

SURFACE TO SOUL

Live Well | Lead Well | Coach Well

Building Developmental Relationships

In a project that began in 2013, Search Institute studied what would happen if we surrounded people, young and old – in their families, schools, work places, and neighborhoods – with the kinds of relationships through which they develop character strengths such as positive identity, agency, and commitment to community. It led to the creation of the Developmental Relationships Framework that identifies 5 categories of behavior that foster developmental relationships.

1 | EXPRESS CARE - SHOW ME THAT I MATTER TO YOU.

- Be dependable . . . be someone I can trust.
- Listen . . . really pay attention when we are together.
- Believe in me . . . make me feel known and valued.
- Be warm . . . show me you enjoy being with me.
- Encourage . . . praise me for my efforts and achievements.

2 | CHALLENGE GROWTH - PUSH ME TO KEEP GETTING BETTER.

- Expect my best . . . expect me to live up to my potential.
- Stretch . . . push me to go further.
- Hold me accountable . . . insist I take responsibility for my actions.
- Reflect on my failures . . . help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.

3 | PROVIDE SUPPORT - HELP ME COMPLETE TASKS AND ACHIEVE GOALS.

- Navigate . . . guide me through hard situations and systems.
- Empower . . . build my confidence to take charge of my life.
- Advocate . . . defend me when I need it.
- Set boundaries . . . put in place limits that keep me on track.

4 | SHARE POWER - TREAT ME WITH RESPECT AND GIVE ME A SAY.

- Respect me . . . take me seriously and treat me fairly.
- Include me . . . involve me in decisions that affect me.
- Collaborate . . . work with me to solve problems and reach goals.
- Let me lead . . . create opportunities for me to take action and lead.

5 | EXPAND POSSIBILITIES - CONNECT ME WITH PEOPLE & PLACES THAT BROADEN MY WORLD.

- Inspire . . . inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
- Broaden horizons . . . expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
- Connect . . . introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.

Discussion Questions

Who has modeled one or more of the five elements of developmental relationships in your life?
Which developmental category comes easiest for you? Which categories are growth areas for you?
With whom do you wish to invite into your life and/or invest more fully in their wellbeing?



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