

2023 ESSAY TOPIC

The Society or Fraternity of Freemasons is at its core a system of morality taught by symbols, allegories, and lectures grounded in fundamental principles such as brotherly love, relief, and truth. Despite the fast-paced environment in which students live and today's preference for less face-to-face connection, interpersonal relationships are important to one's overall mental health and stability.

If you were to start an organization or network to help foster interpersonal relationships and connectivity, what principles would you incorporate and why?

Be sure to properly document any research supporting your conclusions.

WINNER LIST

First Place (\$4,000)

EMILY MCCUBBIN

Frontenac High School
Marvin A. Armstrong Lodge No. 187

Honorable Mention (\$500)

ALLISON MODDELMOG

Southeast of Saline High School
Salina Lodge No. 60

Second Place (\$3,000)

ALI TIBBITS

Jefferson West High School
Perry Lodge No. 415

Honorable Mention (\$500)

PEYTON RYAN

Central Plains High School
Hoisington Lodge No. 331

Third Place (\$2,000)

CLARA JOHNSON

Jefferson County North
Active Lodge No. 158

Honorable Mention (\$500)

CAMRYN BEIKMANN

Linn High School
Clay Center Lodge No. 134

Fourth Place (\$1,000)

KAMDYN TRAHAN

Yates Center High School
Gilead Lodge No. 144

Honorable Mention (\$500)

MORGAN ALLEN

Centralia High School
Marysville Lodge No. 91



EMILY MCCUBBIN from Frontenac High School, sponsoring Lodge Marvin A. Armstrong Lodge No. 187.

THE PRINCIPLES OF LIFE

If I were to create an establishment that fosters interpersonal relationships and connectivity, it would have many principles. The ability to connect with others on a deep level enriches our well-being and success. To cultivate and sustain these connections, there are five key principles for building meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Effective communication serves as the foundation of successful relationships. It extends beyond mere speaking and encompasses active listening. Genuine connections are fostered when individuals engage in empathetic listening, seeking to understand others without judgement. Clear and honest communication is essential, as it nurtures trust and transparency, enabling individuals to forge stronger bonds.

Empathy, the ability to understand and share another person's feelings, is also fundamental to building profound connections. When we step into someone else's shoes and genuinely strive to comprehend their emotions and viewpoints, trust and rapport naturally develop. Empathy not only aids in conflict resolution but also strengthens the bonds between individuals.

Additionally, respect is a vital component of connectivity. It involves treating others with dignity, valuing their opinions, and appreciating their individuality. When individuals feel respected, they are more likely to open up and be vulnerable, a crucial element in establishing trust and intimacy. Furthermore, respect extends to personal boundaries, signifying understanding and consideration.

Furthermore, trust is the bedrock upon which all healthy relationships are constructed. It is built over time through consistent, reliable behavior. To establish trust, individuals must be dependable, keep promises, and, when necessary, maintain confidentiality. Trust is a fragile concept, easily

shattered, but once established, it leads to deeper connections and increased vulnerability within relationships.

Authenticity is being true to oneself and others. Authentic individuals are genuine and transparent in their interactions and don't pretend to be someone they are not. When people are authentic, they create an environment where others feel safe to be themselves as well. Authenticity erases barriers and encourages openness, resulting in a profound sense of connection.

Therefore, creating interpersonal relationships and connectivity is a complex yet vital aspect of human life. These five principles – communication, empathy, respect, trust and authenticity – are fundamental in building and maintaining meaningful connections with others. Whether in personal or professional settings, these principles serve as a guide for navigating the intricacies of human relationships.

Undoubtedly, embracing effective communication ensures that interactions are characterized by openness and understanding. Empathy fosters deeper connections by recognizing and validating others' emotions and perspectives. Respect reinforces the importance of treating each individual with dignity and acknowledging their unique value. Trust, the foundation of all healthy relationships, is nurtured through consistency and reliability. Lastly, authenticity encourages individuals to be true to themselves, fostering an environment of honesty and vulnerability. Incorporating these principles into daily interactions can lead to stronger, more meaningful relationships. In a world where technology often dominates our communication, it is crucial to remember that the essence of human connection lies in these principles. By practicing them, we can build lasting bonds that enhance our personal and professional lives, ultimately contributing to our overall well-being and happiness.