

Week 10 Evangelism: Developing a Relational Foundation

This effort must begin with investing in the **relational** aspect of the friendship. By relational we mean; building a **genuine friendship** based on **mutual interests** and **common experiences**. We mean the intentional effort to make the friendship **real** and lasting. We mean taking time to do fun things together; to eat, work, play & laugh together.

In the relational building phase of the friendship we are in the “**red zone**” for sharing the gospel or diving into anything major spiritually. In the relational building phase of the friendship we are intentionally focusing on **developing & strengthening an authentic, strong and lasting** relationship.

Psychological Approach:

“What is my overarching _____ towards this relationship?”

Acceptance & Tolerance: Our overarching mentality is one of love, grace, mercy, compassion, acceptance & tolerance. Our expectation is for this unbeliever to act as such; as a carnal _____ of this _____, who is strictly led by their sin nature, with no understand of the truth!

Respect & Dignity: Although this person has much to learn & will have glaring failures that may even offend you...they still are worthy of our respect & should be treated with dignity. Be open to even learn a few things from them.

Don't Criticize, Condemn or Complain: This person will have many areas in their life worthy of criticism & condemnation but that is not your goal. Our goal is to _____ communication and _____ the relationship and nothing shuts someone down quicker or tears down trust better than criticism.

Avoid Controversy and Arguments: Our goal is not to win the battle over a certain political/social issue, it is to win the war over sin and death! Avoid at costs needless controversy. Our goal is not to have this person think “*we are totally different*” but rather “*we are very similar*”

Be Genuine and Authentic: Our goal is to build trust and advance the friendship into the more personal areas of life. The more genuine and authentic we are, and the more we allow our walls to come down the more likely our friend is to trust us and become vulnerable themselves.

Be a Listener & a ‘Rememberer’: Our goal in this stage of the friendship is to observe and gather as much information as possible to help us steer the relationship into the more personal. The more we listen and the less we interrupt with controversy and criticism the more info we will obtain.

Personal Approach:

“How am I going to direct this relationship into the more _____ areas?”

Take the Initiative: We must take the initiative in this relationship. Our friend will not be driven to make time, or to schedule events or to get more personal. We have to guide all of that if it is to happen!

Make the Time: We must realize and accept that this relationship is going to take a lot of our time, if it is going to accomplish what we set out to accomplish. We must make the necessary sacrifices.

Keep in Regular Contact: The more able we are to stay in regular contact the more success we will have in developing a meaningful friendship. Text/call this person several times a week & eventually daily, with questions of “How are you?” “How was your week?” “Did you see that?”

Be Thoughtful: Remember the key things they mention in conversation and use those things to be thoughtful later. If they like a certain kind of tea, buy it for them. If they had a recent interview, call and ask how it went. If their child is sick, ask how they are doing.

Make Small Gestures: Similarly, take every opportunity to express an “I was thinking of you” moment. Stop in at their place of work when you are in the area. If their wife is sick, bring them dinner. If their favorite team won the game, mention that you saw it.

Be there in Times of Need: Anytime they need help, be there. Be the one that rushes to help get their car out of the ditch. Be the one that shows up when their grandmother is in the hospital. Be there when their basement floods. Help shovel their snow. And go the extra mile when helping.

Remember Important Dates: Remember their anniversary and birthdays with a card and a small gift. Remember their children's birthdays and give a meaningful gift, based on their unique interests. Remember deaths or critical events in their life and there corresponding dates/triggers.

Celebrate Successes: Be there when they succeed. Celebrate their victories and support their accomplishments.

Don't Always be Serious, be Goofy & Fun: True friendships aren't all serious all the time. They have a balance of mood and emotion. And if anything, friendships tend to thrive the most when friends are laughing and having fun together.

Social Approach

“In what ways can I create a _____ through common experiences?”

Discover Hobbies & Interests quickly: The sooner you can identify someone's hobbies and interests...and the sooner you can join them in those activities...the sooner you will be on your way to a genuine & lasting friendship.

Schedule Activities based on their Interests: Schedule activities and outings around their interests...find mutual interests that will engage you both on a personal level. Look for creative ways to have them enjoy their interests in a way they never have before (*a new hunting location, a new restaurant*).

Engage their Family: The sooner you can engage with and connect with someone's family in a meaningful way...the sooner you will be on your way to a deep & personal friendship. In some situations it is more important to connect initially with the family, than the person!

Get on their Turf. Especially their Home: The sooner you can get into someone's home...the sooner you will be on your way to a deep & personal friendship. It is amazing how many walls come down once you are in someone's home, especially if there is food involved!

Wherever you are going, take them with you: Maybe you have to run to Sellingsgrove to get a chair off Craigslist. Maybe you have to drive to Philly for a work project. Maybe you're taking your kids to the park in the evening. *TAKE YOUR FRIEND WITH YOU!!!*

Whatever they are doing, do it with them: Maybe they have to clear out their basement. Maybe they have to paint their Mom's apartment. Maybe they are remodeling a room or rebuilding a car. Maybe they sit on their deck in the evenings and have a beer.