

PUT A LITTLE Z.I.P. INTO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS!

Chris Widener

excerpted from *The Fifth Pillar of Success:
Relationships, Part One - Basics of Healthy Relationships*

Z.I.P. stands for three things you can do—and begin to do immediately—to improve any and all of your relationships. They are:

*Put some **Zest** into your relationships.
Cultivate more **Intimacy** in your relationships.
Develop a **Purpose** in your relationships.*

Put some ZEST into your relationships.

By **Zest**, I primarily mean fun. Relationships were meant to be fun! We wouldn't have been made with the capacity to have fun if relationships weren't supposed to have a little zest in them!

Think about it: Don't you usually start out most healthy relationships with a lot of fun times? ...Fun is some of the glue that bonds the relationship.

But as life goes on, specifically in a marriage, but in all relationships really, the fun starts to go by the wayside. More and more it is about getting the job done, whatever the job may be.

To restore the relationship, to put a little zip into it, we need to reintroduce the idea of **zest**.

What about you? Have you lost the zest? What can you do to get it back? Think of a specific relationship you have: What were the fun things you did at the beginning of the relationship that acted as the glue that bonded you together? Now, commit to

doing those again and see if your relationship doesn't begin to soar again! If you can, develop new fun things to do together so you can both start an adventure of fun together!

Cultivate more INTIMACY in your relationships.

First a couple of clarifications: One, I don't just mean intimacy in the common term of sexual intimacy. I mean for all intents and purposes, taking your relationship to a deeper level. Second, I don't mean that you have to start doing group hugs with your workmates or having revelation sessions where the tissue flows freely.

What I do mean is that every relationship that is mutually satisfying has a level of depth to it that provides meaning. This is really what the search is for in our relationships—meaning.

Remember when you first started your relationship, whether with your spouse or friend. All of that time was spent opening up, telling who you are, where you were from, and about your likes and dislikes. There was a deep sense of satisfaction with

the relationship—that is why it continued. You liked who they were and you enjoyed being known by them.

But then something happens. We get to a certain level and the pursuit of depth ends. We stop sharing feeling, likes, and dislikes. We stop sharing joys and dreams and fears. Instead, we settle into routines. The daily grind takes over and we stop knowing one another and we simply exist together. Now don't get me wrong, every time you get together doesn't have to be deep. Remember, I am the one who advocates in the previous paragraphs just having plain old fun sometimes. But there is a need for regular times of intimate connection where we go deeper with others.

This is particularly hard for many of the male species like myself, but it is not only possible but healthy and needed! If we want to have the kinds of relationships we were made to have, we have to open ourselves up to having others know us and for us to know others.

True meaningful relationships come when we are loved and accepted for whom we are at our core, not simply for acting in such a way in our relationships to keep the other person in it....

You can guard yourself from intimacy but then you won't go much deeper and you will feel a longing in your heart for more, or you can begin the deepening process and see your relationships change for the better.

Develop a PURPOSE in your relationships.

The most meaningful relationships we have are those that are held together by a com-

mon purpose and vision for what the relationship can accomplish, not only for those involved but also for a greater good.

Let's face it, when people have a common purpose they feel like they are part of a team and they feel bound together in that relationship. Even when people may be disappointed in the people they are in relationship with, if they have a purpose, such as raising children, they are much more likely to stick it out. Purpose creates bonds....

Think about your strongest relationships. Aren't they centered around at least one area of purpose or a common goal?

What about a relationship that has cooled? Think back and see if perhaps you used to have a common purpose but it has gone by the wayside.

And what of your desire to see a relationship grow? Take some time to begin to cultivate a common purpose. Sit down with that person and tell them that you would like to have some common goals, some purposes that you can pursue together. As you develop these, you will see your relationship strengthen in ways you never imagined!

Let's recap: You want your relationships to show a little "zip?" Then put a little **Z.I.P.** in them:

*Put some **Z**est into your relationships.*

*Cultivate more **I**ntimacy
in your relationships.*

*Develop a **P**urpose in your relationships.*