

Relating For Oneness

Energising Organisations through Wholesome Leadership

Life is relating. It is a series of interactions in which everything is connected to everything else. When I put this pen to paper and write, I cannot help thinking of the forest from which this paper came, the workers who made this pen, the thousands of people who have been our teachers, the farmers who grow the food which nourishes our bodies . . . and so on, in never ending connected chains.

When I think of relating, I think of connecting, joining, interacting, sharing, and celebrating together. To me, it is a coming together, a gathering of energy, spirit . . . a union of some kind. It is as if I am reaching out from the boundary that I call "I", and connecting with the "you" inside the boundary of what we call "you". I can also relate to other entities (bounded creatures or things) like animals, rocks, places and trees. If there were no separate entities, there would be no relating . . . only processes unfolding with time.

What is the purpose of our relating as human beings? We are either running after something or running away from something. Ultimately our relating is driven by our desires. Through relating, we seek the fulfillment of our needs and wants.

These needs and wants, in fact, the whole fabric of our desires which drives our relating arises from a false notion of who I am. When I imagine myself to be my body or mind or intellect, I necessarily limit myself. The rest of my life journey, of which relating and interacting is a good part, then becomes a struggle for completion, a striving for wholeness. It is a search for peace, love and unbroken bliss which can only be found when I am my Real Self. In fact, the Real Self is the infinite substratum of everything. As the Upanishads roar silently, it is the already attained goal!

It is proposed that the source of all values is the Real Self. All that we value in life is valued because it brings us closer to the complete and unbroken understanding that we are free, pure, unbounded oceans of love.

For example, we value 'Truth' because it is a reflection of the Real I . . . which is beyond any contradiction and which includes everything. Similarly, we value 'caring' because it is a spark of the fire of love and compassion which is born out of pure understanding . . . our innermost core of being.

The diagram and table below depict the differences that arise in relating from a false notion of who we are and from our Real Self:



FALSE SELF (Partial)	VS.	REAL SELF (Whole)
Ego, Mind		Mystery, No-Mind
Fear		Love
Stressed and Unbalanced		Healthy and Balanced
Dis-ease		Ease
Bound		Free
Rigid		Fluid
Artificial		Real
Deficient		Full
Fixed		Flexible
Greedy		Giving
Habitual		Creative
Focused on thoughts		Present to feelings
Judging		Accepting
Attached		Detached
Circumference		Centre
Agitated		Peaceful
Dual		One

Table.1 : Differences in Relating from the False Self vs. the Real Self

The Real Self encompasses and accepts the left hand side.

If asked about how we can improve the quality of relating, I would unhesitatingly answer "Be your Real Self". Everything else will spontaneously flow from that.

However, such a comprehensive solution may disappoint some readers. They may feel let down. I am, therefore, sharing below what happens to relating as we expand our understanding of who we are and come closer to our Real Self. A few devices and insights gleaned from experience are also shared.

Relationships as Mirrors

Relationships are like mirrors. We often see in the other, things that we have disowned, rejected or shut down in ourselves. These manifest as judgements. We see things not as they truly are, but as we are.

So, can we use our relating to see ourselves as we would a mirror? Can we get a better look into our inner-space through the hurts and reactions that invariably arise in our relating?

A simple way to do this, for example, is to be conscious the next time you get hurt in relating. Ask, "who is getting hurt? Who is upset?" Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (detached observation) help us to see things from the standpoint of awareness. Stand under everything to truly understand! This will be a liberating experience.

Related to this is the practice of being present, conscious of the here and now. When I am mindful of my own feelings, assumptions, my own patterns of needs, and my own inner wounds, I am free of them. A Sufi exercise is worth sharing here: Examine the assumptions behind your feelings and actions, and then, examine the assumptions behind your assumptions.

Relating as Caring

Mother Teresa was once asked about her approach to good management. She answered with two questions: "Do you understand your people?" and "Do you love your people?"

Good management is all about caring.

Caring to me is a combination of 'understanding' and 'love in action'. Both are needed in relating. Such caring could be expressed towards ourselves, our family members, our colleagues at work, our customers and the natural environment. Relating based on values expresses itself as caring.

Relating for Healing

Remembering the Real Self in the other, and seeing it as the same Self which is my, makes relating a very wholesome and easy process. Before you speak, remember who you are. Also, remember that the understanding awareness behind the other person's body-mind-intellect is none other than you . . . as pure understanding. This completes the circle of understanding. It unites two people in a bubble of holy understanding. What transpires within this bubble of Holy Communion (the true import of communication), then becomes healing, evolutionary and beneficial.

It does not matter if the other is not seeing this the way you are. Your own integrity and peacefulness will create its own positive ripples in the process of relating.

I find maintaining eye-contact useful for this perspective. It helps me to listen totally and also to express myself honestly, caringly and directly when I speak. Listening and honest expression build trust, which further expands our understanding and notion of who we are. The closer I come to my own centre, the closer we come to each other. This device can help immensely in healing conflict.

Three other things I have found useful is resolving conflicts:

1. Focusing our attention on a larger vision of life. Remembering why we are here. Keeping in mind that life is ultimately about expanding peace, health and bliss. This keeps the perspective right, and creates a common ground for healing conflicts.
2. Secondly, making our purpose the quick and joyful "resolution of the conflict in a manner that benefits all", rather than "winning the conflict". Finally,
3. The focus of our relating is on "what is right" rather than on "who is right". We choose to move forward on a joint exploration of what is true in a situation (in a spirit of 'dialogue') rather than get stuck in our positions to prove who is right (in a spirit of 'debate')

Relating as Service

If I look at life as an opportunity to serve (in a spirit of seva), then I can bring gifts to each situation. A kind word, inspiring thoughts, encouragement, hope and sharing love... all help the other to grow.

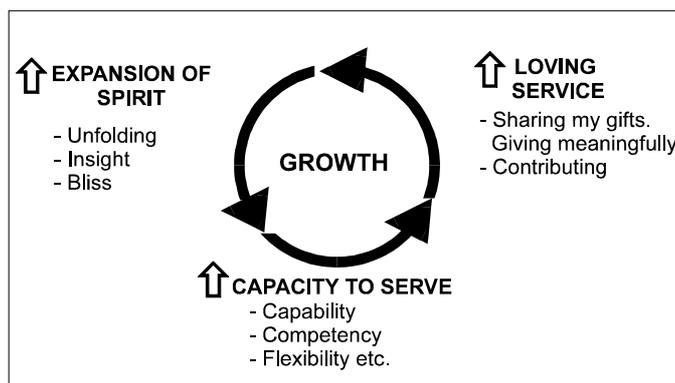


Fig.1: Relating as Service

As I give from the very best I have in my relating, I expand my spirit. I come closer to my Self. This in turn, increases my capacity to give more. I stretch and grow. This releases more joy and peace as shown in the figure above.

Relating as Development

Man is God veiled. God is man revealed. Relating is the dynamics of God/ the self unfolding itself, revealing itself. It is about Discovering, Developing and Transforming.

If I am the source of all Values, then my relating will unfold value in other people. It will become a spontaneous spur for evolution. It will become the unfolding of love.

When I relate from my center I am not the same anymore. I am stretched to respond in new ways. I am touched, cherished, loved or affected in some way. This helps me see things differently, and therefore, act differently.

Where there are some things that needed balancing in my life, they start getting evened out as I relate freely to others. This is just like two water bodies at different levels tending to move towards the same level when connected. This can happen only through relating from a space which allows a free flow of ideas, information, feelings and perceptions to move between people. When the limiting boundaries of the mind have been transcended, we connect with powerful forces of transformation.

When I let-go into the peace of my own being, all the associations, memories, desires, forms and limits of my false I are left behind. These then come into play in relating appropriately as needed. This brings a transformational and facilitative quality to relating. It makes for healing, learning and development.

Whole people who operate from the source of all values namely awareness and understanding, spontaneously become instruments of the whole. They become channels for healing and connecting and relating to happen. They enable people to move from being isolated waves on the surface of the ocean to being the whole ocean. Like sources of light and love through their interactions, they enable people to see the oneness of life and to act in inspired ways for the well-being of the whole.

Conclusion

So, to summarize:

- All of life is a play of relating
- We are all seeking the real I
- The source of all values is the real Self
- The dynamics of life (including relating) is an evolutionary/learning process which is nudging us towards being our Real Self (which we are right now). We have to just awaken to this truth.
- The quality of our relating depends upon the inner space from where we are coming. It depends upon who we are.
- If we are the Real Self, relating really drops off, because all is one. There is no other to relate to!
- In our life journey of unfolding understanding, and expanding care, a few things when kept in mind can help improve the quality of relating.

Creative relating based on our values dissolves boundaries. It expands both our understanding and also our love-in-action.

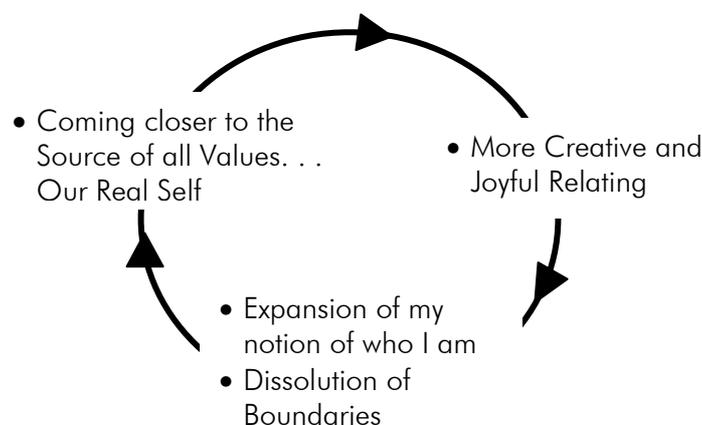


Fig 2: Virtuous Cycle of Value-base Relating

As this virtuous cycle gathers momentum in our life, energy is released. We experience a playful lightness and inner peace underpinning all our interactions. We come closer to our Real Self, the source of all values.

The culmination of life's journey of relating is not a static dead end called "oneness". It is an endless truth, ever evolving and endlessly unfolding. It has no beginning and no end. It can at best be described as a Divine Play whose purpose itself is celebrating the bliss of knowing that God is Love. If we forget this, we lose everything. If we remember this, we are everything. The mysterious oneness, love and peace of the Real Self then becomes not only the goal of Human Relations Development, but also the source of the very best we can offer the world.

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