

A definition of our welcoming team's signature gift, beliefs and principle driven practices from a retreat we did together

Welcoming Team Guiding Principles and Practice

2014

Our team's signature gift is that we welcome people who have become outcasts and who feel misunderstood, devalued, rejected, and isolated.

We believe that:

1. Each unique outcast person has overlooked special gifts and value if the effort is made to welcome them to share their lives with us. We believe this because each of us have been outcasts and our value has been overlooked too
2. The more challenging someone is to connect with the more rewarding that connection is likely to be when it is made for both of us – especially if it is the first time they've connected with someone.
3. Successful approaches to building relationships with people include:
 - a. Listening, above all
 - b. Trusting our own feelings and instincts while exploring other people's worlds and sharing our worlds with them
 - c. Approaching people with warmth, kindness, and caring - including hugs
 - d. Being nonjudgmental, accepting, and tolerant
 - e. Seeing the world from their side - Searching for truth and meaning in their unique perspectives rather than imposing our own
 - f. Self disclosure to help people move from "out-cast" to "in-cast"
4. Healthy, healing relationships include:
 - a. Relentless hope
 - b. Mutual trust
 - c. Reciprocity
 - d. Multiple shared roles, activities, and interests
 - e. Helping people reconnect to their families and their past to more solidly know who they are
 - f. Becoming sources of safety and security, sometimes even becoming surrogate families
5. Small precious moments of connection, shared joy, mutual admiration and gratitude lead to treasuring the time spent together and each other.

6. Celebrating small successes and victories together builds hope and pride and gradually adds up to big successes and victories
7. These connections and successes lead to increased self awareness and valuation, achieving personal goals, and rebuilding lives.