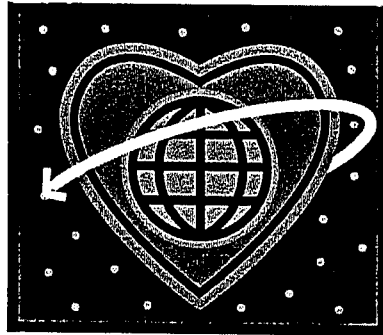


# **Building a Context for Relationship**

**Valued Roles, Relationships and  
Places of Belonging**



**Kamloops 2014**

Janet Klees

**You cannot create  
RELATIONSHIP...**

...but you can recognize,  
encourage, and design  
opportunities in which the  
miracle of friendship is  
more likely to occur.

**A CONTEXT FOR RELATIONSHIP**

- Discovering community spaces
- Ensuring presence
- Designing and supporting valued roles
- Connecting with other people

- ▶ The more time that a person is present and involved in **these** kinds of situations, then:
  - ▶ a) the richer his life experiences
  - ▶ b) the more familiar is his life to others – they can talk to him, relate to him
  - ▶ c) the more opportunity for learning and the greater his comfort in other typical settings
  - ▶ d) the more he is surrounded by other people who might provide some **natural support**

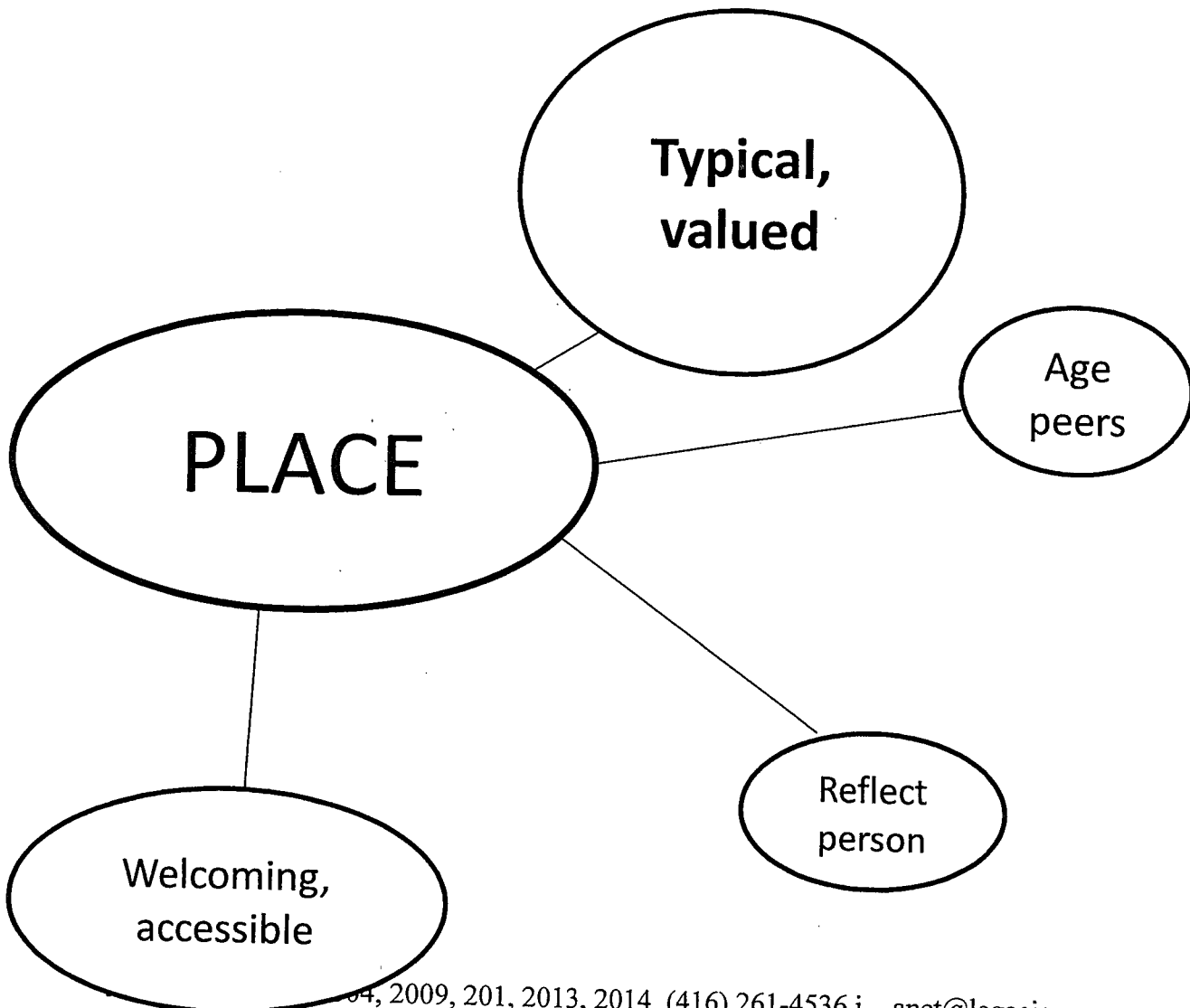
- ▶ e) the more likely that relationship of various kinds will occur

## Who Is This Person?

Interests Passions Skills Likes/Dislikes

Personality

Contribution

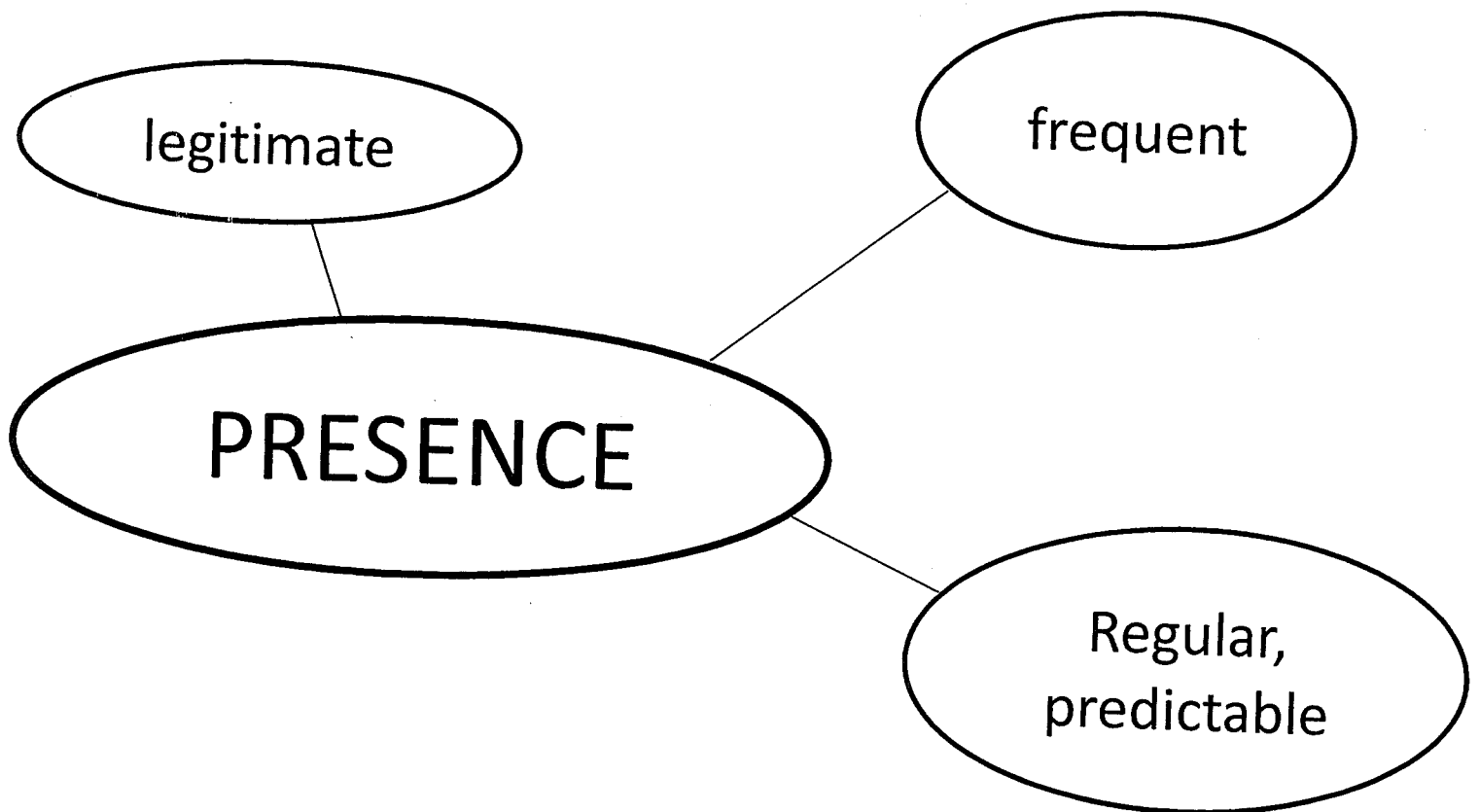


If people are not present:

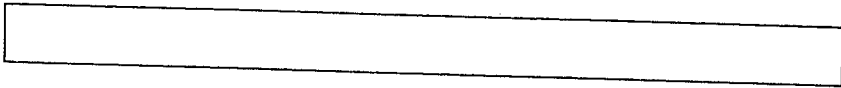
- frequently
- predictably
- legitimately

Then NOTHING will happen.

Let's use our energy and resources more productively!



So...Spontaneous one-offs  
Irregular attendance  
Constant variety  
*don't count*  
If your goal is RELATIONSHIP



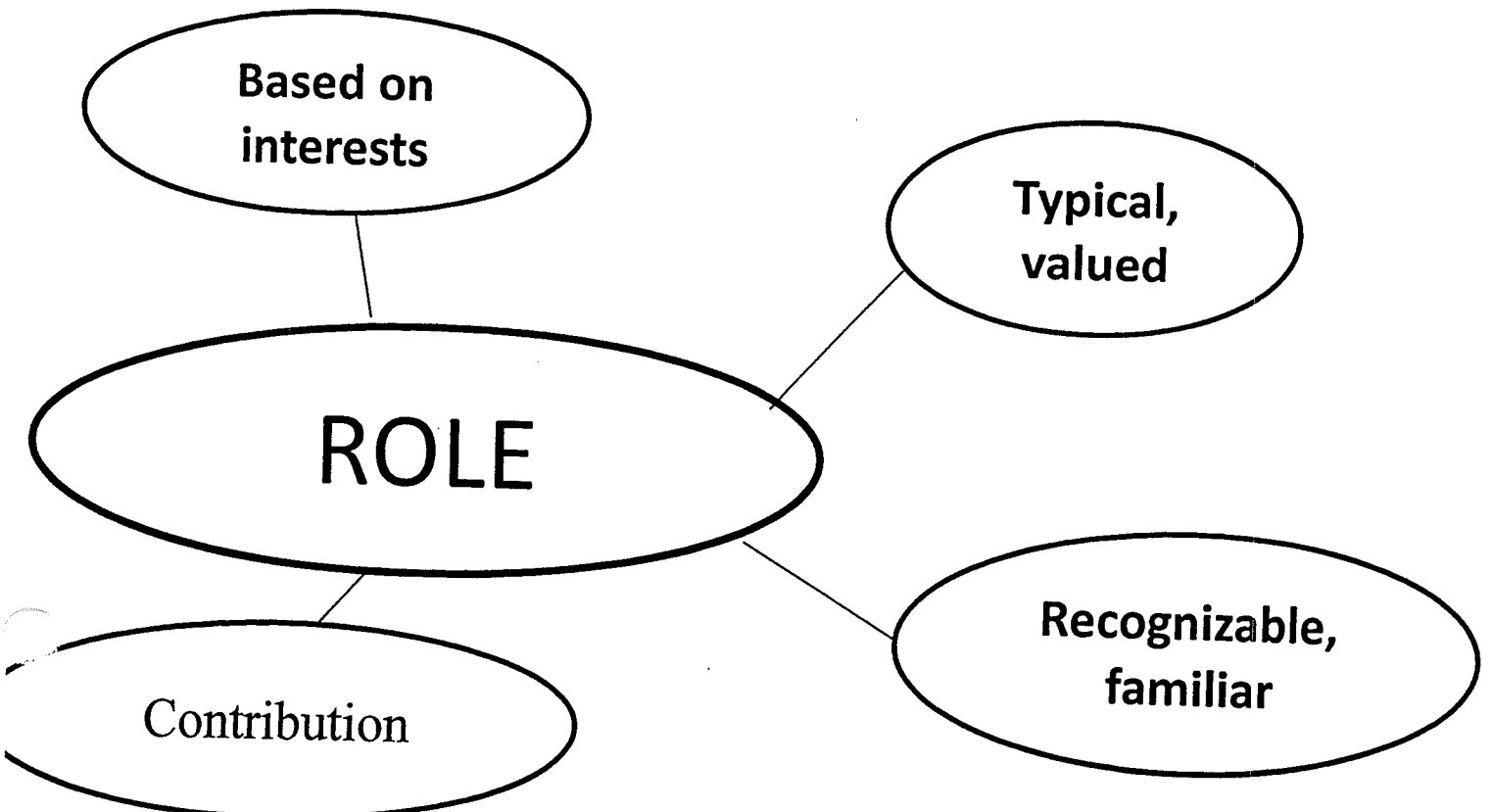
**A ROLE**

is a person  
in a place  
doing something predictable

**If**  
**You don't do anything to promote**

~~positive social roles~~

then society will  
- by default -  
impose  
one or more of these  
common negative roles  
upon this person



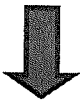
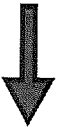
# Roles versus Activities

Role is **broader**

- activity on a **regular basis**
- +
- doing **related activities**
- +
- being interested in similar activities, people

Roles emphasize what is **similar and familiar** between this person and all others in role. Roles change **activity** into **opportunity**

## What's the difference?

<p>I like...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gardening</li> <li>○ Walking</li> <li>○ Reading</li> <li>○ Going to church</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTIVITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One off</li> <li>• No identity</li> </ul>	<p>I am a...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vegetable gardener</li> <li>○ Walking club member</li> <li>○ Book club member</li> <li>○ Altar guild member</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ROLE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Leads to other things</li> <li>• Involves people</li> <li>• Identity</li> </ul>
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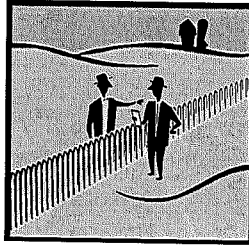
## Activities related to this role

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ joining a local community garden</li> <li>➤ working in own garden</li> <li>➤ buying gardening supplies</li> <li>➤ visiting a flower exhibit</li> <li>➤ entering a local garden show</li> <li>➤ sharing produce with a neighbour</li> <li>➤ watering the garden</li> <li>➤ weeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ joining a gardening club</li> <li>➤ volunteering to garden at co-op</li> <li>➤ subscribe to gardening magazine</li> <li>➤ send away for stuff (seeds, tools)</li> <li>➤ design garden on computer</li> <li>➤ having a Seedy Saturday table</li> <li>➤ collecting and selling wildflower seeds</li> <li>➤ and many, many more</li> </ul>
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## Big "little" Roles



Family



Neighbour



Friend



### ***At the heart of ROLE is CONTRIBUTION***

Our society functions on contributions of:

- Time (shared focus, attendance, presence),
- Resources (energy, skills – including emotional and spiritual work often neglected - and talents, place, supplies, physical assistance, shared interests, a catalyst or reason to act, money),
- Ideas (solutions, the right questions, imagining a different way, seeing what others do not)
- Knowledge (information, facts, memories)
- Leadership (teaching, mentoring, inspiring, motivating, coordinating, organizing, gathering, bringing together, taking action, courage, perseverance),
- Support (listening, coaching, supporting, encouraging, faith, stillness, hospitality, believing (in), grounding, being with),
- Love (cherishing, caring, gratitude, joy, welcome).

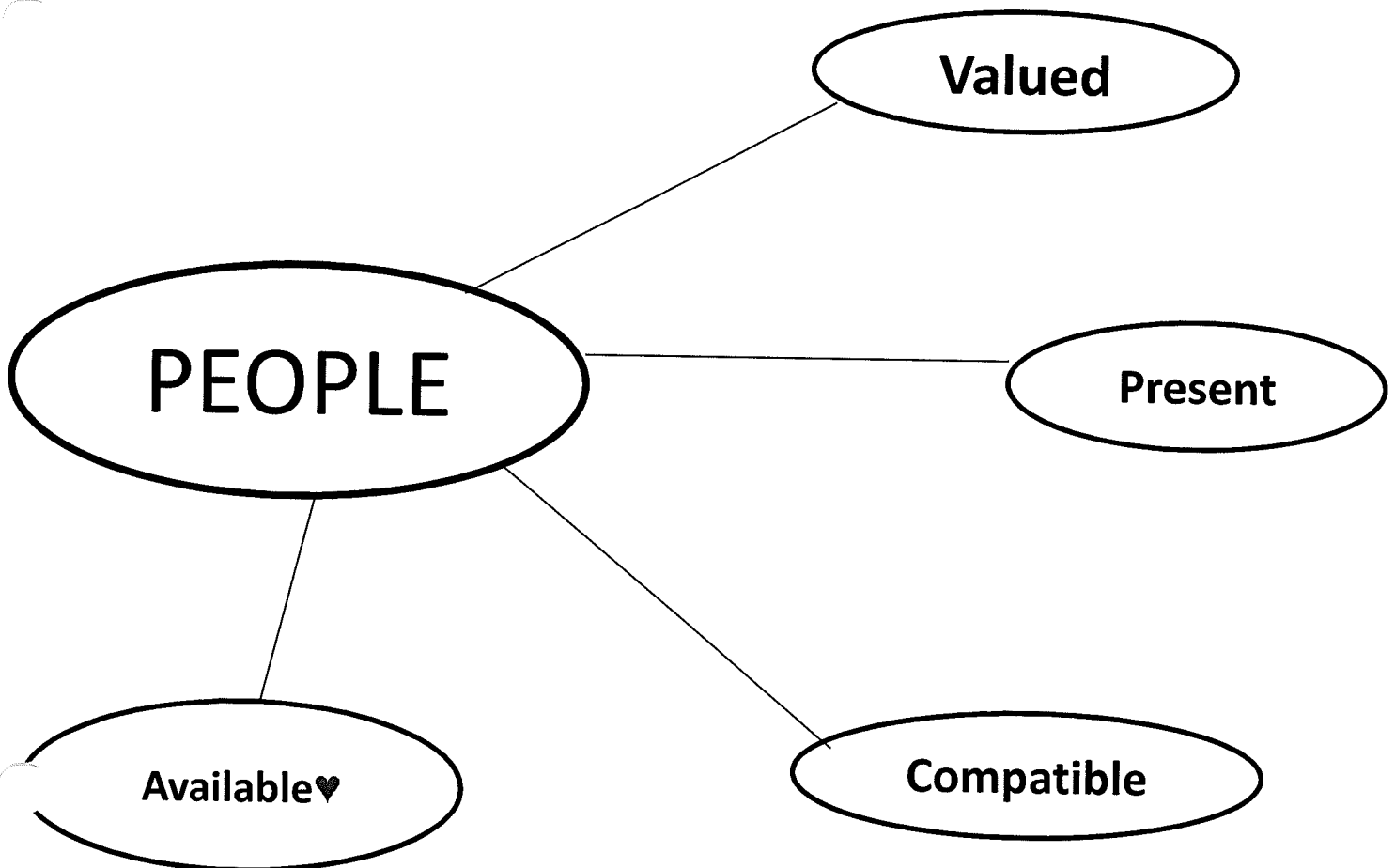
In addition, people with disabilities and their families often offer the following contributions of being:

- Showing possibility
- Providing inspiration and motivation
- Stimulus to creativity
- Focusing on the here and now
- Economic
- Reason to gather
- Demonstrating grace in trying times
- Others (ask the group)

**So...  
only having the roles of  
participant,  
spectator, observer  
family member  
(without responsibilities)**

**do not cut it  
if your goal is**

**RELATIONSHIP**





## People

- ...who are likely to be enjoyable (share something)
- ...enriching (offer something new and positive to life)
- ...able to support and protect
- a continuum
- ...age peers
  - ...new friends
  - ...old family friends
  - ...extended family
  - ...neighbours
  - ...colleagues
- ...supporter
  - ...family of supporter
  - ...groups of supporters and other disabled people
  - ...other disabled people
  - ...other marginalized people

**Why the focus on Valued Citizens?** People need friends for all of the typical reasons, but in addition they also need someone one:

- ▶ To ensure the welcome of others
- ▶ To introduce a person in a positive light
- ▶ To help make complex decisions
- ▶ To be a positive role model
- ▶ To turn to in moments of trouble
- ▶ To be listened to when they speak on their behalf
- ▶ To help hold the vision To offer a ride
- ▶ To teach a skill or draw out a talent
- ▶ To provide new experiences

So...movies,  
**mall walking,**  
**going for long drives,**  
**relaxing alone at home**  
**do not count**  
**if your goal is**

**RELATIONSHIP**

## **HOW TO APPROACH**

PLACES..... We need to DISCOVER

PRESENCE....We need to ENGINEER

ROLES ..... We need to ENGINEER& SUPPORT

PEOPLE..... We need to RECOGNIZE & SUPPORT

### **Good**

- occasional presence
- in a valued setting
- where good people of same age are around
- and you are in a familiar role of spectator, participant

### **Better**

- frequent, regular presence
- in a valued setting
- where you see the same people again and again
- in small enough numbers that those people begin to recognize, acknowledge, and welcome you
- and where you are in a role that implies some kind of shared belonging (membership rather than one time participant)

### **Best**

- frequent (often), regular (same time, place), intense (in various roles or activities) presence
- in one or more valued settings related to this interest
- where you see the same people across settings and roles
- and where you see 1-5 people frequently and regularly
- and engage with those 1-5 people because of the engaged role that you play (membership with status or higher expectations)
  - and there is ample time in some of the regular activities to socialize
  - and where your contribution is clear, distinct and recognized

## **Social Situations that provide a context for relationship**

- \* join a club
- \* join a fitness centre
- \* find a job with good colleagues
- \* become a fan
- \* get a pet
- \* become a member (church)
- \* create a regular evening potluck or other event
- \* engage in civic events
- \* offer a service
- \* deliver Avon (door-to-door sales)
- \* become a good neighbour
- \* become a student

## **Supporting Relationship**

- model respect in all you say and do
- value the relationship with others above all
- learn how to stimulate conversation
- get the job done well
- be invisible-do not be the centre of attention
- do not be a barrier to relationship
- weave one into the fabric of the moment
- fade only when you are certain
- return frequently and reliably
- be the person to talk to when problems or questions arise
- return support when new people arrive
- Who holds the relationship?

**If things are not working out, then  
one of the four pillars  
of the context for relationship**

- **Place**
- **Presence**
- **Role**
- **People**

**is not in place in a minimally optimal way**

## **Anticipating false pathways**

- Segregation and congregation instead of real community
- The supporter being the friend rather than being the bridge to friendship
  - It is not a shortcoming in a Supporter if she does not become a friend. Not providing good support is a shortcoming. There is no expectation for friendship. If it comes, we will only know later on and it is another thing altogether.
- The person never gets to leave childhood – “Stranded in Disneyland” and take on rich, adult roles...and the resulting cycle of low expectations
- Messing up the community building
- We don't really know how to listen; we don't really want to listen; we don't really think we need to listen – who knows best? (listen to individual but also listen to family)
- Underestimating the complexity and art of good support – anyone can do it;

## **The surest path**

- One person at a time
- Choose small
- Choose local
- Choose family-owned, co-operative, rather than large and franchised
- Choose community-based over separate
- Choose familiar and typical rather than strange and eccentric
- Choose based on interest, passion, personality rather than disability, behaviour, exception
- One step at a time