

Building B E T T E R *Bridges*

**Creating Great Relationships
with the People Who Matter Most**

Dr. Steve Frisch, Psy. D.

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For years I have been the collector of a wide variety of quotations. Too often, however I carelessly neglected to note sources. In preparing this book I have spent countless hours attempting, unsuccessfully, to locate the origins of some of the quotations cited. If you know the sources please contact me at the numbers listed in this book. My apologies to the authors, and to the readers for the absence of credit.

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For information, please contact
Alive And Well Publications

drfrisch@AliveAndWellNews.com
www.AliveAndWellNews.com
(847) 498-5622

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Not a Destination But a Journey

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It is impossible to be a practitioner in the field of psychology without being influenced in both my thinking and development by the many great writers in our field. However, I want to specifically acknowledge a special man whose ideas influenced me greatly.

William H. Fitts', Ph.D. conceptualization of the Interpersonal Wheel Model has been the core of my work, the cornerstone for Relationship Bridge-Building, and consequently the ideas in this book. I really think you got it right twenty-five years ago. Your ideas have been an inspiration and a beacon of light for me and all the people with whom I work.

Lastly, I want to say a special thanks to the most important teachers I ever have had—all the people I have had the privilege to work with throughout the years. Your belief and trust in me has sustained me throughout all the highs and lows of our time together. I only hope that I was able to give you half as much as what you all have given to me. May your lives continue to be all that you have worked so hard to create for yourselves and more!

*D*edication

With all my love, I dedicate this book to my niece,
Sarah Frisch. You have grown into a remarkable woman.
You are the pride and joy of my life.

About the Author

Dr. Frisch is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago, Illinois. He is a graduate of the Adler School of Professional Psychology where he received his doctorate in clinical psychology. He received his masters Degree from National-Louis University where he specialized in addictions counseling. His undergraduate degree was awarded to him by the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated with honors.

Dr. Frisch received post-doctoral training in two specialties at the Adler School of Professional Psychology. He completed a certificate training program in clinical hypnosis at the Center for the Advanced Study of Clinical Hypnosis. He also completed a certificate training program in Marriage and Family Counseling. He is licensed by the state of Illinois as a clinical psychologist. He was certified in Illinois by IAODAPCA as a certified drug and alcohol counselor in 1988.

Dr. Frisch's first book, *The Comparative Effectiveness of Group Therapy Versus Individual Therapy as Measured by Self-Concept, Interpersonal Orientation, and Degree of Emotional Adjustment* was an empirical investigation of the treatment modalities he utilizes in his private practice. This book was based on a study he conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of his treatment protocols.

His treatment philosophy has grown out of his diverse clinical background in which he has worked with a variety of different clinical populations. From these diverse experiences, Dr. Frisch has assimilated a variety of assessment and treatment interventions into his integrated treatment philosophy.

Dr. Frisch has worked on the staff of both inpatient and outpatient chemical dependency programs. This experience provided the foundation for his work with the issues that arise from the impact of chemical dependency on the individual, the family, and the workplace.

As a result of his work in the field of chemical dependency, Dr. Frisch founded the Adult Children Institute. This treatment clinic specialized in working with adults who were raised in families that were emotionally organized around the influences of drugs and alcohol, sexual and physical abuse, and emotional neglect.

The Adult Children Institute developed treatment interventions that enabled the program's participants to develop effective ways to heal from the aftereffects of the trauma they experienced from their earlier development. These aftereffects included substance abuse, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, shame, and relationship issues such as fear of emotional intimacy and commitment.

Dr. Frisch co-developed and was the coordinator of a mental health program for homeless adults who required treatment for substance abuse and emotional disorders. He developed an individualized assessment and treatment protocol that provided the impetus and support for each individual to rebuild their lives within their local communities.

The Relationship Bridge-Building and Pathfinders personal growth programs represent the integration of

Dr. Frisch's ongoing research and work in the area of human growth and potential development. Program participants develop the necessary awareness and skills to create an empowered life that maximizes their full potential for both their interpersonal and professional lives.

Whether by individual consultation, group experiences, workshops, or seminars, Dr. Frisch engages his audiences with a mixture of common sense and sound psychological principles of change that awakens and inspires his audiences to the possibility of what their lives can potentially become. He consults with individuals, couples, groups, and organizations that are seeking to implement the principles of development, change, and growth in their lives.

About the Bridge Building Program

The essential ingredient for a life full of wellness and purpose is our emotional and spiritual well-being. Our emotional and spiritual well-being is predicated upon the quality of the relationships we have with ourselves and with the people in our life.

Because of the connection between the quality of our significant relationships and our emotional and spiritual well-being, I created the Relationship Bridge Building tenets. The Relationship Bridge Building program was created from three fundamental premises. The first premise is that our life's journey is most fulfilling when we are able to create fulfilling relationships with the people who matter most. Very simply, the heart and soul of our emotional and spiritual well-being is closely linked to our ability to successfully navigate the oftentimes choppy waters of our interpersonal life.

The second premise of Relationship Bridge Building is that our emotional and spiritual well-being is directly connected to the relationship we have with ourselves. Not one of us is immune from the toxic aspects of the relationship we create with ourselves. Yet, by healing the most fundamental of all relationships we maintain, the relationship with ourselves, we can be more open to cre-

ating a place in our world that honors us rather than tears us down.

The third premise is that there is a set of skills easily learned that can enable anybody to repair the wounds we carry within us. Also, there is a set of skills we can easily learn that will enable us to create emotionally safe and satisfying relationships with people we choose to build relationship bridges with.

Quite simply, we all are pursuing the same end—to create a life for ourselves based upon who we are as well as who we are fully capable of becoming. No matter where we are in our life's journey, we are always in the process of becoming. Yet oftentimes, we get stuck along the way. When we become stuck, we can often see that the root of our obstacles lies within our relationship with ourselves and the people in our lives.

When we become stuck, we can feel overwhelmed by an inherent sense of powerlessness. And there's a very good reason for that. What we all must eventually discover for ourselves is that we become stuck for one very simple reason—that reason being ourselves. And it's impossible to transcend ourselves without doing things differently than we have up to that point.

That really is the first step we all must take before we can ever transform the drama in our lives into a space of emotional and spiritual fulfillment. We need to discover one essential, inescapable truth—we are the sole creators of what our life is today. We need to better understand how we are not mere victims of other people's cruelty and hostility—rather that we are the author of all that exists in our life.

That is exactly what rises to the surface for partici-

pant's in the Relationship Bridge Building program. Personal responsibility and freedom are the core of what each participant discovers. It is through one's ability to create relationships with other people based upon mutual responsibility and personal freedom that unlocks each individual's emotional and spiritual prison—the prison created by blaming others for not meeting their responsibility to make and keep us happy.

Afterall, we all are searching for a way to create a space in our lives that brings honor to who we are. A space where the relationships we create nurture our growth and development. A space where the relationship we have with ourselves encourages us to experiment and play. A space where we find a way of reclaiming all of those disowned parts of ourselves and bring them back into our life.

As a personal growth program, Relationship Bridge Building serves as a catalyst for transforming our life's journey. Quite simply, the only way to prepare for our life's journey is to begin the journey. And for many of us, the present moment is a tremendous amount of inertia to overcome.

This is exactly the point of Relationship Bridge Building. To discover deep within ourselves the majesty of living life in the here-and-now. To discover how the present moment is a powerful goddess. To discover the skills that live within each and every one of ourselves that enables us to most fully live our lives in the present, in the cleanest way possible with the people who matter most.

Relationship Bridge Building is a powerful elixir for what we all encounter in our lives from time to time: discouragement; cynicism; hopelessness; loneliness.

Just how might that be so? You see, the most impor-

tant tenet of Relationship Bridge Building is that we can stop defining ourselves by where we are in our lives today, for it is not so much where we are today, but in what direction our journey is moving us. And as we begin to feel more comfortable with our ability to create satisfying relationships, we will discover a completely different direction to our journey.

That is the exact connection between the quality of our relationships and our emotional and spiritual well-being. For our relationships add a whole new dimension to our life's journey. Our relationships add a hue of meaning and purpose without which we become disconnected from our path, aimlessly cut adrift from our true purpose in life.

Developing the skills to activate the dormant potential of cooperative living with the people who matter most is the ultimate aim of Relationship Bridge Building. Anyone can soon discover the power that effective communication can have on their journey. Developing safe supportive relationships that build trust among people can truly liberate us from the pain that we experience when we feel overwhelmed by the "stuck" points in our relationships.

Discovering, perhaps for the first time, the power of acceptance as well as the immediate shift that acceptance brings to any of our relationships, is a truly empowering discovery. Discovering the capacity for acceptance within and how to bring it to our relationships will free us from the toxic effects that our own judgmentalness exerts upon our relationships.

As you acquaint yourself with Relationship Bridge-Building, you will see yourself reflected within the pages of this book. The words on each page will take on a very personal meaning to you—a meaning meant to awaken your

soul to the possibilities of what your relationships can be.

As the tiny seeds of hope and potential within you are activated, be ready for what your life will become. For your life will become a wondrous mixture of hope and fear, growth and paralysis, excitement and discouragement.

And that's as it should be. But over time, the roller coaster ride will even out for you—of that you can be sure. And as it does, you will have trouble recognizing who is staring back at you as you look in the mirror every day.

Let me share this one last thought with you as you begin your journey. We have a saying that describes people's experience in the Relationship Bridge-Building groups.

"You couldn't pay me a million dollars to do it again, but you couldn't pay me ten million dollars to have never done it at all."

It is with this spirit that I encourage you to launch your own search for the path that will [re]connect you to your life's journey.