



## Human Relations Made Easy

by Betsy Barbieux

**G**etting along with others is essential to a happy, prosperous life. There are some people who just can't wait to get up in the mornings because they are excited about the day, the people they'll meet, and the growth they'll experience. They generally get along with just about everyone. On the contrary, others hate getting up, don't like work, don't like themselves very much, and certainly pass that dislike along to others.

Community association managers don't have to look too far out their office window to see examples of each as they come and go from the

clubhouse. You are delighted to see those who are positive—they encourage you and make your day easier. The others, well, sometimes you wish you didn't have to listen to them. You have spent years trying to win them over, make a friend, and hope they'll be just a little happier about life. Some you win; others you're still working on!

Why do some people get along with people better than others? You can tell they have good family relationships, devoted friends, and adoring residents and associates. They seem to have time to have fun, fulfill a passion, interest, or hobby, and take a vacation. The unhappy ones don't seem to have any of these

things and certainly don't invest their time in others. They are stingy with their time, money, and praise. It's almost as if they think you will be more motivated by criticism. Fear of criticism only motivates for a short while. It doesn't work on kids and it won't work on your employees or residents. And it doesn't work on you!

Here is an interesting story from Dr. Robert Rohm, President of Personality Insights, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, that goes to the point:

*During my second year of college, I had an English teacher by the name of Mrs. Simmons... Our first day of class, Mrs. Simmons held up her grade book and showed us that beside our names she had allotted each of us 1000 points. I was immediately intrigued as I wondered why in the world we already had 1000 points by our names. Mrs. Simmons went on to explain that we would have ten tests in her English class that semester, each valued at 100 points. She was starting with the assumption that we would all make 100 percent on each of the ten tests. We had not even had the first test yet and we already had 1000 points. That was exciting!*

*Mrs. Simmons further explained that if we scored 90 percent on our first test, we would lose 10 points from our 1000 point total. We would then have 990 points or a 99 percent average. If we made an 80 percent on the next test, we would have 970 points remaining or a 97 percent average, and on she went. Then she smiled at us and said, "Just think, you all have an A+ right now, so work hard to keep it!"*

*I cannot explain what happened inside of me that day. I had never had a teacher approach my grade in that manner. I think that in my mind I had always begun each new class with a zero, or an F. I began with the notion*

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*that I had to start at the bottom and work my way to the top. Now, all of a sudden things were different. Mrs. Simmons started us at the top!*

Can you imagine how it would feel if you started each day with an A+? That you didn't have to earn your "grade" as a manager? What an exhilarating feeling to be working from abundance instead of scarcity; from a position of respect instead of disrespect; from an attitude of gratitude instead of cynicism; feeling blessed instead of cursed; living with hope instead of despair.

If you think starting with an A+ is a wonderful position to be in, think how much your family members, employees, and residents will appreciate it. Whether you are a manager, board member, or

resident, there are some simple ways to give an A+ to those around you. They happen every day in scenarios like these. See if you can fill in the blanks. Answers are at the end.

At a previous board meeting, you offered to assist the subcommittee by volunteering to gather preliminary information from several different sources regarding pool resurfacing. You decided to do your "shopping" via the Internet, found some sites with relevant information, and gathered your information and prices. Two days after you presented your findings to the board, you realized the internet prices were based on 2007 costs and thus substantially misstated. Now what do you do? Defend yourself or say " \_\_\_\_\_ ."

Your new manager took it upon himself to call all the residents, introduce himself, and ask for opinions and feedback about the



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management and condition of the association. It's not really part of his job description. No other manager had ever done that before. At first you think, "That's terrific." But then you get skeptical. You wonder, "What's he up to?" A fleeting thought crosses your mind—"Does he expect overtime or a bonus?" Now what do you do? Continue with your skeptical mindset or say "\_\_\_\_\_."

Your fellow board member, Joe, is a pain. He doesn't see things the way most everyone else does. He often comes up with a cockeyed idea and seems to drag the board meetings off point. But you have to admit, as annoying as he is, sometimes Joe saves the day. He makes you consider issues you'd never have thought about. Now regarding the agenda item about revamping the website, he hasn't offered his strange opinions. You know if he does, it'll be offbeat and probably take up 30 minutes of the meeting. Now what do you do? Keep quiet or say "\_\_\_\_\_?"

It's 5:00 P.M. and everyone is shutting down and closing up to go home. Just then the jingle bell on the door tells you someone has walked in. It's your board president. He's come in for one reason, but you realize he is the perfect person to make the remaining call you have to make. He's



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not an easy person to ask anything of. He is gruff, short tempered, and certainly not polite. Now what do you do? Be curt or say "\_\_\_\_\_."

Your board secretary brings you some information she received from her local CAI chapter regarding some legislative updates. She is very excited about her "gift" to you. In reality, she's wasted her time because you already knew about those updates and had known about them for several months. Now what do you do? You can cut her short or say "\_\_\_\_\_."

You won the Communities of Excellence Award in the Communications category. The application required you to submit a lengthy narrative and slave over answering multiple questions about the development of the initiative, the goals and objectives, specific problems to be addressed, how the residents were involved, the impact of the initiative on the community, the lasting effect on your community, and the challenges that had to be overcome in establishing the initiative. In other words, it was a dozen pages of detailed information. But the initiative itself was a year-long and involved hundreds of volunteer hours, not just the few hours it took you to put it all together on paper. You can take credit for the award and think "\_\_\_\_\_ did it," or you can say "\_\_\_\_\_ did it."

Here are the answers. How did you do?

- **The Six Most Important Words**—*I admit I made a mistake.*
- **The Five Most Important Words**—*You did a good job.*

- **The Four Most Important Words**—*What is your opinion?*
- **The Three Most Important Words**—*Will you please?*
- **The Two Most Important Words**—*Thank you.*
- **The Least Important Word**—*I*
- **The One Most Important Word**—*We*

So why do some people get along better with others? They choose to do so. So can you. Now would be a good time to be a Mrs. Simmons to someone today. We'll all respond better to your positive words, attitudes, and actions.

*Betsy Barbieux is a professional development coach with Image Inside & Out. For more information, you may contact her at (352) 728-5075, or [betsy@imageinsideout.com](mailto:betsy@imageinsideout.com). ■*

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