

## WHITE PAPER

# The Durable Relationship™

## Introduction

Certain business, commercial or institutional affiliations are considered to be vital, mission-critical or essential. These associations between two parties typically provide extraordinary value to at least one of the involved parties across time, and perhaps across variable conditions. These *important relationships* may have come about by rigorous thought, planning and pursuit, or may have been born from casual, unintentional, fortunate circumstances. An important relationship may involve different types of parties such as services providers, organizations, institutions, professionals, suppliers, customers, marketplace channels, workers or other stakeholders and “partners.” Important relationships are also defined as *discretionary* from the viewpoint of at least one of the involved parties, thus a matter of *choice* from competing options. They typically involve longer time frames and have relatively high stakes for at least one of the parties.

Important relationships have a wide *continuum of quality*—from an extreme of resiliency, responsiveness, productivity and flexibility to an opposing extreme of counter-productivity, ineffectiveness and harmful, costly acrimony. Such quality is typically unexamined and may suffer from assumptions, misunderstandings or neglect. Each of the two parties, who are relying upon their important relationship, often fail to possess the understanding and outfitting to effectively and predictably design, construct and maintain a high-quality, fruitful relationship. Equally, neither party may possess a means of awareness of hidden problems or enablement of timely diagnosis and remedy.

Although “relationship” is a commonly used word, having an actionable comprehension of a relationship’s *dimensions* and *forces* isn’t a trivial matter. This is because relationships are largely intangible, complex, nebulous and multifaceted, which makes them hard for our minds to see, grasp, take apart or design. Further, business relationships consist of a myriad of bilateral elements ranging from the warm, personal psychology to the cold, clinical economics. Beyond this, substantive relationships normally have layers of paradox—harmony and tension; shared commonalities and distinct differences; dependencies and independencies; control and autonomy; and shared and discrete responsibilities. Additionally, important relationships take place in endlessly varying larger situations and within widely differing operating environments.

Some resist the term “relationship” as being too soft, *Kumbaya* and “fuzzy-wuzzy” to command their respect or serve their purposes. Nothing could be further from the truth! Relationships carry a complicated, blunt-force severity that can blindside anyone with a

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slashing blow if they're not alert, respectful and humble to their power. Indeed, if you've only a little life experience in your wake, you, or someone close to you, has likely already experienced the stealthy surprise of a low-quality relationship's harsh blow, even if nothing was learned by the painful impact.

Some believe they can choreograph an important business relationship by simply applying familiar constructs from other forms of relations, such as conventions of "family" or "friendships." Such naiveté can invite disaster. There's a vast difference between the bonds of family and friendship that include unconditional acceptance, entitlement, love and loyalty; versus business relationships held together by competitive, bilateral accountabilities, offering no room for anyone to relax in the comfort of entitlement.

Across time there have been recipes, formulas and tools for creating more predictable and dependable relationships. Yet many of these have been isolated, esoteric or limited in the domains of psychology, business schools, anthropology, sociology, economics or political science. This has prevented access or practical mainstream application. Even with the essential nature of important relationships within our business strategies and lives, there is surprisingly little attention directed to forming, sustaining and repairing important relationships.

Important relationships can be chosen, constructed and maintained so that they are fruitful, predictable, dependable and enduring. This is the purpose of the *Durable Relationship™*. This is a means to inform and enable higher quality within important relationships and do so bilaterally to the advantage of both parties, while preventing liability, loss and risk. If a relationship is important, it is imperative that it be of high quality from the perspective of both parties. There's simply too much at stake to do otherwise.

*The Durable Relationship™ is a proprietary standard\* encompassing a body of knowledge, methods and tools for achieving success and preventing failures in important relationships.* Durable means sturdy, stable, long-lasting and having the ability to withstand pressure, change, damage and stress. The practice of designing, forming and maintaining a Durable Relationship is described as *relationship engineering™*. Engineering is the appropriate term, for the Durable Relationship standard raises the bar with *knowledge, methodology and instrumentation.*

The "knowledge cornerstone" of the Durable Relationship standard is an organizing principle that addresses the three *dimensions* that each party brings to build an important relationship. This is known as the *Durable Relationship Organizing Principle™ (DROP™)*. This reality-based, universal framework provides a structure for analysis. DROP imparts *criteria of specific conditions* for each of the three dimensions to better assure success and security within important relationships. The principle is applied in practice by a standards-based methodology, processes and usage of informative tools. DROP allows both parties to possess an accurate and comprehensive approach to relationship engineering,

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diagnostics and decisions. Each party explores a relationship's potential and risks in a modular manner by exploring each distinct *dimension* and within each considering if optimal conditions will exist. The Durable Relationship standard and its DROP principle are valuable professional and organizational assets since they can be leveraged to advantage across endless circumstances.

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## The Durable Relationship Organizing Principle™ (DROP™)

*Make everything as simple as possible,*

*but not simpler.*

–Albert Einstein

*An important relationship is a separate, complex “device for gain” constructed by, and serving, two parties.*

Durable Relationships™ are engineered *between* various types of parties. This may be between different communities within a common organization, between two organizations, between individuals or between various combinations of these types of parties, such as between an individual and organization. The repeated usage of the word “between” is noteworthy. A relationship is an “object in a separate space” integrating two sets of contributions and reciprocally satisfying two sets of needs. Thus, an important relationship is a *separate, complex “device for gain”* constructed by, and serving, two parties.

Whenever a relationship fails to offer the *expected* value of *either* party, it deteriorates, dies, or may become harmful, if not repaired in a timely manner. A Durable Relationship fills a chasm between two parties in a manner that reliably *attracts* them to join together, then *continues to attract* them to remain together for shared purposes and objectives across time, challenges and change. Various metaphors can be useful envisioning a Durable Relationship between the two parties such as a *resilient bridge*, a *well-woven cloth*, a *flexible, sturdy chain*, a *well-tied knot*, *strong glue* or a *powerful magnetic force*. The last is perhaps the most instructive, for a dynamic, consistent attraction is the primary force within a Durable Relationship. Equally, the magnetic counter-forces of repelling” can emerge in relationships that are not engineered and *informed* for durability.

One of the many challenges within an important relationship is that it is typically an “*abstraction*” of *understandings, expectations and accountabilities between two parties*. This nebulous nature may foster dangerous assumptions and misunderstandings. To better ensure success in important relationships, it’s essential to make them more concrete for both parties by using an illuminating structure that allows components and quality within an important relationship to become “*visible*” and “*actionable*.”



*A Durable Relationship fills a chasm between two parties in a manner that reliably attracts them to join together, then continues to attract them to remain together for shared purposes and objectives across time, challenges and change.*

The *Durable Relationship Organizing Principle™ (DROP™)*, offers to both parties a higher vantage to “*see*,” understand and leverage the full landscape of a prospective or

*DROP provides a robust means for efficacy in designing, forecasting, diagnosing, improving, remedying ...and avoiding relationships.*

*A Durable Relationship requires each party to embrace a deeper and richer theory about themselves, the other party and the many consequences of a relationship existing between them.*

existing relationship. In doing so, DROP provides a robust means for efficacy in designing, forecasting, diagnosing, improving, remedying ... and avoiding relationships. For those who are diligent and conscientious, DROP is an instructive heuristic that expands understanding and improves judgment. For those who are hasty or nonchalant regarding their relations, DROP may at least serve as a speed bump to slow down spontaneous action, hence reducing risks by provoking thought and sober reflection beforehand.

DROP makes the mechanics of important relationships more tangible, manageable and measurable. DROP ensures each party is more enlightened and literate about universal realities, factors and forces present within important, long-term relations. A Durable Relationship requires *each* party to embrace a deeper and richer theory about themselves, the other party and the many consequences of a relationship existing between them. By sharing this framework while considering and planning an important relationship, each party possesses a dependable reference for more effective thought, language, dialog, predictive design and decisions, and when needed, a map for diagnostics and remedial actions.

Obviously, knowing and applying DROP isn't essential for forming and conducting successful relationships, just as modern healthcare wasn't essential for thousands of years of human life. Great relationships are taking place across the planet each day and have been doing so throughout human history. However, DROP serves to enlighten as to why many important relationships are consistently highly productive and enduring, while others fail, or never rise above mediocrity. As one moves into the future, applying DROP and the standardized Durable Relationship tools increases the likelihood that both parties will gain the rewards they seek while avoiding many risks and lurking disappointments.

## The Organizing Principle

DROP illustrates the three pertinent *dimensions* that are universally present *within each party*. Each strongly impacts important relationships. Whenever two parties form a relationship, each party's dimensions are combined to become the "fibers" or "forces" of the relationship. This set of three dimensions is *true* for both individuals and groups, and their important relationships, even though they are often not understood or may not be well-attended. The three dimensions are:

1. **Worldview**
2. **Capable purpose**
3. **Motives**

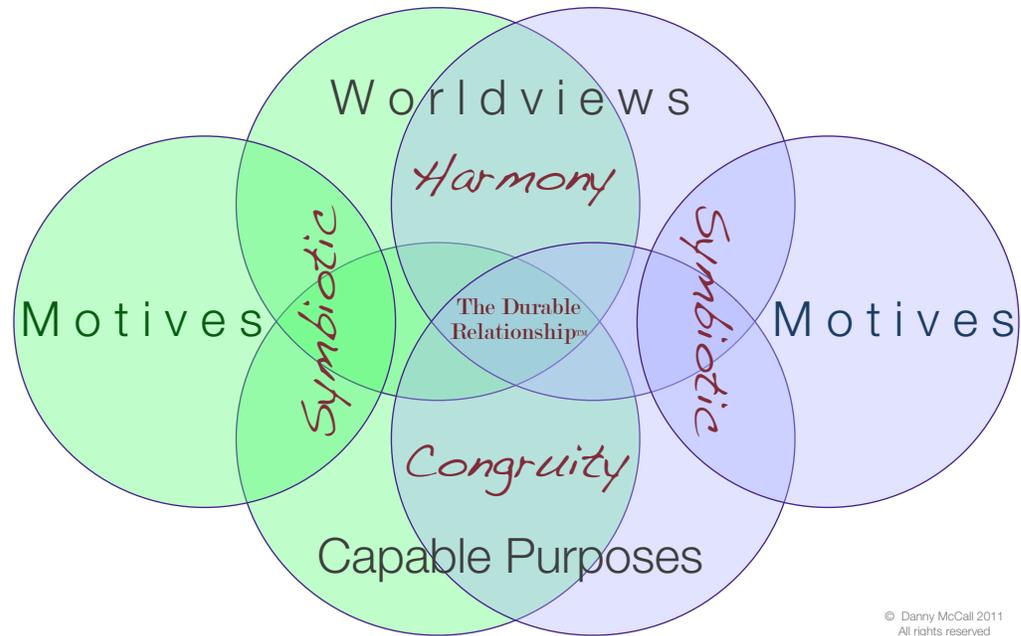
The Durable Relationship not only acknowledges these dimensions, but also respects and *leverages their power* by requiring specific *conditions* as criteria that must be present when the two parties' dimensions are brought together within a relationship. Requiring specific conditions to be in place produces predictability in relationship forecasting and decision-making, and if the relationship is consummated, a higher probability of success for both parties. Note the usage of the terms *predictability* and *probability* ... a Durable Relationship does not promise certainty, for that's unreasonable, if not impossible!

The Durable Relationship criteria of conditions are (in *italics*):

1. ***Harmony*** of worldviews
2. ***Congruity*** of capable purposes
3. ***Symbiotic*** motives

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*Requiring specific conditions to be in place produces predictability in relationship forecasting and decision-making, and if the relationship is consummated, a higher probability of success for both parties.*



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### A graphical representation of *DROP*™

Some may now benefit by exploring the above graphical representation of the DROP framework. Each party brings three distinct dimensions or “meta-context” to an important relationship. Each party’s respective dimensions are represented by two colors: blue on the right side, and green on the left side of the graphic. Pertinent *worldviews* and relevant *capable purposes* combine, blend or integrate as illustrated by the two respective overlaying areas for each of those dimensions. However, each party is also driven by underlying *motives* exerting a powerful force upon the relationship. Since respective *motives* are normally dissimilar, the graphic presents each party’s *motives* as fully separated.

Each required *condition* is located in the areas where *Worldviews* and *Capable Purposes* unite, as well as in the differing *Motives*, shown in a dark red script.

### More about Dimensions ...

Each party, whether a group or a sole individual, inherently possesses each of the three dimensions before, during and after a relationship—*worldview*, *capable purpose* and *motives*. Each of these may be strong building blocks, or conversely, may present problematic detriments to a healthy relationship. Each significantly impacts an important relationship, for better or worse. Knowledge regarding these dimensions by either party may be accurate and extensive, or may be yet unexplored, unknown or incorrect. Each

*Each dimension carries positive or negative implications as to the prospective well-being, productivity and compatibility of the relationship.*

*Worldviews are relatively rigid, tightly held, ingrained and generally are defended, deep-seated and unchanging.*

*Worldview underpins and instructs behaviors, reflexive responses, thoughts, decisions and interactions, especially within performance-oriented relationships that may contain difficult, changing or stressful situations.*

dimension carries positive or negative implications as to the prospective well-being, productivity and compatibility of the relationship. Each *dimension* must be first well understood before considering *conditions*. In some situations, the line of demarcation between the three dimensions can seem fuzzy with boundaries having a variety of subjective interpretations. Such is the challenge of structured compartmentalization or partitioning comprising most “organizing” principles, especially those addressing murky socioeconomic circumstances. Nevertheless, the diligent practitioner should be able to direct attention to each dimension’s distinctions for achieving greater insights, rewards and safety within important relationships.

Following are basic definitions for each dimension, whether within a person, group or organization:

**Worldview** ... our *operating* philosophies, theories, models, paradigms, belief systems, mental anchors and hardwired guiding concepts. This may include values, ethics, principles, prejudices, morals, rigid historical, ideologies, professional methods, practices or discretionary methods. Worldview also includes strongly held political, social, spiritual mindsets and other “guiding biases.” A worldview can be a result of, or correlate with, significant influences, incentives, imprinting, memes and other forms of cultural sculpting. Worldviews are relatively rigid, tightly held, ingrained and generally are defended, deep-seated and unchanging.

Worldview underpins and instructs behaviors, reflexive responses, thoughts, decisions and interactions, especially within performance-oriented relationships that may contain difficult, changing or stressful situations. Based on this definition, *fleeting, shifting, flexible and easily malleable opinions, perspectives and viewpoints do not qualify as worldviews (nor does illiteracy or misinformation, if either can be remedied in a timely and reasonable manner)*.

Notes:

1) In all three dimensions, not all factors within the dimension are necessarily applicable to the relationship, thus only those factors having applicability should be considered. However, it can sometimes be surprising how a seemingly non-pertinent worldview can surface to be critically important in certain circumstances during the time span of the relationship.

2) Interestingly, *DROP is itself designed and intended to be the adopted worldview* as to the guiding theory of important relationships. If this is not adopted by either party as their worldview, by definition, there cannot be a Durable Relationship.

*Capable purpose describes a party's willingness and readiness for accountability.*

**Capable purpose** ... a party's pertinent abilities *and* applicable agenda. This is what a party is trying to accomplish with the relationship *and* what they offer that is of value to the performance of the relationship. This dimension equally includes what the party is not trying to accomplish or what they do not offer (aka: "the negative space") as to their functional performance.

*Generally, absences, deficits, weaknesses or vacuums in capable purpose are the impetus causing an interest in forming the relationship with the other party* (since a party cannot optimally pursue what they desire to accomplish otherwise). Capable purpose describes a party's *willingness and readiness* for accountability. This term addresses both the relevant "wants" and "interests" of a party as well as what they possess (and do not) in latent potential to a relationship. It can be seen as the "intent and power" provided by a party. Capable purpose defines what can and cannot be expected of a party as to committed, effective contributions. To further breakdown this compound term:

**purpose** ... the intent, objective, desire, substantive interests, mission, determination, aspiration, focus, strategy, destination or agenda of a party

**capable** ... the *applicable* (personal, community or organizational) competencies, qualifications, skills, resources, position, inherent characteristics, qualities, experience, capital, culture, traits, resources, preferences, time, attention span, aversions, leadership, intelligence, knowledge, networks/ecosystem, infrastructure and accreditations that potentially may serve, enable and propel a party's role or functional performance within a relationship

Notes:

- 1) Many of the descriptive words used in this definition are personal in nature, while others relate to groups, since this definition is intended to describe both the attributes of individuals as well as those of collective groups, communities or organizations.
- 2) When there is the absence of Durable Relationship organizing principles, this dimension is typically the only dimension applied for forming an important relationship with an organization or person (aka: the party's "desire + ability").
- 3) Some may be aided in their understanding of this dimension by a semantic reversal of the term into "purposeful capabilities" ... in other words, *existing capabilities that are directed to a specific purpose*.
- 4) Author's comment: I wrestled and fought vigorously with this term. Should this be simply considered as two dimensions instead of one? Is there a single word that includes each to make this simpler? After diligent deliberation, I

remain with the term, for I believe the separation of terms would invite loss of meaning. Although I can find synonyms for the two terms separately, there is no single word in our language of which I am aware that has the correct meaning. Interestingly, there are two playful hyphenated approaches that are somewhat in the vicinity —“response-ability” and “account-ability.”

*Motives and their being satisfied are key to the design of relationship quality.*

**Motives** ... the underlying reasons for doing or being, especially the “deeper whys.” Motives are the driving forces and undercurrents of stimuli, often hidden causes or substantive needs that propel a party’s intent and/or actions and extend strong influence over attention and actions. Motives and their being satisfied are key to the design of relationship quality.

While the fountainhead of motives may be intrinsic or extrinsic, motives are a powerful, constant internal need that elicits, controls and sustains behaviors. This is true for individuals; and by extension, likewise true for groups and organizations. Motives are the deeper, often unarticulated, reasons for participating in a relationship. Motives are vital elements that must be satisfied by the relationship. *In most cases, most motives of a party will be significantly different from those of the other party’s.*

**Measurable** definition and satisfaction of the two parties’ respective motives is the key indicator as to quality in a Durable Relationship. To generate this metric, each party’s motives are determined, stratified and quantified to become their quality parameters, which is then combined with the other’s party’s parameters in a graphical, bilateral construct known as **Quality of Relationship (QR™)**. Durable Relationships require that each party is regularly informed regarding QR.

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Notes:

- 1) Capable purpose in some relationships may be “effects” of “causes” residing in the motive dimension. It’s reasonable to expect to find correlations between motives and the dimensions of capable purpose and worldviews. However, a word of caution—do not confuse correlations with causation, or spend excessive energy diving deeper in analysis than is required for prudent engineering and maintaining of the relationship.
- 2) A party may have well-examined motives and be articulate in their expression. On the other hand, a party may not have accurately appraised or diagnosed their motives. Sometimes what are deemed to be motives are merely symptoms of motives. Diagnosing true motives can be a non-trivial, adventurous investigation filled with decoys and detours.

*Each party is advised to place attention only to that which may be applicable and be alert to diminishing returns in any process of investigation, diagnostics or design.*

Two parties approach each other with their respective set of dimensions and attempt to combine them when they form an important relationship. Each dimension has many complexities, facets, factors and contexts, some of which are applicable to the success and durability of the relationship, while others may be neutral or entirely non-relevant to the relationship's durability. Once more, each party is advised to place attention only to that which may be applicable and be alert to diminishing returns in any process of investigation, diagnostics or design. Applicability and relevancy of certain factors may not be fully known or envisioned until the process of combining them takes place by discussion. In fact, in some situations, certain elements are seen to be important only once the relationship is underway and being experienced in daily realities. In Durable Relationships there are never-ending possibilities for discovery, learning, discussion, and if needed, creative remedies. Hence, ongoing instrumentation and periodic reviews are imperative!

## More about Conditions ...

*To engineer a Durable Relationship, it's essential that each dimension a party offers to the relationship fits well with the other party's dimensions. "Fit" herein means synergistic, sustainable and strong "companionship" and sustainable "productive output" when brought together. The Durable Relationship standard requires specific criteria of conditions that will lead to a strong, durable fit. Durable Relationship conditions should be engineered to produce these results:*

*To engineer a Durable Relationship, it's essential that each dimension a party offers to the relationship fits well with the other party's dimensions.*

1. Significant, continuous **attraction of each party** to forming and sustaining the relationship across time and change.
2. **Providing the yields**, outcomes, rewards, results or productivity that each party seeks from the relationship.
3. **Preventing unacceptable circumstances**, including excessive risk, unreasonable demands, pain, harm, chronically detrimental situations or unconstructive, conflict-centered interplay within the relationship.
4. **Providing for mutual adaptability**, resilience and responsiveness when changing circumstances or challenges occur.

DIMENSIONS

		WORLDVIEW	CAPABLE PURPOSE	MOTIVES
CONDITIONS	HARMONY	✓		
	CONGRUITY		✓	
	SYMBIOTIC			✓

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Harmony aids, advances and “lubricates” the spirit, energy and progress of the relationship.

To meet these objectives of a Durable Relationship, three specific conditions must be present when the respective dimensions of the parties are joined together. The criteria of conditions for each dimension are:

- **Harmony** ... when combining “worldviews.”
- **Congruity** ... when combining “capable purposes.”
- **Symbiotic** ... when combining “motives.”

Definitions are:

**Harmony** ... a pleasing, complimentary, amicable, respectful, compatible and constructive, empathetic and responsive interplay of thought, communications and behaviors when blending the two *applicable* worldviews. Harmony aids, advances and “lubricates” the spirit, energy, flexibility and progress of the relationship. *Harmony ensures the parties will more easily adapt and respond to change, surprises and unforeseen issues when they inevitably occur.* Equally, when there is a condition of harmony, *chronic or severe* disagreements, toxic friction, or hidden risks are more likely to be prevented.

This does not imply by any means that worldviews need be identically shared, or even similar, although they may be. Harmony does not mean commonality, homogeneity or uniformity. Indeed, often diverse worldviews can best amplify the potential of the relationship by synergistically stretching perspectives, heightening awareness, offering “construction tension,” educating and expanding the vantage, creativity, responsiveness and innovation in the relationship. *Harmonious relationships are resilient, responsive and possess plasticity, which is essential for durability.*

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*Within the Durable Relationship, a DROP worldview should always be shared in common by both parties as the optimal theory for important relationships.*

*One must be pragmatic, prudent and alert to the pertinence and consequences of the worldviews that will be existing within the relationship.*

*Worldviews normally are hardened in place; thus beliefs or attempts as to their modification may result in disappointment and failure.*

However, when disharmonious worldviews are present, there may be many unconstructive clashes, a cloud of unproductive, draining tensions, difficulties in resolving differences, opportunity losses, counterproductive thinking, communications and behaviors, the presence of excessively negative emotions, mistrust, cynicism, entitlement, disengagement, chronic disrespect and friction, lack of enthusiasm and consistent attitudinal deficits. The relationship is brittle, inflexible and not tolerant of changes. Worse, poorly-matched worldviews can lead to toxic acrimony, ill will, antagonism, damaging conflicts, paralysis, dysfunctional tensions, irreconcilable differences, disenfranchisement or various forms of destructive distractions, harmful or wasteful consequences, passive-aggressive behaviors and a wide range of other unacceptable risks, liabilities and loss.

*Within the Durable Relationship, a DROP worldview should always be shared in common by both parties as the optimal theory for important relationships.*

#### Notes:

- 1) Once more, an emphasis on “applicable” is important, for certainly one does not need to pursue and investigate the entire inventory of their own worldviews, nor all those of the other party, when engineering a relationship. Rather, attention should only be given to worldviews that have prospective implications to the relationship. On the other hand, one must be pragmatic, prudent and alert to the pertinence and consequences of the worldviews that will be existing within the relationship.
- 2) Provide equal diligence to both *positive* and *negative implications* regarding applicable worldviews.
- 3) Worldviews normally are hardened in place; thus beliefs or attempts as to their modification may result in disappointment and failure.
- 4) Each party should carefully determine and express their own applicable worldview, and equally, should learn of the other party’s applicable worldviews *before making decisions to enter an important relationship*. It is suggested that each party make a thoughtful list of worldviews that they believe may have implications (positive and negative) to the relationship (prior to entering discussion), and once completed, share them within a discussion setting. Authentic, candid, vigorous discussion ... upfront ... is a vital ingredient for engineering a Durable Relationship.
- 5) Considerations and decisions regarding the acceptability and impact of worldviews are, by definition, **entirely subjective** and must be pragmatically considered as such through the prudent, sober judgment of each party. Each party’s judgment should be respected and accepted by the other. *Any overriding, unfounded optimism by either party is an impairment to sound judgment and strongly discouraged.*

*Congruity of the two parties' joined capable purposes is the "productive engine" of the relationship.*

*The qualities and characteristics of capable purpose that are offered by each party to the other must "mesh" together like well-machined gears, perfectly-matching puzzle pieces or a hand in a perfectly fitting glove.*

*Congruity is a prerequisite (not an afterthought), and is made explicit by agreement upfront, without allowance for the presence of endangering assumptions or deficits.*

*Capable purpose should be as objective, factual, absolute and inarguable as possible.*

6) A Durable Relationship, by definition, cannot accept, be designed with, or exist with a condition of incompatible worldviews. Both parties, at their discretion, can choose a relationship constructed with suboptimal conditions in place, but *doing so will not qualify as a Durable Relationship.*

7) Unexamined, latent worldview conflicts can fester unnoticed below the surface, then at some point in time, or with stimulus, reveal themselves in an extreme and detrimental manner.

**Congruity** ... this is the core, crux, center of gravity and overt reason for the important relationship. Congruity of the two parties' joined capable purposes is the "productive engine" of the relationship. As previously mentioned, in the absence of DROP, this condition is often the only consideration as relationships are sought and maintained. For the relationship to serve its intentions and produce the yields the parties seek, the qualities and characteristics of capable purpose that are offered by each party to the other must "mesh" together like well-machined gears, perfectly-matching puzzle pieces or a hand in a perfectly fitting glove. Some use the word "alignment" to describe this criterion of the matching of capable purpose of the respective parties.

*Congruity in a Durable Relationship means each party's capable purpose is coupled with the other's in a manner that accurately and completely compliments the other, per the requirements of the relationship's purpose and objectives. Congruity is vital to deriving high performance from the relationship. This, in turn, generates the yields that each party seeks from the relationship. Furthermore, congruity is a prerequisite (not an afterthought), and is made explicit by agreement upfront, without allowance for the presence of endangering assumptions or deficits.*

Each party has a distinct, responsible role to play in the relationship to meet the requirements for achieving the objectives of the relationship. When united, the parties should operate, focus and deliver upon a common vector of performance. The two respective relationships' roles should be integrated so that each party's accountabilities acceptably match the other party's performance needs with reasonable precision. Stated another way, each party must offer and fully utilize what the other utilizes and offers, and do so with efficacy.

You may recall that harmony in worldview is subjective. Conversely, be alert to the fact that *congruity in capable purpose should be as objective, factual, absolute and inarguable as possible. Congruity should be severely judged and based solely upon prevailing reliable information or evidence; alternatively, a trustworthy, rigorous forecast ... all residing upon clear, explicit agreement between the parties as to their respective accountabilities and aversions.* If there is any variance accepted as to deficits in congruity (incongruity), this must be remedied, monitored and enforced in a timely manner if the relationship is to meet the expectations of the parties.

Whatever one party does not offer, as to the total of capable purpose required for the design and success of the relationship, must be offered by the other.

There should be no “problematic overlaps” when the two capable purposes are examined and combined.

To sustain the attraction of both parties, a relationship must consistently and accurately satisfy the motives of each party.

“Complete engineering and agreement as to shared accountabilities” is perhaps another description of congruity. An agreement’s *sum total of accountabilities must be equal to the total functional demands of the relationship*. Nothing should be missing or absent. There should be no holes, gaping incompetencies and responsibility deficits as to the relationship’s requirements. There must be complete and absolute resolve as to every item on the list of required capabilities with nothing left to hope, luck, fate, chance, assumption, “maybe” or empty promise. A Durable Relationship is about increasing the probability of relationship success, not about wishing, gambling or assuming. By definition, if you form a relationship with capable purpose elements missing or deficient that are deemed to be requirements for success, these absences or variances may cause the relationship to be fragile, brittle, handicapped, weak, unproductive, or even dangerous. These in turn may lead to failure, acrimony, wastes, losses, risks and excessive consumption of precious attention and resources.

*Each party’s role in the Durable Relationship is synonymous with their capable purpose or enthusiastic, skillful functional performance. Respective capable purpose contributions are a “zero sum” design.* Whatever one party does not offer, as to the total of capable purpose required for the design and success of the relationship, must be offered by the other. This must not be rationalized otherwise. This does not mean either party must be “all things” or omnipotent. Quite the opposite—each must separately bring to the relationship their respective portion of performance obligations, qualifications, interests and accountabilities so that when both parties are combined, the total requirements of the relationship are fully addressed and in place.

Equally, there should be no “problematic overlaps” when the two capable purposes are examined and combined. While many overlaps may be acceptable and benign, *in some cases there can be troublesome issues of “redundancies” in the parties’ capable purpose inventory or intentions. This can be especially true regarding each party’s functional strengths, history, routines, interests, needs and aspirations regarding their respective roles and scope of functional responsibilities in the relationship. This is further amplified if these should relate to areas such as power, span of control, autonomy, authority, rights, needs for transparency, budgets, distribution of rights, means of conflict resolution and so forth.* Such matters of problematic overlap should be fully discussed and resolved to the understanding, acceptance and agreement of both parties, including explicit agreement of “functional authority,” “relationship governance” and “decision rights.” “Overlap-clash” relates, in some instances, to motives and, to a lesser degree, in worldview as well. Once more, excessive optimism on the front end can cause parties not to be discerning and rigorous in related thought, caution and discussions about these topics.

**Symbiotic** ... the two parties are different, that’s reality, and as it should be, and likely the reason the parties desire a relationship. It follows that their motives may be largely or entirely different. Indeed, if each party shared precisely the same motives, they could become competitive, predatory or repelling to each other. As in many forms

*Durable Relationships acknowledge, leverage and enjoy the power of asymmetrical, symbiotic forces by metaphorically weaving these motive differences into a strong resilient cloth.*

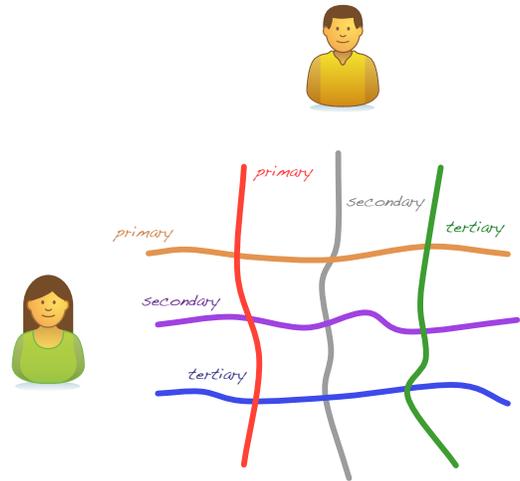
*Each party consistently and accurately satisfying the respective, symbiotic differences of motives of the other is power and security within an important relationship!*

*In a Durable Relationship, the state of the motive condition is reflected and monitored by a graphical construct QR (Quality of Relationship).*

of relations, in important relationships “opposites often attract” due to the motives they seek to satisfy within a relationship. However, differences in motives must be diagnosed carefully due to the positive or negative consequences.

Since motives may be quite different, they must compliment and amplify the agenda and potential for the relationship, versus bringing conflict and danger to it. To sustain the attraction of both parties, a relationship must consistently and accurately satisfy the motives of each party. Throughout the natural world, different organisms with different motives unite in many ways and forms of **symbiosis** to generate outstanding benefits for both entities. So it is with Durable Relationships. Durable Relationships acknowledge, leverage and enjoy the power of asymmetrical, **symbiotic** forces by metaphorically weaving these motive differences into a strong resilient cloth.

*Motives ...*



*... the vital weave of quality*

For example, in workforce relationships, organizations universally have motives of *outcomes, conservation of resources and mitigating risks*; while workers’ motives are totally and universally different as they seek a trident of *functional, social and life satisfaction* from work. Accordingly, the better each party’s motives are respectively known and satisfied by the other, in their entirety, the higher the quality of the work relationship ... and the stronger the attraction remains for each in forming and sustaining the relationship. Each party consistently and *accurately* satisfying the respective, symbiotic differences of motives of the other is power and security within an important relationship!

In a Durable Relationship, *the state of the motive condition is reflected and monitored by a graphical construct QR (Quality of Relationship)*. Note that correct conditions within the two other dimensions, capable purpose and worldview, are simply “threshold requirements” that must be present to merit forming and/or sustaining a Durable Relationship. Satisfying each party’s motives is so important that the *Durable Relationship standard requires the degree or level of QR present within the relationship to be measured at regular intervals. Mutually satisfied motives represent high quality, or metaphorically “the magnetic attraction” that establishes and bonds a Durable Relationship.*

Must all of respective motives always be different? No. But one must realize differences of motives are not only acceptable, but may be optimal. “Shared motives” or “alignment” are too often seen as essential ingredients for successful relationships, leading

*The Durable Relationship standard requires the degree or level of QR present within the relationship to be measured at regular intervals.*

to both “false positives” and “false negatives” in both diagnostics and decisions regarding important relationships. In fact, extra caution should be exercised when motives are too similar, especially in those contexts that can lead to destructive conflicts or competition. Examples are similar to overlaps in capable purpose, such as commonalities that lead to desire for power, control, governance or autonomy. Motive commonalities of strong interest or intention may ultimately result in functional overlap or agenda competitiveness. One related point—benign, common motives are self-satisfying by definition, so it is satisfying the different motives of the two parties that demands attention and vigilance.

Strong “symbiotic” relationship conditions are created by awareness and responsiveness to the value offered by each party in satisfying each other’s motives across the span of the relationship. This makes it imperative that both parties must be initially, regularly and accurately informed. Each party recognizes that only magnetic attraction and “deep incentive” binds the relationship. Unlike worldviews, motives are subject to change, thus another reason for both parties’ vigilance within this dimension. Each should revisit the validity of their respective, articulated motive parameters periodically.

## One final *DROP* component: Ambiance

*Ambiance can be thought of as the environment, prevailing space or the ecosystem that surrounds and influences each party and their relationship. Equally, a Durable Relationship typically exerts impacts upon its related environments.*

*The ambiance of each party and their Durable Relationship can be a soup of noise, forces, shifting priorities, innovations, surprises, trends and competitive options.*

*Durable Relationship anticipates and addresses a messy, changing world, filled with surprises in which its survival and success demands durability.*

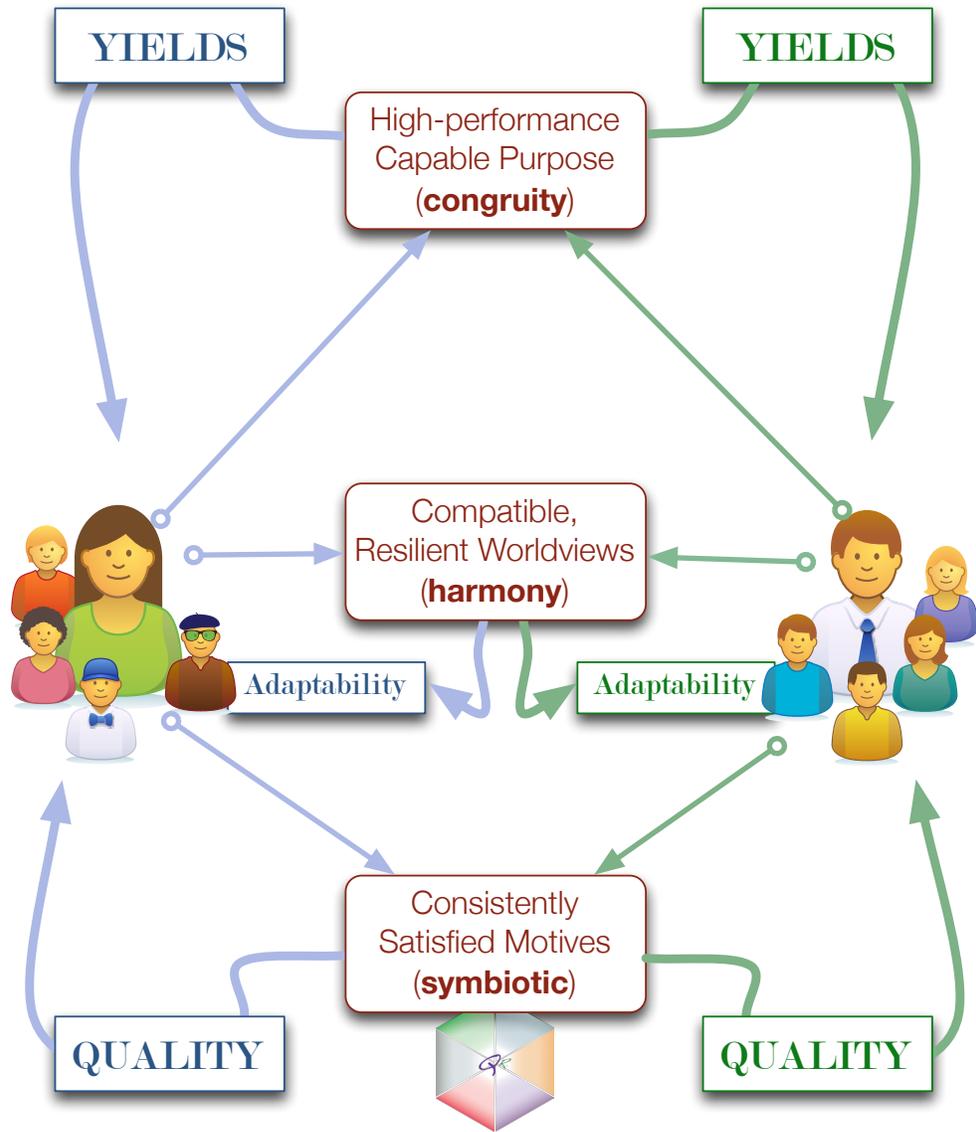
A Durable Relationship doesn't take place and operate within a vacuum, nor will it likely have static circumstances. That is, it's not isolated or insulated from a barrage of influences, changes and distractions, and occasionally, abrupt, unanticipated surprises. This is known as the *ambiance* of a Durable Relationship. While ambiance is not a part of the relationship, *per se*, it is the "stage" it acts upon. Ambiance can be thought of as the environment, prevailing space or the ecosystem that surrounds and influences each party *and* their relationship. Equally, a Durable Relationship typically exerts impacts upon its related environments.

The two parties may have ambiance factors that are generally shared, or each party may have their own unique ambiance. The ambiance of the Durable Relationship is the *sum of the factors* of the two parties, plus any other factors relating to the relationship independently.

Indeed, ambiance is one reason that it's so important a relationship be pragmatically designed, and even reinforced, for *durability*. The ambiance of each party and their Durable Relationship can be a soup of noise, forces, shifting priorities, innovations, surprises, trends and competitive options. These can seduce the attention and energy either toward, or away from, a Durable Relationship. The possibilities of factors that should be considered in ambiance are perhaps limitless when you appraise the nature and circumstances of their ecosystems.

Ambiance in *DROP* serves to generate humbling awareness and be a sobering "engineering reminder." A relationship must not be "naively" engineered for ideal, sterile, static, isolated or insulated situations. Instead, a Durable Relationship anticipates and addresses a messy, changing world, filled with surprises in which its survival and success demands durability. Attention to ambiance helps each party to define, anticipate and specify the factors that will, or could, take place across the environment(s) of the relationship across time; and from this knowledge, design the relationship accordingly. Certainly you can't anticipate everything that may occur across the span of a relationship. But at a minimum, you should conservatively generate "what-if" scenarios, forecast and engineer to a reasonable degree so as to increase probabilities of relationship success.

The Durable Relationship™



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*To qualify as being a “Durable Relationship,” all conditions must be met, consistently sustained, regularly informed and maintained.*

*This standardized structure, criteria, measurable quality and tools is designed to ensure each party will gain the greatest value from their affiliation with the least risks exposure and resource expenditures.*

*There is a general tendency not to place enough thought and rigor on the front end as to understanding, design and decision prudence, thus one should be disciplined to avoid short-cutting and impatience.*

### **Must these conditions be met within all three dimensions in an important relationship?**

Simply to form and conduct an important relationship? No, of course not! As pointed out earlier, important relationships have likely existed since humans and their tribes first formed. Uncountable relationships have provided incredible value to the involved parties. And conversely, many have failed miserably, in countless ways. I suspect you may discover that the presence of the conditions criteria explains many successes, and in most cases, I suspect you will discover that the absence of one or more of the conditions criteria explains failures.

Nevertheless, ***to qualify as being a “Durable Relationship,” all conditions must be met, consistently sustained, regularly informed and maintained.*** Keep in mind that the purpose of the Durable Relationship standard of principles is to ensure an important relationship will be more likely to be well-thought, well-constructed, well-chosen, durable, productive and fruitful for both parties. This standardized structure, criteria, measurable quality and tools are designed to ensure each party will gain the greatest value from their affiliation with the least risks exposure and resource expenditures. The standard provides greater understanding, precision, predictability, stability, security and rewards from important relationships.

### **How deep and extensive should the diagnostics, discussions or design be? When do you reach a point of diminishing returns?**

There are no simple answers to these questions, for these are judgments each party must make. But below are a few points to aid judgment:

- The extent of diligent effort should be proportionate to the level of importance to a party, including risks, rewards, resource investments and potential consequences.
- There is a general tendency not to place enough thought and rigor on the front end as to understanding, design and decision prudence, thus one should be disciplined to avoid short-cutting and impatience.
- Only elements having impact, influence and relevance upon the relationship should be considered.
- The consistent usage of knowledge management methods, documentation or systems can be extremely useful for present effort, and for reference, application, learning, innovations and improvements in future efforts.
- There can be advantages in seeking inputs from others, having vigorous discussions and clinical “post-mortems” regarding past relationship successes and failures. Examining similar exemplary positive and negative relationships in similar and extremely different environments can also offer insights.

*Generally speaking, enjoying the many benefits of creative divergence is relatively rare, while suffering the consequences of too rapid conclusion is relatively common.*

*Approach Durable Relationships with a conservative, realistic, pragmatic, vigilant and “constructively paranoid” state of mind.*

*Think like a discerning “buyer” with “healthy skepticism.”*

- All investigations, diagnostics, design and engineering wrestles with issues of compromise, including promoting divergence while regulating distraction; and marching to convergence and resolution while restraining an excessively fast pace to prevent blindness. Generally speaking, enjoying the many benefits of creative divergence is relatively rare, while suffering the consequences of too rapid conclusion is relatively common.
- The Durable Relationship standard is, in part, designed to prevent or inhibit unfounded optimism, unreasonable urgency, recklessness and the casual, emotional methods often applied in important relationships. One should approach Durable Relationships with a conservative, realistic, pragmatic, vigilant and “constructively paranoid” state of mind, being especially cautious regarding omissions; dangling, unresolved issues; evident flaws; rationalization; deficiencies and excessive variability. Strive to think like a discerning “buyer” with “healthy skepticism.”
- A large portion of the downstream value and resiliency derived from pursuing and having a Durable Relationship is derived from the conscientious upstream effort ... the fountainhead for many of the relationship’s yields.
- Utilizing methodical checklist or schedule (a sequential format of process or work flow) that is optimally suitable for the relationship you’re engineering may prove to be a useful aid to one or both parties.
- A very common example of “underinvesting” in a widespread form of important relationships is the manner in which many workforce hiring decisions are made. This often leads to detrimental business and life consequences, generally because neither party is willing to slow down, think better and apply valid principles and methods to produce better bilateral decisions.

**You indicate there can be a potential of troublesome overlaps regarding the two parties as to their respective capable purposes as well as within their respective motives. Can you explain how one might be able to better understand these two different types of overlaps?**

This can be confusing at first, and in fact, my answer may help some readers to better understand these two dimensions. As a general rule, an overlap in capable purpose occurs when each of the two parties desires to perform the same function, occupy the same role or have the same accountability in the relationship. Whereas an overlap in motive occurs when each of the two parties want to derive the same benefit, yield or outcome from the relationship. You could say the former relates to what each party seeks to “do,” while the latter relates to what each party seeks to “be,” although this is an oversimplification.

*Each party should simply invest in the relationship to the degree that it is important to them, no more, no less.*

Either of these forms of overlap should be carefully evaluated by both parties as to whether they are benign and fully-acceptable, or likely to be problematic and dangerous within the relationship.

To summarize, each party should simply invest in the relationship to the degree that it is important to them, no more, no less. Applying DROP can be very simple, fast and easy or can be extremely comprehensive and sophisticated. Each party defines their investments and threshold of diminishing returns.

*If I had eight hours to chop down a tree,  
I would spend six sharpening my ax.*

—Abraham Lincoln

## The Applied Practice

Once both parties understand and accept DROP™ as the organizing principle (aka: worldview) for important relationships, they can apply this knowledge in practice for their respective benefits. Realizing and sustaining a Durable Relationship is accomplished through a combination of processes and tools that guide and outfit engineering, decisions and the vital periodic maintenance of the relationship, *which are also requirements of this proprietary standard.*

*A new Durable Relationship is created by moving through three sequential stages, with each stage having within it a 5-step process.*

### Stages and steps ...

A new Durable Relationship is created by moving through three sequential stages, with each stage having within it a 5-step process. Stages correlate directly with dimensions. Furthermore, when constructing a new relationship there is a required order of the stages. Following this sequence provides efficacy in progressive discussion, understanding and decision-making:

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Objective</u>
First	Capable purpose	Establish threshold <b>viability</b>
Second	Worldview	Determine <b>compatibility</b>
Third	Motives	Define and inform <b>quality</b>

In a new relationship, these stages correlate directly to “progressive decisions” or “go - no go” vetting milestones, for example:

1. When considering or exploring a new relationship, being able to establish clear congruity in the respective capable purposes should guide decisions as to whether the two parties meet basic qualifications for a fruitful relationship.
2. If congruity of capable purpose is deemed by both parties to be affirmative, at that point, the parties should decide if there will be a compatibility in the relationship by exploring respective worldviews, and from that information, reach conclusions that guide the next level of decisions.
3. Only worldviews point to harmonious conditions, then the parties define quality to ensure they will have correct attention and instrumentation that ensures the relationship is consistently well-maintained and healthy.

The table on the next page describes the stage sequences, from left to right. Under each of the stages is a 5-step process. You will note that below each process are specific tools that the parties respectively utilize for the construction and stewardship of their Durable Relationship\*. These tools are the relationship management suite of a Durable Relationship known as *nPerspect™\**. It is beyond the scope of this whitepaper to go into tools instruction.

Stages >>>	1 Capable Purpose	2 Worldview	3 Motives
<p><i>Target</i> <b>Condition</b></p>	<p><b>Congruity</b></p>	<p><b>Harmony</b></p>	<p><b>Symbiotic</b></p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the relationship's objectives, such as desired yields, production, goals, overarching purpose, product, results, reasons, deliverables or outcomes.</li> <li>2. From objectives, define the <u>total required capable purpose elements (CPE)</u>, such as competencies, accountabilities, management, leadership, schedules, responsibilities, authorities, operating requirements, investment, logistics, infrastructure, resources, work flow and information flow for relationship success.</li> <li>3. From total required capable purpose, <b>allocate CPE elements and respective accountabilities thereof</b>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss and define your (or your group's) realistic abilities and commitments of CPE accountability; and</li> <li>b. Discuss and define the other party's realistic abilities and commitments of CPE accountability.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Resolve any "holes," deficits or conflicts in CPE.</li> <li>5. Establish an itemized agreement on the above by collaboration and use of <i>Shake Tool™</i> to the point of consummating a <i>Durable Relationship Agreement</i>. Modify the Agreement when and if needed. <p><b>Caution: ensure no "holes" or assumptions.</b> Any deficits, if deemed acceptable, must have a timely, well-attended path of remedy/resolve. Be alert to potential purpose, intention or capability "glashes," especially as they may relate to power, control, authority or autonomy.</p> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that both parties understand and adopt <i>DRQP™</i> as the organizing and operating principles regarding this relationship. <b>Both parties</b> should have read <i>Durable Relationship Whitepaper</i> followed by discussion ensuring understanding and acceptance.</li> <li>2. Appraise and list all potentially relevant worldviews you (or your group) possess and embrace, such as those guiding values, principles, points of view and core beliefs that will direct your thinking, behavior, judgement, methods and communications (as may be applicable to generating, or preventing, harmony in this relationship).</li> <li>3. Separately, list similar and divergent worldviews you believe the other party should, and should not, possess (as applicable to achieving, or harming, a high probability of harmony within the relationship).</li> <li>4. Have a candid discussion with the other party by sharing each other's two respective lists. Vigorously probe and collaborate to the point of reliably instructing each party's respective decision and comfort.</li> <li>5. <b>Decide favorably only if</b> the applicable, combined worldviews of the two parties offer a <b>high probability of harmony and low probability of incompatibility.</b> <p><b>Apply prudent, sober judgment in decision-making,</b> being alert to potentials of deep-seated, irreconcilable conflicts and incompatibilities.</p> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diagnose your (or your group's) core motives or essential factors which must be consistently satisfied within and throughout the relationship. What ultimately defines quality for you in this relationship? Be intellectually honest, rigorous, reflective and divergent.</li> <li>2. Use "Quality Factors Declaration" in <i>Snap Tool's</i> set-up process to express and rank the three paramount factors that define satisfying relationship quality from your (or your group's) point of view. Use care in the words/ semantics chosen so as to accurately communicate your needs to the other party without confusion. These become the three parameters that express and define the quality of relationship for you. <i>Snap Tool's</i> process will unite your parameters with those of the other party to construct complete parameters of the relationship's <b>QR™</b>.</li> <li>3. Share, define and discuss your <b>QR™</b> factors with other party. Equally seek to learn, understand ... and become consistently effective in delivering their <b>QR™</b> factors.</li> <li>4. <i>Snap Tool</i> will prompt you each month to authentically express your <b>QR™</b> perspectives in a timely and authentic manner. Once both parties have provided inputs, carefully consider the information in your <b>QR™-Snapshot™</b>.</li> <li>5. <b>Whenever QR-quality is suboptimal, either party should seek immediate remedy.</b> Apply <i>DRQP</i>-based diagnostics, dialog, <i>Talk Tool™</i> and <i>Shake Tool</i> as needed. Stay informed regarding the accuracy of motives and changes. Act in a timely manner to problematic issues or betterment opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p><i>nRespect-</i> <b>Tools</b></p>	<p><b>Shake Tool™</b></p>	<p><b>Durable Relationship Organizing Principle™ ( DRQP- )</b></p>	<p><b>Snap Tool™</b> and its <b>QR Snapshots™</b> As required: <b>Talk Tool™ &amp; Shake Tool™</b></p> <p><small>Danny McCall 2011 All rights reserved</small></p>

## What about existing important relationships?

Many existing relationships can be converted or transformed into Durable Relationships. Conversely, DROP can reinforce or validate decisions to conclude relationships that are non-productive, problematic and do not merit the pursuit of remedial paths. Within existing relationships there are four differing circumstances, each demanding different approaches and actions:

*Within existing relationships there are four differing circumstances, each demanding different approaches and actions.*

**1. Maintain, Safeguard and Assure** ... for a relationship that is consistently healthy, productive, compatible and has “apparent” quality in place:

- When “apparent” conditions of congruity and harmony prevail, this indicates a need to perform the 5-steps of stage 3 (Motives) for its continuing health and wellness. Doing so will ensure that quality is more accurately defined so that it can be monitored and validated on a regular basis. Further, this step will provide reinforcement to each party and offer instrumentation for early warning “alarms” should the relationship’s quality begin to falter from either party’s perspective.

**2. Improve or Repair** ... for a relationship that’s moderately fruitful, or generally “acceptable,” with prevailing harmony of worldviews, yet failing to meet its full potential or not presently competitive when compared with other options:

- When **both** parties generally agree the relationship is suboptimal and share a desire to achieve a greater potential:

a. Together, diagnose the issues, then creatively and divergently explore possibilities using DROP as a framework for dialog, diagnostics and remedial actions.

b. Once you have creatively explored remedial options and possibilities, move to collaboratively and decisively converge upon optimal actions and steps to be taken. If either Capable Purpose or Worldview dimensions are applicable, utilize the 5-step processes within those stages. Reach clear, specific agreement as to all **shared accountabilities** regarding the improvements via ShakeTool.

c. Pursue the 5-steps of stage 3. (This can be in parallel with “a” and “b.”)

d. Monitor improvements and progress via QR Snapshots. Continue to refine and improve as needed.

*When “apparent” conditions of congruity and harmony prevail, this indicates a need to perform the 5-steps of stage 3 (Motives) for its continuing health and wellness.*

*Whenever the relationship needs to be “transformed” or substantially “modified and remodeled,” a new relationship should be engineered “from scratch” and approached as a new relationship (sequentially moving through the 3 stages).*

- When **only one** party envisions opportunity loss or has moderate dissatisfaction:

- a. Begin with the 5-steps of stage 3 as a means and structure to expose and constructively share understanding of respective QR parameters leveraging the “wake-up” power of the present level of QR. Simultaneously, introduce this whitepaper to the other party and invite collaboration and innovation regarding unleashing the greater potential within the relationship.
- b. Use any QR deficits of either party as a starting point for progressive dialog and remedial collaboration, fully leveraging the most recent QR Snapshot™, DROP and applicable TalkTool™.
- c. As applicable, pursue improvements wherever issues and opportunities may reside. Reach clear agreement as to shared accountabilities for any pertinent remedies via ShakeTool™.
- d. Continue to monitor progress and improvement via QR Snapshots. Refine and improve as needed.

**3. Redesign and Rebuild** ... for a relationship in which applicable fundamentals, circumstances, purposes and/or objectives have significantly changed since its inception:

- Whenever the relationship needs to be “transformed” or substantially “modified and remodeled,” a new relationship should be engineered “from scratch” and approached as a new relationship (sequentially moving through the 3 stages).

A word of caution: fresh, objective examination can be especially challenging when rebuilding a current relationship. This can be due to existing prejudices, assumptions, routines, familiarity or either party’s “comfort” with the status quo. Therefore, a purposely disciplined and overtly creative approach should be offered by both parties, ideally while considering any other competitive options each may have.

- Before beginning the 3-stage process, both parties should discuss the need for reconstructing and “renewing” the relationship and why doing so is urgent and in the best interest of both parties. Both should acknowledge why the relationship’s continuance may be in jeopardy if it remains “as is” (in most cases, the relationship’s obsolescence or inadequacies and the timely need for rebuilding should be a shared worldview prior to beginning the reconstruction).

*In circumstances in which a preponderance of inarguable reasons for concluding the relationship exists, strive to terminate the relationship in a timely manner, with the least risks and the greatest good will possible.*

*When reasons for ending the relationship are debatable or questionable...it may be preferable to initiate urgent and severe dialog first.*

**4. Discontinue - Conclude - Terminate** ... for a relationship with ample evidence indicating counter-productivity, risks, loss, irreconcilable differences, unreasonable remedial investments or problematic incompatibility of worldviews:

- ***In circumstances in which a preponderance of inarguable reasons for concluding the relationship exists***, strive to terminate the relationship in a timely manner, with the least risks and the greatest good will possible under the circumstances. In many situations, applying DROP or the applicable TalkTool within the discussion may serve to structure and benefit one or both parties' understanding, rationale and potential learning from the experience. The use of the DROP structure in discussion, as clinically as possible combined with leveraging clear and present evidence, can advance understanding, acceptance and prevent or diffuse emotions, resentments and future ill-will.

- ***When reasons for ending the relationship are debatable or questionable***, in the view of one party (and when: •no prevailing exposure of harm, risks or loss exists, •there exists harmony in worldviews, and •there is a reasonable possibility of remedy), it may be preferable to initiate urgent and severe dialog first. DROP and stage 3 steps should be used to reveal deficits in QR to both parties. As applicable, the steps of above circumstances # 2 or 3 should be followed, but more assertively and tightly choreographed as to urgency and without any impairment of unfounded optimism or assumption. Such considerations are especially applicable when communications regarding dissatisfaction within the relationship have been weak, assumptions or misunderstanding have been allowed to fester or misinformation or inadequate information regarding expectations and accountabilities is present.

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