

## Triple-A Relationships

**Purpose:** Persuade people to consistently build Triple-A relationships.

How many of you have used AAA to decide where to stay on a trip?

A triple-A rating is important to many hotels and restaurants.

I look to see how many diamonds a hotel is rated.

If it has only 1 diamond, I wonder about the quality and lack of amenities.

If it has 5 diamonds, I know that it's fabulous like a Ritz-Carlton property. (And I can't afford it!)

As we discuss triple-A relationships in this lesson, would you use the 5-diamond scale to rate how well you build relationships with people?

AAA relationships help people learn to love, gain confidence, overcome fears, and expand their comfort zones. Most people respond very favorably to AAA relationships because everyone has emotional needs as real and powerful as their physical needs. People crave for **approval**, **appreciation**, and **acceptance**.

Triple-A relationships involves these 3 actions you can take with people.

Let's apply this lesson in our homes, in the church, in our schools, and in the workplace.

They are powerful ways to show that we love others. These actions all begin with the letter A.

**The first triple-A action is Approval.** Mark 14:3-9 The good news of Jesus is a positive gospel.

Many people will do almost anything for approval and recognition. Some are silently screaming for attention. Here is how to create a healthy climate in which people can live, learn, work, and improve.

Try this rule of thumb or the 4 to 1 formula.

Hold your hand like this with me to remember this rule of thumb or 4 to 1 formula.

Be sure to point out 4 right answers, solutions, good qualities, desired behaviors, or proper actions for every one time that you must point out problems or correct mistakes, poor performance, or bad habits.

Of course, you don't have to do all this in the same conversation.

Over a period of time in your relationship with a person, seek to express approval at least 4 times as much as giving corrective feedback.

Examples: Dr. Baker and his college physics class: Performance improved just by setting a positive approach.

Math classes controlled research study: 20% improvement when teachers only focused on the wrong answers.

70% improvement when teachers only focused on the right answers.

Obviously there are times that we must correct mistakes, stop bad behavior, and warn people of danger.

The lesson here is the power of positive reinforcement. Compliment good behavior generously.

Using this powerful action of approval builds your relationship with just about anyone.

**The second triple-A action is Appreciation.** Romans 16:1-6 A total of 36 people are named in Chapter 16.

The apostle Paul recognized and praised people and gave them credit for their good work.

People need to know that you appreciate them as worthwhile individuals.

When you express **specific** appreciation to them, they feel more valuable.

Feeling valuable and worthwhile strongly motivates a person to learn and improve their lives.

Let me demonstrate being specific.

How did it feel? ...How did that feel? Why did it feel better the second time? It was specific.

How much longer did the second expression of specific appreciation take? Only about 8 seconds.

The additional benefit of being specific is that it provides evidence of your sincerity.

**Specific** and **sincere** praise are powerful.

Many surveys reveal that people rate appreciation or praise from others as their number one motivator.

Remember the 10 lepers in Luke 17:11-19. Say "thank you". Send thank you cards and appreciation notes.

William James, the psychologist said, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."

**The third triple-A action is Acceptance.** Romans 5:8

People hunger to feel accepted and liked just as they are.

You provide strong motivation for them to change when you accept them as they are.

Carl Rogers, the psychologist, said, "When I accept myself as I am, I change; and when I accept others as they are, they change." I had to think about that statement for a while before I understood and agreed with it. He is **not** saying to accept wrong answers, mistakes, or bad behavior. He is talking about **accepting the person** as a valuable worthwhile individual.

The German philosopher, Goethe, said it this way, "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being." I had to think about that and digest it like the other statement. I have found it to be so true in my experience with thousands of people.

It is the self-fulfilling prophecy at work. Simply put, what you expect is what you get.

People usually live up to or down to your expectations.

Example: Make our guests feel welcome and comfortable when they visit our church worship and activities.

### **Visualize**

Look upon every person as valuable and worthwhile. Philippians 2:3-4

Sincerely endeavor to make others feel important. This may be the highest step toward building powerful relationships. How you feel about other people largely determines your ability to create an environment of approval, appreciation, and acceptance.

Think about it! Who do you think about when you remember people who influenced you the most?

Who do you remember when you recall a situation that had a good impact on your life?

I think of the positive supporters who reinforced good things in my life. I can show you my list of 21 people.

**Powerful Example:** At a university graduation ceremony a person was awarded an honorary doctoral degree. The audience gave him a standing ovation and would not sit down.

The Dean finally realized that the young group of graduates wanted to hear from the guest.

When he came back to the podium, he looked out into the audience as though to look into the eyes of each individual. He said these few words, "I like you just the way you are. I like you just the way you are." He sat down and received another standing ovation, but the graduates were satisfied and the program could continue.

Who do you think the person was? Yes, that person was another Rogers, not Dr. Carl Rogers, but you know him as Mr. Fred Rogers. Those graduates had to hear him say one more time what they grew up hearing from him on Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. Many of those young people were hurriedly sent to school each day by stressed, scolding parents. During school they were often teased or picked on by other kids and constantly corrected by their teachers. They returned home to those same fatigued and often critical parents or sometimes no parents were home at all.

They turned on their favorite late afternoon TV program and sat on the living room floor as Mr. Rogers emerged from that side door. He took off his jacket and put on his sweater; he took off his shoes and put on his slippers. During that special time with his TV friends he always said these magic words in such a personal way that it felt like the camera and TV set were not even between Mr. Rogers and his young friends. Many of you grew up hearing these special encouraging words, perhaps the only positive words you heard all day long, "I like you just the way you are. I like you just the way you are."

Most of us could never do exactly what Mr. Rogers did, but people all around us every day have the same need for approval, appreciation, and acceptance as those graduates who wanted to hear Mr. Rogers' special message to them one more time.

Let's all build **Triple-A Relationships** with **approval**, **appreciation**, and **acceptance** to create an environment in which everyone can live, love, learn, grow, serve, thrive, and achieve more of their potential.

That's why triple-A relationships are so important.

Your most important relationship is with Jesus Christ. He wants to accept you into His family, the church.