

build

your

A-team

evaluate the people in your life
and guarantee good results

Phil Anthony M



Start here.

According to the ‘Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale’ seven of the top 10 biggest stressors in life are related to our relationships.

The people we surround ourselves with are our like our A-Team. We need to choose them wisely, understand their behaviours and get the best out of them. Whether it’s family, friends, lovers or colleagues, a few simple tools can help us examine the people from our past and present. That way we know how to make our relationships just a little easier and perhaps even better?

And what if your relationships are already great? That’s cool too, because you’ll figure out how to take them to the next level.

This is like a seven-day course in a 10-minute read.

Reading time: 10 minutes

3 tools to get the best results.

There are times when we don't quite know *what* the purpose of a relationship is. Maybe we're in it and things are confusing and conflicted. Maybe we can't quite figure out if we're happy or not. Or maybe it's great but it could be even better.

When I find myself struggling with someone, I use three tools. First, I take the relationship, classify it and try to identify the biggest lessons I can take from the relationship. Secondly, I audit the relationship with eight quick questions. Then, depending on what I discover about both myself and the situation, I consider working on upgrading the relationship.

This is how...

Tool 1. What type are they?

Step one.

Write down five people who have been on your mind lately for the wrong reasons. Don't think about it too long. Just jot the first five names that spring to mind. Take a minute to do it. Try not to read ahead, just come back when you're done.

Step two.

In another of my books 'tom, dick and harry -- the three types of people and why they matter', I dive into explaining the three types of relationship. Here I just want you to determine which of these categories the relationship best fits into.

The three types of relationships are:

- **Life-giving** - a short-term relationship that was perhaps a little too highly charged. Think of a one-night stand or a two-year intense rollercoaster filled with sharp ups and steeper downs. Too hot to handle. Too many wild times.
- **Lifetime** - a long term relationship is always going to be in your life, like family members or long-term best friends.

- **Purposeful** - a relationship that exists to teach you something, to fulfill a purpose. Most relationships (around 80 percent) slot into this category. Did you learn anything from the relationship? Did you learn to love deeper or be more empathetic or did it lead you on a great quest to find yourself? If so, it's a purposeful relationship. It has fulfilled a purpose.

Spend just a minute here. Of course a relationship can be all of these things, but try to find the most suitable category.

Step three.

Start thinking about the purpose of each relationship. How did they serve you? How did they positively impact you? What did you learn from them? What did you gain?

Now you have a good understanding of five relationships in your life and how they positively impacted and changed you.

What this enables you to do, especially for those relationships that haven't ended so well, is to move away from resentment and towards acceptance. We are rewriting our stories and changing our perspective of these otherwise bothersome relationships.

Tool 2. Why are they even here?

Let's do a quick relationship audit on the five people you named in the previous section. Chances are, they are the people you invest a lot of time and energy into thinking about. So let's see whether they should make up part of your A-Team or not.

Q1. Is the relationship a void filler?

In life, we all go through periods where we might have a few voids. Maybe we're feeling a bit down or just bored. Maybe we don't feel all that great about ourselves. Often we fill that space with something. It could be drugs, alcohol, ice cream or even relationships.

Let me say it again: a relationship can fill a void.

I had this situation with my gym buddies a few years back. At the time I really wasn't happy with life, feeling bored in my job and a bit demotivated. After a fairly sharp comment from a 'friend' at a barbeque (where he pointed out my muffin tops loudly, in front of everyone. You could say he wasn't a healthy relationship!), I joined a gym. I ended up loving it and got really into my fitness.

This also led to me making friends with a group of guys at the gym. Fun guys and wild partiers. As I wasn't all that fulfilled with life at the time, these party-loving friends filled that void, but this wasn't all that healthy for me. I got sidetracked from my life goals and after too many late-night binge sessions, I realised it was time for a change.

Ask yourself: is the relationship just filling a space? Or is it actually benefiting you?

We all love company and a sense of belonging. But it's often better to be alone than to be with people who drag you down. A positive, healthy relationship should lift you up and make you better for having them in your life.

Q2. What are you getting from this relationship?

If a relationship is great, then this is pretty easy to answer. "I love them, we just get each other, we make each other insanely happy!" But even if a relationship is bad, chances are you're in it because on some level, you're getting something out of it. So what is it? What are you getting? And is it the thing you really need or even what you actually want?

Q3. Do you have unfair expectations ?

There's no signed agreement between you and a friend. Even a marriage contract doesn't cover every part of being a nuanced, complex human being. So relationships are constant renegotiations and compromises.

Think of that friend who always arrives late. It's annoying, right? But you probably haven't sat down with a lawyer and agreed that they will always be on time, that you'll pay for tea, that they'll call early in the afternoon, and so on. It's ludicrous, right?

So again, relationships aren't contracts.

This means you need to ask yourself what you're willing to tolerate and where you're willing to compromise, and to what degree. How you let others treat you is exactly how they'll treat you. So if that friend who's always late is a barrel of laughs and you don't really mind, great. If it truly bothers you, then have a frank conversation about it and discuss ways to make a change.

You also need to ask if you're being unfair. Do you expect that friend to be on time down to the second? Or do you demand your partner never changes, never grows, never develops? Are you honouring the other person's values?

Q4. Have you been here before?

We are creatures of habit. Often in romantic relationships, the situation will have played out in a similar way before, and before and before. We fall into the same pattern over and over. Perhaps we find comfort in the familiar. If it's healthy, this is fine. But if it's draining and destructive, this is a trap to watch out for.

Ask yourself, what is it in these types of relationships that draws you in? And is it good for you?

Q5. Are you being you or are you a great actor?

It's easy to be yourself. But when you pretend, when you're trying to be someone else's vision of perfection, then this is called acting. People pleasing. Being what you believe they want you to be. And it's bloody difficult. Tiring. People get paid millions to act. Why? Because when you act, you're not being your authentic self.

Good relationships are all about work, but not to the point where it's more like *hard* work. Not to the point that you stop recognising yourself in the mirror because you've become what someone else wants you to be.

So, are you being you? Are you acting?

Q6. Does the relationship fit your values and ethics?

I've got an entire book dedicated to understanding your values and figuring out what really matters. Check it out 'Sort your life out - set your GPS to head in the right direction'. Even if you've not worked through it, you probably have a gut feeling about a relationship and how it aligns to who you are and who you want to be. How do the other person's ambitions, goals and wants match yours?

Q7. Is it a good investment?

Every single experience, everything you're doing and being, should be an investment.

When we spend money, energy, time or effort, then boom! It's gone. It's gone for good.

When we invest, we get a return. We get interest. This is particularly important with time and energy, because these are the two things so crucial to who we are.

In a relationship, make sure you're growing, developing and nourishing your soul. Otherwise you're spending, you're losing and you're moving toward a deficit.

Q8. Is it supporting your next move?

Now here's the big finale. Here's the game-changer. Ask yourself:

- Is the relationship working for you?
- Is the relationship serving you?
- And most importantly... Is the relationship worthy of you?

Controversial I know, but I want you to be just a little bit selfish. People look at 'selfish' as if it's a bad thing, but it's not. You have to put yourself first. Unless you're filling yourself up with goodness and greatness, how can you expect to deliver that to the rest of the world?

Often we make justifications for the relationship we have. "Oh you know, I feel great when I'm with them... one percent of the time."

That's not good enough for you. You're worthy of someone who tries their best to make you feel great 100 percent of the time.

The people you allow into your life become mirrors of how you value yourself. So please only allow the best for yourself.

Tool 3. Build a winning team.

Now we have a deeper understanding of our relationships. So what next? How do we create actions around this understanding? We can remove, reprioritise, recategorise or compromise our relationships.

Booster 1. Remove.

If your relationship just isn't working or isn't making you feel all that great, rather than forcing it to work, could you just remove yourself from the situation? I did this when I left my gym buddies behind. I moved to Phuket and gave myself the freedom to start fresh. The fastest way to solve a problem is to remove it.

Booster 2. Reprioritise.

If you have a bestfriend that you spend all your time with, but often you leave those interactions feeling a little down, maybe it's not the healthiest relationship. You don't need to cut that person out of your life. Just reprioritise the friendship. Reduce the amount of time you spend with them and focus on expanding your network and developing your other relationships.

Booster 3. Recategorise.

Relationships change. People change. And sometimes, rather than ending things or feeling bitter about the differences, it's worth

looking at how we can recategorise things. Perhaps it was a purposeful relationship designed around being parents and raising kids. When the children leave the nest, you may want to repurpose the relationship with your partner. Perhaps focus on becoming business owners together, travelling the world or simply being best friends.

Booster 4. Compromise.

I don't say this lightly. Sometimes, just sometimes, there are those special people we love above all else. They match us in many ways but there are some major differences as well. In these instances, it's worth considering a fundamental compromise. Can you adjust your values to be more aligned with theirs? Is it worth it to you? Can you perhaps meet somewhere in the middle?

End here.

Relationships are tricky. Why? Because people are complex. But they also have the potential to be beautiful, shaping our days, our weeks and our lives.

The tools here have made a huge change in my life. They've helped me release anger from past relationships while looking at how I can improve current ones. Of course I'm still growing and learning, and of course things still hurt or disappoint. That's life. But with these tools, I've got a few handy ways to understand, heal and improve; and know how best make my A-Team work best with me.

How amazing is that? So there you go. Here's to even better relationships from here on in.

Go out and build your A-Team!

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