

# *Relationship Intelligence*

*Student Journal*  
*A Course in Character and Relationships*  
*Twelfth Edition*

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# PREFACE

Concern about school violence, drug use, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases has led to the development of many health education, drug and violence prevention programs, yet such programs are often criticized for talking more about what students *shouldn't do* than what they *could be doing, in a positive sense*. The *Relationship Intelligence* curriculum responds to this criticism by putting forth a positive vision of healthy relationships, divided into four sections on *Relationships, Self Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, and Community Relationships*.

*Relationship Intelligence* uses an interactive approach including “self-inventory” exercises and student journal questions for personal reflection. It calls upon the power of stories by drawing on selections of best-loved literature from the famous *Velveteen Rabbit* segment on Love, as well as selections from Tolstoy, E. B. White, O’Henry to contemporary song writers to heartrending confessions in letters to Ann Landers or to the *freeteensusa.org* website. It also draws on scientific research on brain activity during different stages of romantic love to give teens a practical insight into what might be happening biochemically when they feel themselves in the intoxicating throes of “love” and hopefully offer a more long-range, mature perspective on the stages of intimacy. Social science research on marriage is also discussed, both to give students a clear idea about the substantial benefits of that institution and a realistic idea of the conflict that can occur in any long-term relationship. Students are taught how to use communication skills to minimize the hurt and pain that occur through misunderstandings and miscommunication.

The concept of freedom is central to *Relationship Intelligence*. None of us can control what happens in the world and communities we live in nor how others treat us, but we *are* free to choose our response to the actions of others. As Viktor Frankl, survivor of the Nazi death camps and author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*, and Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa who spent 26 years in prison because of his opposition to apartheid, both learned during their prison experiences: *when every vestige of your physical freedom has been taken away, one begins to really appreciate the last freedoms—to choose to live, to not give into hatred and despair*.

Yet the sad reality is that many people give away these most precious freedoms not because they’ve been put in a prison, but for very trivial reasons or just to “fit in.” Students are challenged to reflect on the lives of these courageous figures, as well as sports figures such as Jackie Joyner-Kersey and to see how the same principles lived by these “heroes” can and should be applied in their own lives.

*Relationship Intelligence* was revised and updated in 2008, with the creation of a companion *Relationship Intelligence Student Workbook*, containing 18 exercises drawn from the curriculum.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Katie Manseau of the *National Fatherhood Initiative* and our indebtedness to other experts on family, sexuality and relationships including Drs. Joseph McIlhaney and Richard Tompkins of the *Medical Institute for Sexual Health*, and the writings of Stephen Covey, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott, Dr. Lori Gordon, Dr. Steven Stosny and Richard Stedman. I’d also like to express my appreciation for the wise advice of my good friend and colleague, John Williams of the International Education Foundation and other advisers including Tom Cutts, Don Sardella, Joe Tully, my brother, Ronald Panzer and my sister, Dr. Sheri Koplow. Marline Pearson and June Saunders made valuable suggestions which led to the addition of a new chapter in the second edition on “5 Star Sexuality.” We are indebted to the “Watch Out for Children: A Mother’s Statement to Advertisers” report from the Institute for American Values, the PBS FRONTLINE Documentary, “The Merchants of Cool,” and marital therapist, Douglas Weiss for much of the content of *Appendix D: Are You a Target? Minding Your Digital Diet*. Finally, we would like to thank Char Kemper, author of the *Connections* curriculum. Several slides on relationship myths and smart relationships in the part 3 powerpoint presentation are drawn from that curriculum.

We sincerely hope that *Relationship Intelligence* proves to be a valuable resource for teenagers in your community.

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Author



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