Relational Development

friendships ... business relationships ... romantic relationships ...

- Relationship of Circumstance – based upon life’s circumstances
- Relationship of Choice – you’ve chosen to initiate, maintain, and/or terminate

Relational Development

- All relationships go through various stages, Up and Down
- Outsiders can often tell what stage a relationship is in, by observing the interpersonal communication
- There are turning points in relationships
  - Causal
  - Reflective

Bill Rawlins’ 6 Stages of Friendship Development

- Role-limited interaction
- Friendly relations
- Moving toward friendship
- Nascent friendship
- Stabilized friendship
- Waning friendship
“Stage” talk
- Contact messages
- Closeness messages
- Maintenance messages
- Distancing messages
- Repair messages
- Dissolution messages

Models of Relational Development
- Two basic models
  - Staircase (Knapp)
  - Elevator (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond)
- Additional model: Joseph DeVito’s 6 stage model
- Lots of similarities between the models
BB&R’s Elevator Model of Relational Development

1. Preinteraction Awareness
2. Acquaintance
3. Exploration
4. Intensification
5. Intimacy
6. Differentiating
7. Circumscribing
8. Stagnating
9. Avoiding
10. Terminating

Relational Escalation

Best Friend/Lover/Spouse
Close Friend
Friend
Acquaintance
Stranger

“Going up?”

“Going down?”

Relationship Escalation

5. Bonding
6. Differentiating
3. Intensifying
2. Experimenting
1. Initiating

“Will you marry me?”
“Great friends for life.”
“Are you ready for kids?”
“What kind of pizza do you like?”
“Hi, my name is [name], nice to meet you.”

Relationship Deterioration

7. Circumscribing
8. Stagnating
9. Avoiding
10. Terminating

“Let’s not talk about this.”
“I don’t want to talk.”
“I really don’t like to be around you.”
“I want a divorce.”

“Going to read a book.”
“Ok, I’m going to the movies.”
“Are you ready for kids?”
“We’re going to dinner.”
“Nice to meet you.”
Relational De-Escalation

5 Turmoil OR Stagnation
4 Deintensification
3 Individualization
2 Separation
1 Post-Separation Effects

"Going down?"

Knapp BB&R
Bonding
Integrating Intimacy
Intensifying Intensification
Experimenting Exploration
Initiating Acquaintance

Knapp BB&R
Differentiating Turmoil/Stagnation
Circumscribing Deintensification
Stagnating Individualization
Avoiding Separation
Terminating Post-Interaction Effects

Movement Within and Between Stages/Floors
- Intimacy is not the only goal of relationships
- Not all relationships move through all 10 steps/floors
- Movement between steps is generally sequential
- Movement occurs within stages
- Relationships are constantly changing
- Movement is always to a new place
6-Stage Model of Relationships (Joseph DeVito)

Contact
Perceptual
Interactional
Involvement
Testing
Intensifying
Exit

Relational Development

Intimacy
Intrapersonal
Interpersonal
Social bonding
Commitment
Dissolution
Social/public
separation
Dissolution

Repair
Intrapersonal
Interpersonal
Repair

Relational Maintenance

Stage 1: Meeting
Stage 2: The Chase
Stage 3: Honeymoon
Stage 4: Comfortable
Stage 5: Tolerance
Stage 6: Downhill
Stage 7: Breaking up

Strangers Again... (Wong Fu Productions)

Steve Duck’s Typography (Relational Decay/Dissolution)

Breakdown: Disatisfaction w/relationship
"I can’t stand this anymore!"

Intrapsychic
• Social withdrawal, resentment, brooding on partner's "faults" & relational costs
  "I’ve been justified in withdrawing."

Dyadic
• Uncertainty, anxiety, hostility, complaints, conflict
  Discuss with partner ("our relationship")
  "I mean it."

Social
• Going public; seeking advice/support from others
  "It’s now inevitable."

Grave Dressing
• Tidying up memories, making relational history, storytelling ("cover story")
  "Time to get a new life."

Resurrection
• Recreating sense of own social value, envisioning future relationships (and self)
  "What I learned and how things will be different."
## Disengagement Strategies

### Avoidance/Withdrawal
- Physical & emotional withdrawal
- Relational ruse

### Manipulation
- Pseudo de-escalation
- Cost-escalation
- Make other feel guilty for wanting you to stay

### Positive Tone
- Take the blame
- Lessons learned

### Open Confrontation
- Direct dump
- Justification
- Nobody’s fault
- Blame game
- Negotiated farewell

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## What to do?

### Coming Together/Escalation
- Pay Attention
  - Small Talk/Ask Questions
  - Follow Initiation Norms
  - Communicate attraction
  - Self-Disclose appropriately
  - Monitor Perceptions & Reduce Uncertainty
  - Listen and respond appropriately
  - Be other-oriented

### De-escalation/Maintain relationship
- Express Emotions
- Relationship Talk
- Demonstrate Tolerance & Restraint
- Manage Conflict
- Self-Disclose appropriately
- Use Persuasion when necessary

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Leslie Baxter, 1984
7 Rituals characteristic of long-term relationships

- Couple-time rituals
- Idiosyncratic/symbolic rituals
- Daily routines & tasks
- Intimacy rituals
- Communication rituals
- Patterns, habits, & mannerisms
- Spiritual rituals