

# RELATIONSHIPS

## *7 Steps to Repair a Troubled Relationship*

By Branch Isole

I'd like to thank you for tuning into my recent guest spot on one of your favorite podcasts. It's always a pleasure to share information with listeners who are seeking ways to improve their lives and relationships.

Life is about relationships. Relationships are about effective communication for growth and balance. Growth is accomplished when we learn to respond differently from our 'old pattern' ways. Balance is the stability that grounds and connects the four cornerstones of who we are in mind, body, soul, and spirit.

We spend our time in relationships at work, at home, with family or friends. Every relationship has importance and value. We always want relationships to produce good emotional bonds, growth, and good times together. As is our nature, sometimes relationships can become strained or broken. A constant question for each of us is how can I make this relationship better? Sometimes if a relationship is struggling or in possible peril of breaking, we may want to know why or how to repair it because its importance can become part of our well-being.

If you heard the topic '**7 Steps of Relationship Repair**' on one of your favorite podcasts, you'll remember there are seven essential steps people in a struggling relationship can use to improve, change for the better, or put into action of reconciliation. Let's review those here:

- **Recognize**
- **Responsibility**
- **Regret**
- **Remorse**
- **Redress**
- **Repeat**
- **Repent**

First, we must *Recognize* we have caused harm by actions or words to another person in the relationship. Whether it's at work with a team member, at home with a partner or family member, with a friend or someone important to us. Recognition is the first step.

Next, we must take *Responsibility* for our part in the turmoil or strain caused. We all make mistakes. We have all said or done something we later wish we hadn't. This is part of being human and making the most of opportunities to grow. When we take personal responsibility for our words and/or actions it may be a 'hard pill' to swallow at first, but the fallout will be minimal and forgiveness will be more easily realized, given, or obtained.

Third, we must have *Regret* for what we did. Fourth we must have *Remorse* for what took place. Many people ask, what's the difference between these two? Aren't they the same? In fact, they are

very similar, with one exception. *Regret* is the emotion directed at and for the other (harmed) person. *Remorse* is an emotion directed at ourselves.

Step five is *Redress*. This means doing something to compensate for the harm. A solution which is acceptable to both parties. An effort to ‘make right’ the wrong experienced.

Step six is of fundamental importance. It’s *Repetition*. Meaning whatever the words or actions of harm which were involved must never again be repeated in the future or similar circumstances. It is only when repeating the offence is clearly understood to be unacceptable that true efforts toward reconciliation can take place. *Repetition* is only proven or borne out by time and effort.

Finally step seven; *Repent*. When many people hear the word, Repent, the first thing they think of is a religious connotation. And to a certain extent that’s true. Repentance is part of a spiritual relationship, particularly for born-again Christians. However, in the relationship context we are describing Repent has a different application. Its importance is right up there with the previous step Repetition. Repentance in the relationship reconciliation process as one of the seven steps refers to ‘change’. More specifically *changed future behavior*.

When one activates Repentance in the relationship reconciliation process it refers to ‘future changed behavior.’ If and when we have managed to get to step seven, our ‘vow and commitment’ is to never again repeat the offense which has caused the harm AND *change our future response* to any or every similar situation we might encounter that caused the original harm we are attempting to eliminate.

Why are these steps so important? First, they give us a guiding process to use. Second, both parties can understand exactly what’s expected and agreed to. Third, it provides measurable and consistent steps that build upon each previous step with a partner agreed upon goal and completion.

This seven step process helps us realize there are three different levels of harm that need to be addressed and corrected. The first level is the **Act** or Behavior that caused the harm. The second is the damage wrought by the feeling of **Betrayal** that the harmed person experiences. The third is the **Breach of Trust** that has occurred. This is the deepest and greatest of the three. In fact, when the trust between the parties may have been so damaged that reconciliation may never take place. Breach of Trust goes well beyond the emotional disruption caused by the act.

If you’re in a damaged relationship and you want to repair the ‘break’ all three levels must be addressed: the Act, the Betrayal, and the Breach of Trust. Because all three have been harmed, all three must be part of the repair process.

To learn more, you’re invited to read my books at  
[www.branchisole.com](http://www.branchisole.com)