
LESSON B

Importance of Relationships

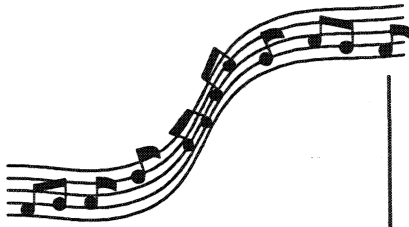
FOCUS: Relationships are important for several reasons: healthy relationships help us feel happy, influence our self-concept, help us learn to accept differences between people, contribute to a feeling of well being. Relationships are also important because we can not avoid the fact that we are connected to other people.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Play recordings of popular songs with friendship themes (Simon & Garfunkel, "Bridge Over Troubled Water," Bette Midler, "You Are My Hero", etc.) Ask students to list messages in these songs about the importance of relationships with others. List them on the board and point out the important themes about friendship. Use Student Handout, "Importance of Relationships."
2. Conflicts, problems and unhappiness arise in our relationships as we live our life only for ourselves, instead of fulfilling our responsibilities that we have to others. Show the importance of cooperation among and between friends by playing "Super Tic-Tac-Toe" and/or "Win As Much As You Can." These games illustrate that more is accomplished when we work together and act in behalf of others best interests rather than for ourselves and our selfish interests. See Teacher Information for directions.
3. Read or display a story that illustrates how friends help each other. Use Teacher Information, "The Hands of a Friend." [This is a great illustration of how we are connected. Albrecht was a great painter but that was only possible because Hans fulfilled his obligation to Albrecht. At the same time Albrecht was only able to be inspired to make the portrait of the hands because of his relationship with Hans and the love he had for him. In addition, Hans altruistic behavior was only possible by being concerned for the best interests of Albrecht and not his own selfish interests.]
4. Ask students to assess qualities they have that lead to healthy, on-going relationships. Use Transparency Master "Friendship Quiz." See Teacher Information. [This could also be a good time to have a discussion on what our obligations are in our relationships and what are the ways we fulfill or neglect them and how does that affect our relationships. Question 10 might be helpful in starting a discussion on what does it mean to be a friend.]

What did this quiz reveal to you about the kind of friend you are? What you can expect from a friendship?
5. Read a story about friendship from a Coed magazine. Discuss the types of relationships that were portrayed, qualities of friendship that each person did or did not exhibit. A good example of an appropriate story is, "The Ride Home," by Sid Vigmostad in the November 1981 issue.

List your favorite songs
with friendship themes
"You are my hero" . . .



Importance of Relationships

Relationships are important because:

- we are fundamentally connected to others and therefore obligated to them
- when we neglect this obligation, conflict arises in our relationships
- the source of well-being and happiness is being true to the obligations we have in our relationships.

1. What do messages in songs say about the importance of relationships with others? _____

2. Relationships are always important. But how may our obligations change in our relationships when we live on our own? _____

SUPER TIC-TAC-TOE

Divide class into small groups. In each small group divide into teams. One team is X, the other is O. Each team with 5 in a row wins. Winners receive a prize (candy bars, suckers, etc.)

[Teacher:

The object is for teams to finally realize that they can both win by cooperating, rather than competing. Both teams can be successful.]

Win as Much as You Can

Each player receives a card with a "C" on one side and a "D" on the other. The payoff for each player depends on the choices made by the group as a whole. The object is to win the most points for yourself.

One game is ten rounds of play. For each round, do the following:

1. Decide for yourself whether to play a "D" or "C".
2. Each player places her/his card on her/his knee, with the chosen side facing up, and covers the card with her/his hand so it cannot be seen.
3. When all four players are ready, remove your hand in unison to reveal your cards.
4. Use the chart on the board to calculate your score.
5. ***It is not permitted to bypass the game and simply fill in the score. All ten rounds must be played.
6. You may not discuss strategy with the others except during the bonus rounds. On bonus rounds (5, 8, 10), you may discuss strategy, but only for the time limit of three minutes. In spite of any agreements made, the rules of the game do not bind any player to abide by such agreements. Each player remains free to play as she/he chooses. Note that on bonus rounds, the resulting score is tripled.
7. For you information, if all four players choose "C" on every round, they will each earn 16 points by the end of the game.

PAYOFF SCHEDULE

4 D's	Lose 1 pt each.
3 D's	Win 1 pt each.
1 C	Lose 3 pts.
2 D's	Win 2 pts each.
2 C's	Lose 2 pts each.
1 D	Wins 3 pts.
3 C's	Lose 1 pt each.
4 C's	Win 1 pt each.

WIN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN				
Round	Time Allowed For Play	Confer With Group Yes/No	On Rounds 5, 8, & 10 Multiply Your Gain or Loss by 3	How Much Did You Gain or Lose This Round?
1	3 Minutes	Yes		
2	30 Seconds	No		
3	30 Seconds	No		
4	30 Seconds	No		
5	3 Minutes	Yes	Multiply Gain or loss by 3 =	
6	30 Seconds	No		
7	30 Seconds	No		
8	3 Minutes	Yes	Multiply Gain or loss by 3 =	
9	30 Seconds	No		
10	3 Minutes	Yes	Multiply Gain or loss by 3 =	
Total Time 15 Mins.			Your Total Score	

Important: Record and Total the Scores for Each Player in Your Group:

Your Score _____
 Player 2 _____
 Player 3 _____
 Player 4 _____

Groups Total Score _____

Now divide Group Total Score by 4 to get Average Score per Player

Average Score Per Player _____

THE HANDS OF A FRIEND

In a small chapel at Northwestern University, there is a statue of two hands raised in prayer. A simple statue - yet it has a strange story.

It goes back to the year 1490. Two young apprentices in France had often confided to each other their desire to study painting. But each of the friends, Hans and Albrecht, were too poor, and such study would take money.

Finally, though, they had a solution. Let one work and earn money while the other studied. Then when the lucky one became rich and famous, let him in turn aid the other. They tossed a coin and Albrecht won.

So while Albrecht went to Venice, Hans worked as a blacksmith. As quickly as he received his wages, Hans would forward them to his friend.

The months stretched into years, and at last Albrecht returned to his native land, an independent master. Now it was his turn to help Hans.

The two met in joyous reunion, but when Albrecht looked at his friend, tears welled from his eyes. Only then did he discover the extent of Hans' sacrifice. Hans' fingers could never handle a painter's brush.

And so it was in humble gratitude that the great artist, Albrecht Durer, painted a portrait of the work-ridden hands that had labored so that he might develop his talent. He presented his painting to his devoted friend.

That is why, as a symbol of friendship and sacrifice, the masterpiece was reproduced in the chapel at Northwestern.

-Author Unknown

Friendship Quiz

The "Friendship Quiz" will help you assess what qualities you have that lead to on-going relationships. Rate yourself on the scale from 1 to 5—1 = never, 3 = sometimes, 5 = always.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. If you make a promise, do you always keep it? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 2. Are you willing to work at maintaining good relationships? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 3. Are you "there" when your friends need you, even if it's not convenient? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 4. Do you generally support your friend as a person, even if you disagree, without putting him or her down? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 5. Can you usually avoid being bossy? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 6. Do you sincerely try to understand where your friend is coming from when you disagree? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 7. Do you return borrowed items promptly? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 8. Do you take time to be a good listener? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 9. Do you avoid talking about yourself most of the time? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 10. Do you consider your own needs before those of others? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 11. Do you work at sharing thoughts and feelings with your friend? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 12. Do you avoid judging even if your friend does something different from you? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 13. Are you willing to look at the other side of an issue at times? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 14. Are you willing to work at maintaining good relationships? | 1—2—3—4—5 |
| 15. Do you express affection for your friend? | 1—2—3—4—5 |

My Score _____

When you are finished, add all the scores together and divide by 15.

Evaluate where you are according to the following:

1 = time to step back and see what changes need to be made

2 = a little better, but still lots to work on. (Where will you start?)

3 = average, OK, getting along

4 = willing to go the extra mile

5 = maintaining a friendship is a high value to you

THE RIDE HOME

by S.J. Vigmostad

I have to say something, Sandra thought. This is ridiculous. Almost two and a half hours in this heat. I'm going to say something to him right *now*.

She took a deep breath, and--let it out. A truck roared by. He wouldn't have heard me anyway, she rationalized. She'd try again in a minute. She had to think about it.

But what was there to think about? A whole weekend spent hanging around garages, listening to endless talks about parts, prices, and Porsches? She was sick of cars, especially Joe's "new" '71 Corvette. How had he convinced her to trust that heap of junk?

Now they were stranded and had to start walking the ten or fifteen miles back to campus. She glanced anxiously at the sun sinking toward the horizon. It would be dark soon - and she was tired.

I *knew* this would happen. I'm going to say something she determined. Right *now*.

But she hesitated. Finally, she turned to her partner and murmured, "Joe, could we stop for a while and sit somewhere?"

Joe sighed. "I guess. But not for long. I want to get home."

Chicken, she muttered to herself, as they walked to a tree and sat down. But maybe it wasn't the best time to bring it up. It would just start an argument, and they had had enough of those lately. Maybe if they just talked...

She tried to catch his eye. "What are you thinking about?" she asked.

Joe shrugged. "Nothing," he

replied, chewing on a hangnail.

Determined, Sandra pursued the question. "You've got to be thinking about something. What were you thinking about?"

"My Corvette, I guess."

"Oh," Sandra said, disappointed.

"See?" Joe charged. "You ask me what I'm thinking about, then you put it down."

"I'm sorry, Joe. It wasn't that, really. It's just -" she faltered, then plunged in. "Well, I was afraid this would happen, but you said the car was all right. And now, we're stuck so far from home and it's getting dark..." she paused, then added cautiously. "Besides, my parents wouldn't like it if they knew."

"At 18, you're old enough to run your own life." Joe replied. "It's not like you're alone, I'm with you."

"I guess you're right," she said.

Joe just grunted. His attitude disturbed Sandra. They fell silent for several minutes. Sandra knew Joe didn't feel like talking. He seldom did lately. But, for some reason, she tried again.

"Joe did you have fun this weekend?"

"Sure, didn't you?"

"O, yeah," she answered, then paused for a moment. "Why did you have fun?"

"I don't know." Joe was now idly watching the traffic. He seldom, Sandra noticed, looked at her when he spoke to her. She waited for him to elaborate, but he didn't.

She sighed. "Sometimes you remind me of your father," she said. At this, he

Vigmostad, S.J. (1981). "The Ride Home," *Coed*, November 1981. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic, Inc. Permission does not include the right to grant others permission to photocopy or otherwise reproduce this material.

turned to look at her.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know." Sandra answered, running her hand lightly over the grass. "How he talks to your mom most of the time - kinda mean. Like he's sick of talking to her after all this time." She glanced at him to see his reaction.

He didn't answer. He was looking at the highway again.

"Joe?" she prodded. "Did you hear me?"

"Huh? Yeah, I heard you. What's the matter with you anyway? You've been really moody lately."

Sandra persisted. "Did you hear me? Are you sick of talking to me?"

Joe made a face in exasperation. "What do you mean, sick of talking to you? That's a stupid question."

"Can't you at least say yes or no?"

"Okay! No. I'm not sick of talking to you."

Sandra could tell it was useless. She decided to give up, just as Joe sprung up, saying, "Let's go."

Something was wrong, something was uneven inside her. But she couldn't figure out what it was. She wasn't unhappy in school or at home. It was something else. Her mother once told Sandra that she and Joe had become "habit" with one another.

"You've been dating so long," her mother had explained, "that you can't see your relationship objectively. If you could, you'd realize you and Joe are not basically compatible."

That was when Sandra was 17. She grew angry at her mother's words. Nobody's relationship remained exciting after the first year or so, she contended. Things became more practical, mature.

"Funny," Sandra thought, as a semi roared by. "This is the first time I've thought about that since it happened."

But the thought of losing Joe--she couldn't imagine it. He had been with her since she was 16, through everything - proms, parties, football games, graduation. It was just hot, she reasoned. She was tired. She knew she loved Joe, and...

Suddenly a car screeched to a stop in front of them, interrupting her thoughts. It was a 1958 faded green junk heap, blotched with rust. The driver leaned over and yanked the door open for them.

"It don't open from the outside," he called cheerfully. "Com'on in!" He gestured to them, a half-empty bottle of ginger ale in his hand.

Frightened, Sandra impulsively protested, "Oh, no, we're not -"

"Thanks!" Joe interrupted quickly. He turned to her muttering, "Ya gonna walk 15 miles? Come on!"

They climbed into the front seat, trying to avoid some greasy automobile parts that lay scattered on the floor. Sandra scratched her leg on the torn vinyl upholstery as she slid into the middle of the seat. Joe jumped in beside her and slammed the door.

"Thanks for the help," Joe said dutifully. "My car broke down a while back, and it was gettin' pretty hot out there." He stared ahead as he spoke.

"S'all right," the driver replied. "Had a lotta problems myself - before I got *this*." His nod indicated the car, and he paused expectantly.

"Uh? Oh, yeah, looks like it runs okay."

Sandra said nothing, but after a safe interval, she peeked at the driver. He was short and stocky--plump was a better word. She guessed he was around 30. He had stubby hair and small green eyes. His skin was blotched by scars - perhaps from acne. He wore an old, white dress shirt, the kind that was popular in the early '60s. His pants were black, covered with lint. She

glanced down at his shoes. They were black, too, with paint splatters.

She smiled to herself. An ugly duckling he was, and yet, what was it about him? She thought for a minute, then hit upon it.

He was small-town people, that's what it was, the kind that smiled at you without stopping to think about it. Small town and big-hearted. Despite her initial fear, she decided she liked him.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Charlie," he answered with a shrug. "Original, ain't it? My real name is Charles."

Sandra smiled at the unnecessary clarification. "Well, I'm Sandra, and this is Joe, that's no more original than Charlie," she laughed.

Joe gave her a puzzled look.

"You two look like you just been put through the wringer!" Charlie said. "How long you been out there?"

"About two hours," Sandra answered. "And I *feel* like I've been through the wringer!" It felt good to say what was on her mind.

"Ummmmm," Charlie nodded sympathetically. Then he brightened. "Want some of my ginger ale?" he offered, holding the bottle toward her. "It'll cool ya off."

"Oh - no thanks," Sandra replied. "Thanks anyway." She smiled politely.

Charlie held it out to Joe who regarded it with distaste. "No thanks," he muttered.

Unabashed, Charlie continued talking. "Where you folks headed?"

"We go to the university, that's where we're going now," Sandra explained.

Charlie nodded. "The ol' 'U', huh?" he replied over emphatically. He waited for a moment, then ventured, "I go to college, too."

Sandra and Joe both stared. He was

obviously lying, but instinctively Sandra knew why. He was insecure, eager to please, and he wanted their respect. Sandra finally stammered, "Oh, really? Wh-which one?"

"Which one?" He paused. "State."

Sandra nodded politely while Joe gave a choke of disbelief. She knew he was trying to keep himself from laughing outright. Anger burned inside her. Joe was always so unfeeling about people. If someone wasn't just right, he couldn't be bothered. He always seemed to blame people for their shortcomings. Sometimes he was rude, as he was to her father that time.

The first time Joe met Sandra's father was two years ago. They had arranged to attend a basketball game together. As she and Joe walked into they gym, Sandra's father shouted and waved at them.

Sandra smiled and waved back. She was eager for this meeting. Joe was very popular, and she was proud he dated her.

Joe walked reluctantly beside her. "Why didn't you tell me your old man was so fat?" he asked bluntly.

Sandra stopped in midstep. "What?" "Well, he is."

Sandra turned to look at her father. Yes, he was fat, definitely fat. So what? But her voice was uncertain. "I don't know why I never told you. I guess I didn't think it was important."

"Well, I wish you would have," Joe muttered. "Everybody we know is here..." His voice trailed off as they neared Sandra's father.

"So this is Joe!" he exclaimed. He had a booming voice which carried.

Joe uncomfortably glanced around him, replying, "Nice to meet you, sir."

"I hear you're quite a baseball player!"

Joe shrugged, his eyes searching the

floor. There was an awkward pause. Finally, Sandra's father said, "Well, why don't we get a seat before the house is full?"

But Joe hung back, "Oh - hey, listen, I gotta go to the locker room for a minute to talk to the guys. You go find seats. I'll be back a little later, okay?" He smiled weakly and disappeared into the locker room.

Sandra sat down, her face burning. He said only a minute, she told herself, avoiding her father's eyes. He'll be right back. But the game started and still Joe hadn't returned. The first quarter ended, then half time. No Joe.

Finally, the game almost over, he rejoined them. "Sorry," he said as he sat down. "Got kinda wrapped up with the guys. Never had been much of a basketball fan. You know how it is."

Sandra leaned her head back and closed her eyes. She had almost forgotten that episode! Or had she?

"What'cha guys goin' in?" Charlie's loud voice interrupted her thoughts. "In school, I mean."

"My major is English," Sandra replied. "Joe wants to be an architect."

Charlie whistled, "Boy, ya gotta study hard to do somethin' like that," he declared. He directed his remark at Joe.

Joe just looked at him, then mumbled, "Ummmmmm." He quickly withdrew from the conversation, gazing out the window.

Sandra flushed with anger and discomfort. Couldn't he at least be polite? Did he really think he was better than everyone else? Oh, it was just hot, that was all. And she was crabby, taking it out on Joe. Maybe he was hot and tired, too. This would pass. But for now, Sandra decided she would pretend Joe wasn't even there. Then she wouldn't feel so self-conscious talking to Charlie.

She faced the driver again. He was still talking about architecture.

"Yep, a *pret-ty* tough course to take, all them numbers and stuff. Sure glad that's not what I'm goin' in," he prompted.

Sandra felt compelled to ask the question he was fishing for. "What are you studying?"

Charlie cleared his throat with humble importance. "I'm gonna be a doctor."

Suddenly Sandra was all too aware of Joe's presence. "Oh, really?" she asked weakly. "What kind of doctor are you planning to be?"

"Pediatrics doctor," he answered pronouncing the word as if it were a recent addition to his vocabulary. Joe rolled his eyes at Sandra, but she ignored him.

"Oh, you must like children, then," she contributed.

Charlie didn't answer for a moment. Then it clicked. "Yeah, I *love* children."

Joe tried to get Sandra's attention by clearing his throat dramatically, but she pretended not to hear him. They all lapsed into silence and Sandra noted with relief the exit for the university.

"Listen, you can drop us off at the exit here, that'll be fine," she said.

"Well, where ya going?"

"Huron Street."

"I can go up there - no trouble. Just a few blocks."

"We don't want to put you out," she protested, knowing it was useless. She regretted she couldn't enjoy this shy, well-meaning man as she would have alone.

"Well, here ya are!" Charlie exclaimed with a smile, as the car sputtered to a stop on Huron Street.

Joe was out of the car before Charlie finished speaking. But Sandra said, "Thanks for going out of your way and all. We really appreciate it. And it was nice meeting you, Charlie!" She got out of the car and shut the door.

"S'okay - so long!" Charlie shouted

as his car chugged away.

The two were silent, gazing after him as they waited for the light to change. Finally, Sandra ventured, "He was nice, wasn't he Joe?" Somehow she hoped he would agree, even pretend to agree. It seemed strangely important.

But Joe stared at her in disgust. "Nice!" he almost bellowed. "The guy was an idiot! Did you hear that doctor routine? He's probably never been near a college in his life! Goes to State, probably the state penitentiary. And did you see that car? I didn't think we'd make it!"

Sandra said nothing to all this. She pursed her lips and watched him closely as he continued, shaking his head.

"And *you*! Here you go takin' it all in. You never talk to *anyone* you don't know. But him, you'd think he was your best friend!" He shook his head again, and ready to dismiss the whole episode, turned

to go. "Come on," he said, and grabbed her hand. But she jerked it free.

She glared up at him, ready for once, to argue. But she remained silent. What could she really say to him? He'd never understand. He didn't see things or people the way she did. And she suddenly realized how different they were.

As he stood there, she examined his face, so familiar, yet suddenly strange. Who was he? How had he changed so quickly? And then she realized it wasn't Joe who had changed. He had always been self-centered, inconsiderate, shallow. But she had been too dazzled and insecure to see it.

"I-I think I'd like to walk home alone, if you don't mind, Joe."

Without waiting for a reply, she turned from him and walked away. He started after her, totally confused, and she knew it. But she didn't turn back.

Get Smart

NAME _____
DATE _____

QUESTION'S FOR "THE RIDE HOME"

CO-ED's fiction this month is a story, by S.J. Vigmostad, about the break-up of a long-time, steady relationship. After you read it, jot down answers to these questions, and discuss them in class. They will help you get a better understanding of what the author is saying and what you can learn from it.

1. Write down three or four words that describe Sandra's feelings as the story opens. Why is it so difficult for her to speak her mind?

2. What do you think Sandra would really like to say to Joe?

3. How does Sandra finally open a conversation with Joe? What are the results? How else could she have approached the conversation?
