how to erect boundaries around those who only wanted something from Him. He was gentle in his firmness and firm in His gentleness.
* There were times He was in-your-face confrontational because He knew others’ motives ([Matthew 3:7](https://www.biblestudytools.com/matthew/3-7.html)).
* Because He could see into people’s hearts, He didn’t play the games of the religious elite or let them trap Him or trip Him up ([Mark 12:13-17](https://www.biblestudytools.com/mark/passage/?q=mark+12:13-17)).
* If you are in a toxic relationship or know someone’s motives are to use or manipulate you, the best thing to do to improve that relationship is sometimes to end the relationship. As an overall rule, don’t take the toxicity. Love like Jesus did.
* He exercised love with dignity, but also knew when to be humble so God would be glorified.

For more on strengthening your relationships with God and others, see Cindi’s books [Letting God Meet Your Emotional Needs](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/letting-god-meet-your-emotional-needs/), [Women on the Edge](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/women-on-the-edge/), [When a Mom Inspires Her Daughter](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/when-a-mom-inspires-her-daughter/), and [12 Ways to Experience More with Your Husband](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/12-ways-to-experience/).

**Cindi McMenamin** is a national speaker, Bible teacher, and the author of 17 books, including [*When Women Walk Alone*](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/when-women-walk-alone/) (150,000 copies sold), [*When a Woman Overcomes Life’s Hurts*](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/when-a-woman-overcomes-lifes-hurts/), [*Drama Free*](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/drama-free/), and [*When Couples Walk Together*](https://strengthforthesoul.com/product/when-couples-walk-together/), which she co-authored with her husband of 32 years. Find out more about her speaking ministry, coaching services for writers, and books to strengthen your soul, marriage, and parenting, at [*www.StrengthForTheSoul.com*](http://www.strengthforthesoul.com/).