

Building Strong Relationships

It's a common myth that resilient people are lone warriors. In fact, research shows that the most resilient people are those with strong relationships and good networks of support both at home and at work.

Strong Relationships are built on empathy, trust and mutual respect. They don't happen automatically – they require time and energy. So, we've brought together a collection of top tips and resources to help you identify and invest in those key relationships.

BUILDING EMPATHY

Think of a work relationship you'd like to improve. Who would you like to get on better with? Take some time to focus on them and their situation. Put yourself in their shoes.

- What's important to them?
- What challenges are they facing?
- What might they need right now to support them?

HOLDING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Effective communication is the foundation for any relationship. But what we think we're communicating is often misinterpreted, and it can be easy for us to not take responsibility for what we're saying.

Courageous conversations start with respect. Figure out first what you both want, and then create a safe environment that supports transparency. Once that's done, follow the flow, taking time to acknowledge your individual perspectives, and looking for a solution that you both can commit to.

**It's a commitment
and a practice to
choose courage over
comfort.**

Brene Brown

ACTIVE LISTENING

How often do you give the person you're talking to your full attention? It can be so easy for us to interrupt, start giving advice and assume we understand.

Active listening is about showing you're listening, letting go of our own judgements and being curious.

CREATING MOMENTS OF POSITIVITY

Research suggests that you need 9 positive interactions to one negative interaction to keep relationships on a positive footing. That's a high ratio. Which of your relationships might need a boost of positivity?

Here are a few ideas of how to do it:

- Have fun together
- Share experiences
- Celebrate
- Say thank you

Humanitarian workers report less trauma when they have high levels of social support.

Source: J. Fawcett, 'Stress & Trauma Handbook: Strategies for flourishing in demanding environments.' World Vision International, 2003.

BE INSPIRED

Ready to find out more? Here are some of our favourite talks and books to help build relationships.

[Vulnerability](#), TED Talk by Brene Brown

[Connected, but alone](#), TED Talk by Sherry Turkle

[How to have a good conversation](#), TED Talk by Celeste Headlee

Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives.

Good genes are nice, but joy is better, Harvard Gazette, April 2017

'The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work', by John Gottman and Nan Silver (Orion, 2000)

'Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High', by Kerry Paterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler (McGraw-Hill, 2002)