

Engage with Intention



A 12-week campaign to help
trusted adults build intentional,
health-promoting relationships (HPR)
with youth ages 11-18

Week 11

Topic:

**The Simple, Quiet Truths
of Health-Promoting Relationships**

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WEEK 11

The Simple, Quiet Truths of Health-Promoting Relationships



SIMPLE, QUIET TRUTHS OF HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS

Simple, quiet truths are the foundational principles of relationships we innately know to be good, right, and true. They're the deep realities of what truly supports human connection, growth, and well-being. Yet these truths are often unspoken, easily overlooked, or set aside amid the distractions, stresses, pressures, and expectations of daily life. They may also be quietly avoided because honoring them calls us to do important inner work, which may include healing from pain or trauma in past relationships, acknowledging aspects of ourselves we are not proud of, or simply spending time in honest reflection about who we are and who we want to become.

When we choose to bring these truths forward and live by them, they become the steady ground on which we relate to youth. They restore clarity in moments of uncertainty, invite deeper authenticity in our connections, and create the kind of emotional safety that allows protective beliefs to take root and flourish. In doing so, they strengthen the young people in our lives while also gently transforming us, helping us become the kind of trusted adults we most want to be. The HPR paradigm and the truths it represents offer us a way to remember, think about, and bring these truths to life in our own unique ways, one intentional moment at a time.

Over the next few pages we will expand upon the following seven simple, quiet truths of HPR and offer trusted adults and youth opportunities for reflection and discussion (if comfortable) related to each truth.

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|  We must pay attention to the function and quality of our relationships. |  Small moments add up. |
|  Our environment and presence always speak first. |  Work within ourselves enables both us and others to thrive. |
|  Our way of being is never neutral. |  We never outgrow the need for the 5 HPR core beliefs. |
|  Meaningful connection is multi-dimensional. | |



We must pay attention to the function and quality of our relationships.



Why?

Relationships are the foundation of well-being and require attention towards their purpose and quality.

Common Misconception

As long as we are spending time with them, the quality of the relationship will take care of itself.

In the busyness of daily life, it is easy to go on autopilot and forget that relationships can be purpose-driven and function as catalysts for youth well-being. We tell ourselves that as long as we are making sure a youth's basic needs are being met, and that we are fulfilling our role's primary function (e.g. classroom instruction if a teacher, developing athletic skills if a coach), or we are spending time with them, we are doing enough. Yet intentional, health-promoting relationships are essential for well-being. They provide the consistent, intentional connection that nurtures protection, resilience, and flourishing in youth, and in ourselves. A village of adults engaging youth with intention to cultivate the five HPR core beliefs (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.) multiplies hope, possibility, and lasting impact across generations.

The common misconception often comes from the pressures of modern life, including packed schedules, work demands, digital distractions, and a cultural emphasis on productivity and achievement. We convince ourselves that "being there" is the same as being fully present and intentional. The Health-Promoting Relationships Paradigm invites us to challenge this assumption and remember that relationships must be prioritized and invested in for greatest benefit.



Reflection for Adults

- In what ways have I been letting busyness push relationships to the background?
- What would prioritizing one relationship look like for me this week?
- When have I felt the difference between "being there" and truly paying attention?



Reflection for Youth

- What is one way an adult has shown you that your relationship with them matters to them?
- What is one way **you** have shown someone else that their relationship with you matters to you?
- This week, how can you show someone you care for that their relationship with you is a priority to you?

Our environment and presence always speak first.



Why?

Before any words, the space we create and the quality of our presence either open the door to trust or quietly close it.

Consideration

We are often task-oriented. We prioritize getting the task done and struggle to focus on how we show up.

Youth are watching us long before we speak. They are constantly observing and learning from how we enter a space, how we transition from one task to another, and how we make room for them in our attention. They are attuned to not only whether we want to be with them in that moment, but also how we create the conditions for warmth, safety, and connection, even when initially distracted. A calm tone, open posture, thoughtful arrangement of space, and grounded presence send the powerful unspoken message: "You matter to me and are welcome and safe here." When youth experience focused presence and care from the beginning, it opens the door for deeper connection and protective belief cultivation.

We experience numerous pressures within our worlds as adults. Our natural focus in relationships with youth sometimes is on content such as how to express expectations, what advice to give, etc. In reality, the environment and presence set the stage for everything else. We underestimate how much young people absorb from our non-verbal cues, the atmosphere we create, and ultimately how we make them feel. When our environment and presence suggest they are important to us, the words that follow have far more of an impact.



Reflection for Adults

- What does my body language, presence, and greeting typically communicate to youth I encounter?
- How might distractions and competing pressures be influencing my ability to shape my environment and presence into something more welcoming for youth?
- What is one small adjustment I can make to my presence or environment to help youth feel important?



Reflection for Youth

- What types of things do adults do that make you feel welcome and important to them before they even speak?
- Consider how you typically show up for your family, friends, and others. In what ways do you let them know they are important to you before saying a word?
- How can you show someone in your life they matter to you before you say anything next time you see them?

Our way of being is never neutral.



Why?

Every interaction quietly builds, reinforces, misses an opportunity, or undermines protective beliefs.

Common Misconception

As long as I'm not actively treating them in a negative way and/or because my time with them is so limited, my everyday way of *being* doesn't have much of an impact.

Our tone of voice, level of patience, quality of attention, body language, emotional availability, and word choice all quietly build, reinforce, miss, or undermine the protective beliefs that shape a young person's sense of self and their place in the world. Youth are constantly absorbing these subtle or direct signals, often without us realizing it. A patient pause, a warm glance, a calm response to frustration, words of encouragement, support in discernment, or a distracted sigh all send messages about their value and whether they are worthy of time and respect. Over time, these everyday moments influence the invisible architecture of their inner beliefs that inform how they feel about themselves and how they behave.

The common misconception often comes from the ideas that bigger or lengthier, more obvious moments and/or strong or intense verbal expressions have lasting power. We may think that as long as we're not yelling or being overtly negative, we're doing no harm. In reality, the everyday environment, tone, words, actions, and support we bring have a profound, cumulative effect, even in the briefest of moments. Every day offers new and fresh opportunities to engage with intention in the HPR way of *being* to strengthen protective beliefs and support youth well-being.



Reflection for Adults

- In what ways do I notice and pay attention to the impact my way of *being* has on youth?
- What do "missed opportunities" look like for me in my encounters with youth?
- What one small change could I make today to seize opportunities with youth to strengthen their protective beliefs?



Reflection for Youth

Think about a time when you wanted to say something to someone to let them know you care and you didn't.

- What do you think stopped you from saying it? (e.g. fear, not having the words,
- If you could share it now, what would you say?

Meaningful connection is multi-dimensional.



Why?

It begins with self-connection and is then built through a rich set of relational qualities and practices.

Common Misconception

Connecting meaningfully with others is simple to do.

Meaningful connection with others begins with the inner work of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-alignment of our thoughts, words, and actions with nourishing relational values, often informed by spiritual connection (a sense of meaning, purpose, or belonging to something larger). Meaningful connection can then be facilitated by engaging qualities like authenticity, empathy, humility, vulnerability, patience, nonjudgment, respect, and kindness. The synergy of these dimensions, even though imperfect at times, results in young people experiencing deeper and more meaningful connection that goes far beyond surface-level interaction. They feel able to show up as they are, share what matters to them, and thrive within the relationship.

The common misconception comes from underestimating the breadth and depth of connection. Meaningful connection with others is simple to understand but not simple to do. It requires intention, purpose, inner work, putting the other person first, genuine and meaningful curiosity, apologies, forgiveness, and commitment. When we do these things, we create health-promoting relationships that stand the test of time.



Reflection for Adults

- What dimensions of meaningful connection have I maybe overlooked?
- In what ways do I prepare for meaningful connection with others?
- Who will I try to connect with more meaningfully this week?



Reflection for Youth

- What does meaningful connection mean to me?
- How do I feel when someone tries to connect in a more real way with me?
- How do I naturally move beyond superficial connection with someone? (e.g., I try to learn more about them. I consider their needs. I focus just on them when we're together and don't get distracted.)

Small moments add up.



Why?

Consistent engagement of the HPR way of being builds trust with youth, providing the soil for protective beliefs to take root and strengthen.

Common Misconception

Only big, memorable moments or grand gestures really make a difference in a young person's life.

Consistency transforms small moments from isolated events into a reliable pattern that youth can count on. This dependability fosters trust which is foundational. Through these repeated moments we create healthy norms of engagement that youth can expect and thrive within. What feels small and ordinary to us can become foundational and life-shaping for them. Over time, this steady repetition strengthens neural pathways associated with the five core protective beliefs, making them more stable and resilient. The brain begins to internalize the messages that "I am seen and loved," "I matter," and "I have support" not because of one big moment, but because the evidence has been quietly accumulating day after day. Similarly, if trusted adults seize opportunities to activate youth agency and support them in navigating challenges with consistent emotional regulation, affirmation, nonjudgment, and presence, youth will believe "I can influence my life and I can overcome hard things." with greater conviction.

The common misconception comes from believing occasional large efforts or dramatic conversations are what count. In reality, it is the steady accumulation of small, consistent acts of care and attention that build lasting trust and shape beliefs.



Reflection for Adults

- In what ways have I been consistent with small acts like noticing, affirming, or curiosity?
- Where can I focus more consistently on engaging the HPR way of being?
- Ask a youth in your life to give you honest feedback on how you can more consistently show up for them. Listen with nonjudgment. Thank them.



Reflection for Youth

- What adults in your life consistently make you feel that you matter even if you see them for only a few minutes?
- When you have a brief moment with someone, what do they do that makes you smile or feel important?
- In what ways can you offer similar love, support, and/or kindness consistently in small moments with others in your life?

Work within ourselves enables both us and others to thrive.



Why?

Engaging in an honest process of daily self-awareness, healing, and growth strengthens our capacity to influence our own lives and the lives of others.

Common Misconception

As long as we focus on helping the youth, our own personal growth and struggles don't really matter.

Perhaps the most important thing youth can observe in us is a vulnerable and transparent process of understanding our values and working daily to align our lives more closely with the person we strive to be when we are with them. Humility plays a vital role in this process by allowing us to become more self-aware, acknowledge our imperfections or brokenness openly, and role model what it looks like to learn, accept, grow, and try again with vulnerability, non-judgment and grace. Role modeling what healthy and honest growth looks like from all angles empowers everyone benefitting from that growth to do the same.

The common misconception often stems from the belief that adults should have it all together, or appear as if they have it all together, before they can effectively support youth. We may feel pressure to appear strong, put together, or perfect, believing that our own ongoing growth process is a distraction or even a weakness. In reality, our willingness to engage in honest inner work creates authenticity in the relationship and shows youth that making mistakes and growing from them is normal and part of being human – it is a universal, shared experience. Youth are not alone AND they can always learn, always grow, and always change.



Reflection for Adults

- What is one area of my own growth or healing that I have been avoiding or putting off?
- How might doing inner work in that area help me show up more fully for the young people in my life?
- When have I seen my own growth positively affect a relationship with a youth?



Reflection for Youth

Think about an adult in your life that is trying to learn and/or change something about themselves.

- What do you notice or appreciate about their effort?
- How does it make you feel when an adult shows they are still growing?
- What is something you are working on or would like to get better at in your relationships?

We never outgrow the need for the 5 HPR core beliefs.



Why?

No matter our age or circumstances, we all need quality relationships that cultivate the five core beliefs to be well.

Common Misconception

As we age we become stronger and more independent and don't need our relationships to influence our beliefs.

The five core protective beliefs (I am seen and loved. I matter. I can influence my life. I can overcome hard things. I have support.) remain essential across all developmental stages. For younger youth, they provide the foundation for building identity and how they see the world. For adolescents, they support the search for independence and trying things out with a safe and supportive belief system to keep them resilient even in the context of failures. For older teens and young adults navigating bigger challenges, these beliefs offer hope even when life feels overwhelming. These beliefs are not something we outgrow. Instead, they evolve with us and continue to anchor our well-being throughout life. The HPR *way of being* is nimble and can be adapted in new and creative ways in response to each individual's circumstance.

The common misconception often comes from the idea that as we get older or face bigger challenges, we no longer need basic relational supports. We may not need them to *survive*, but we do always need them to *thrive*. We may think nourishing these beliefs reflects weakness, but in reality, we are keeping ourselves well.



Reflection for Adults

- Which of the five beliefs are strongest for me right now?
- Which of the five beliefs are less stable in me right now?
- In what ways can I strengthen the less stable beliefs through my relationships, self-work, or by addressing any areas of my life that are challenging those beliefs?



Reflection for Youth

- Which of the beliefs are strongest and weakest for me right now?
- Which beliefs change for me in different contexts such as school vs home? Why?
- In what ways can I strengthen the weaker beliefs through my relationships or by doing something for myself?