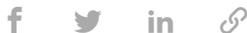


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# How to Beat Stress and Build Successful Business Relationships

Three easy tips for overcoming interpersonal anxiety and and strengthening professional bonds.



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eustress. Eustress can be triggered when a person encounters an unfamiliar experience, like working with a new team or starting a new job. While stepping outside of your comfort zone and interacting with new people may be temporarily stressful, it can be enormously rewarding in the long run.

As a leader, you know how important it is to develop strong relationships. Are you devoting enough time to building successful relationships with customers, team members and partners? Strong relationships don't happen overnight, but pertinent skills and practices can be learned. Here are three steps that you can apply to strengthen your relationships.

### **1. Build your emotional intelligence.**

It's important to devote time to improving your emotional-intelligence skills by thinking carefully about your everyday actions. How do you behave in stressful situations? As you go about your day, try to predict and visualize how you will feel in certain scenarios. Be conscious of your body language and the body language of the people around you. When you're interacting with someone, try to decipher their nonverbal communication. Are they using a certain tone? Are they hunched over or standing confidently? If you feel irritable, channel your emotions into something productive and positive. Why not keep a diary and reflect on how your emotions are influenced by your experiences? You'll quickly see patterns and trends that you didn't know existed, and the strength of your relationships will catapult. As an added bonus, [research has shown](#) that emotional intelligence reduces stress because you're better able to manage your emotions.

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## **2. Become a bridge between diverse groups.**

It feels safe to spend your time with the same groups of people, but this isn't how a successful network is formed. Leadership is about far-reaching impact, and the most effective leaders build open, diverse networks. Try to identify synergies between diverse groups and draw connections and identify people who can benefit from each other. [Research has shown](#) that the most effective leaders form open networks and take advantage of weak ties. The most promising opportunities typically happen through second- or third-degree connections. When you expand your relationships, you expose yourself to new viewpoints, maintain a fresh perspective and are able to improve your emotional intelligence and relationships.

## **3. Be a giver.**

Relationships are about giving and taking, but it's much more effective to [demonstrate kindness](#) and be a giver than a taker. Kindness and generosity block a slew of toxic emotions, including envy, resentment, regret and depression. In fact, gratitude [has been shown to result](#) in 23 percent lower levels of stress hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline. Try to approach relationships looking for ways to help others. Can you mentor them? Can you recommend a resource for them to learn an important skill? Can you give them valuable advice? Can you sympathize with them and help them improve their state of mind? Giving to others makes them feel appreciated and valued. They'll trust that you have their best interests at heart and confide in you, and in turn, having your team members's support you will enhance your ability to lead and reduce your stress levels. You'll feel a stronger sense of belonging and a part of something special.

**Related:** [How to Build a Positive Relationship With Your Boss and Colleagues](#)

As a leader, your relationships define how far you advance, both professionally and personally. You have enormous opportunity to impact your team members. By creating meaningful personal connections, you can enrich their lives and careers, so apply these three steps to improve your relationships and boost your success. I guarantee you'll live a more productive, rewarding and meaningful life. And most importantly, take good care of yourself.

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