

# The Seven-Step Relating Cycle

Relating well to a client lends itself to a logical process, a sequence of steps that comprise the framework of relating. This can be called the relating cycle. The seven steps that make up this cycle are all necessary for successful and sustainable relationships. Through each step you make conscious choices that affect the success of the relating and relationship process.



## Step 1: Valuing

Valuing the client assigns worth and importance to that person and must be present to begin the relating process. It is the foundation, the starting place, for good relating.

## Step 2: Hearing

Hearing the client goes beyond the obvious auditory hearing and even beyond the use of listening skills. It is translating what is said into what is meant. It is hearing with the heart. Hearing with the heart can only be accomplished with highly developed listening skills and a coach who has sound and experienced intuition and discernment.

## Step 3: Understanding

Understanding the client is a choice made by you to place importance on and know the significance of what has been heard by you and ultimately meant by the client.

## **Step 4: Reacting**

Reacting is an inevitable, natural and unfiltered internal response to what is understood by you about the client. Your reactions must then be translated, however, into appropriate and accepting responses.

## **Step 5: Accepting**

Accepting is the choice to receive a person gladly, without disapproval, blinding judgment or compromise of our own personal integrity. It does not mean to endorse, buy into or agree with whatever is being received. It is to accept as something being true for another, even if not for you, and the resistance of the need to fix something.

## **Step 6: Responding**

Responding is the external relating step. All the others are internal, but color the actual responses made to the client. For this reason, it is more important to give very careful consideration to the formulation of responses, making choices to promote the client and the entire relating process. Your responses are what dictate the client's ability to relate with and to you.

## **Step 7: Honoring**

Honoring the client by showing that person respect through every step of the relating cycle and the entire coaching process is the filter through which all relating activities and phases must be screened. Honoring confers distinction on a client, and shows your desire to give, credit to them.

### **It's a Repeating Cycle**

The relating cycle will be experienced throughout every phase of coaching including:

- Creating the relationship
- Establishing trust and intimacy
- Creating a safe, supportive environment
- Communicating effectively
- Active listening
- Powerful questioning
- Facilitating learning
- Creating awareness
- Empowering the client
- Designing action plans
- Planning and goal setting
- Managing progress and accountability

Throughout each of these coaching functions the relating cycle will be present and will be repeated continuously as you seek to sustain the coaching relationship in the best interest, and for the growth, of the client. It is a process that must always focus on the client, not on you. You must understand and accept the client's reality, focus, goals, and intents on a continuing basis.

**Basic Best Practices of Relating**

In addition to the relating cycle, there are basic common sense practices of relating including:

- Be a model in every way
- Show more compassion than you think necessary
- Work on developing a model relationship
- Be engaged in curiosity, wonder and excitement about the client's agenda
- Empathize, don't sympathize just to make them feel better
- Understand who the client is, more than what they are doing or saying
- Give the client what he or she needs, not what you need for them
- Match the client's mood and language
- Identify the client's type quickly, if possible, to save time and relate better
- Show that you care, don't just talk about it
- Want more for this person than they want for themselves and share it