

# BUILDING A CONTEXT FOR RELATIONSHIP

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You cannot create  
**RELATIONSHIP...**

**...but you can recognize,  
encourage, and design  
opportunities in which the  
miracle of friendship is  
more likely to occur.**

# A CONTEXT FOR RELATIONSHIP

- ❑ discovering community spaces
- ❑ ensuring presence
- ❑ designing and supporting valued roles
- ❑ connecting with other people

# A context for relationship and natural supports

The more time that a person is present and involved in ***these*** kinds of situations, then:

- ⦿ a) the richer his life experiences
- ⦿ b) the more familiar is his life to others – they can talk to him, relate to him
- ⦿ c) the more opportunity for learning and the greater his comfort in other typical settings
- ⦿ d) the more he is surrounded by other people who might provide some ***natural support***
- ⦿ e) the more likely that relationship of various kinds will occur

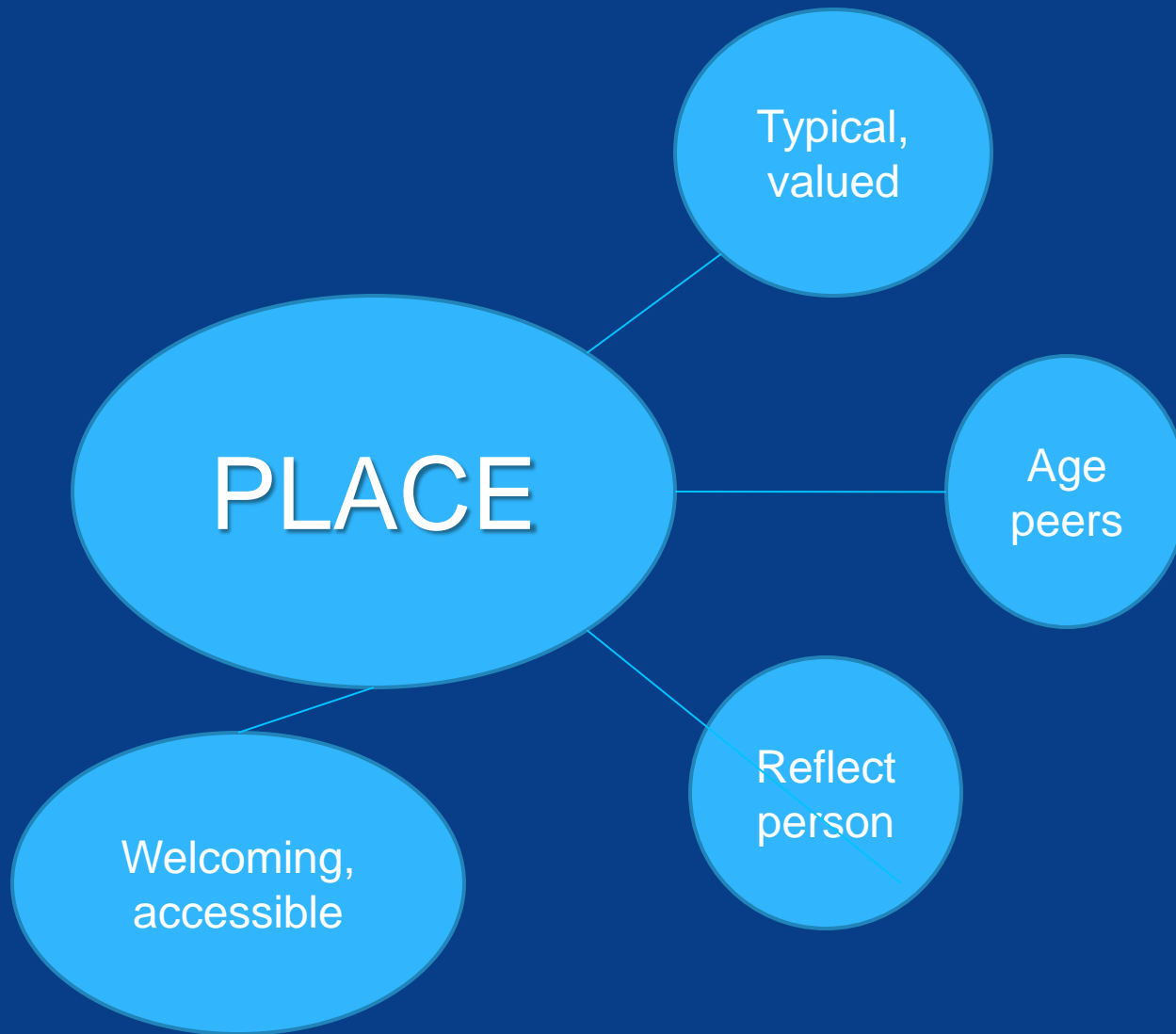
Interests/Passions  
Skills

Likes/  
Dislikes

Personality

**WHO IS  
THIS PERSON?**





So,  
spending time apart  
in special classes  
day programmes  
segregated recreation  
group homes  
*do not count* if your goal is  
valued, freely-given  
**RELATIONSHIP**



Choose one of the interests...  
and brainstorm the PLACES (which  
meet the criteria) where this interest  
may be pursued:

- \* Be creative
- \* Think “where do others who have  
this interest hang out?”
- \* Keep your ideas to places  
for typical citizens



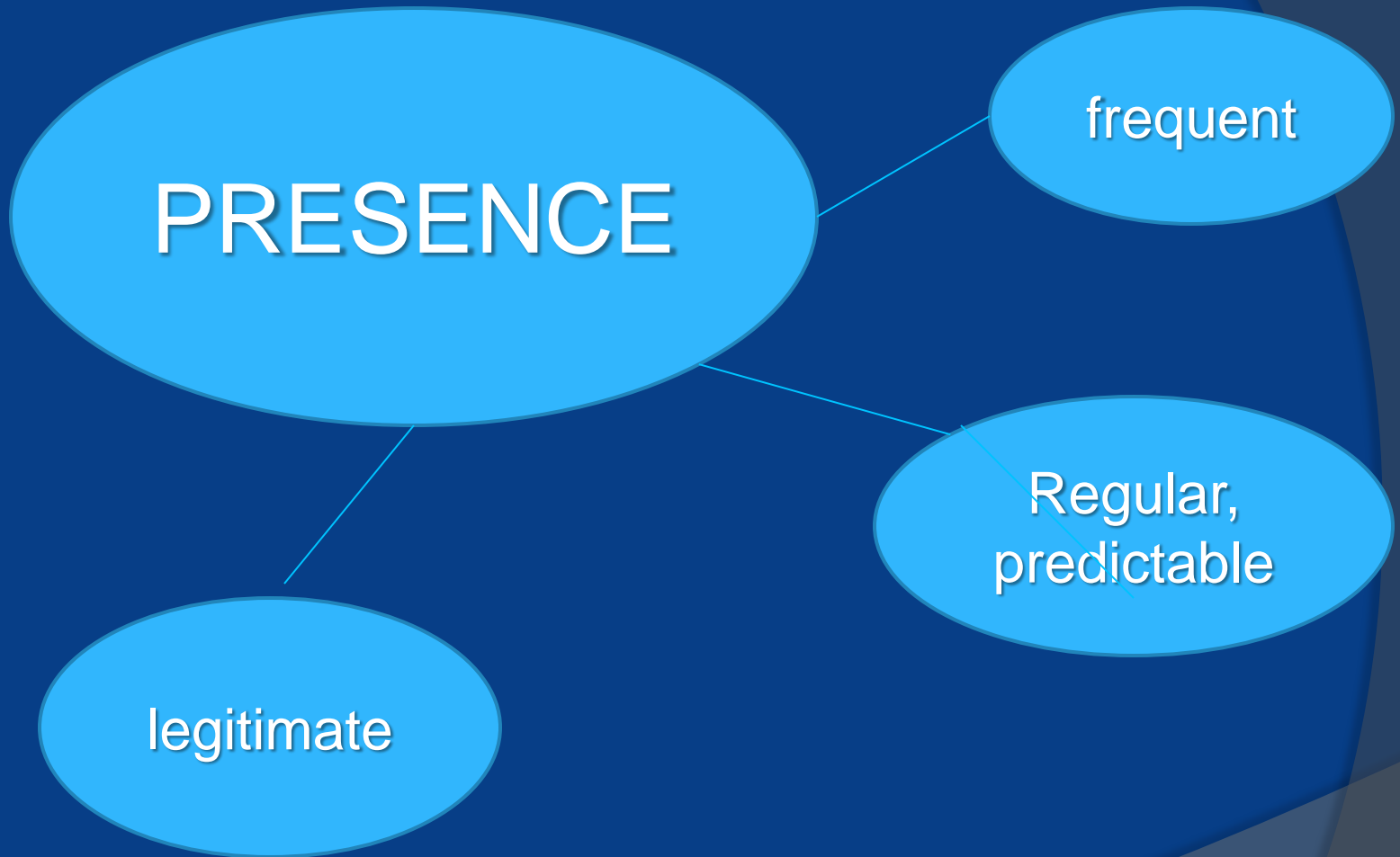


# If people are not present...

- \* frequently
- \* predictably
- \* legitimately

## Then NOTHING will happen

(except by chance)



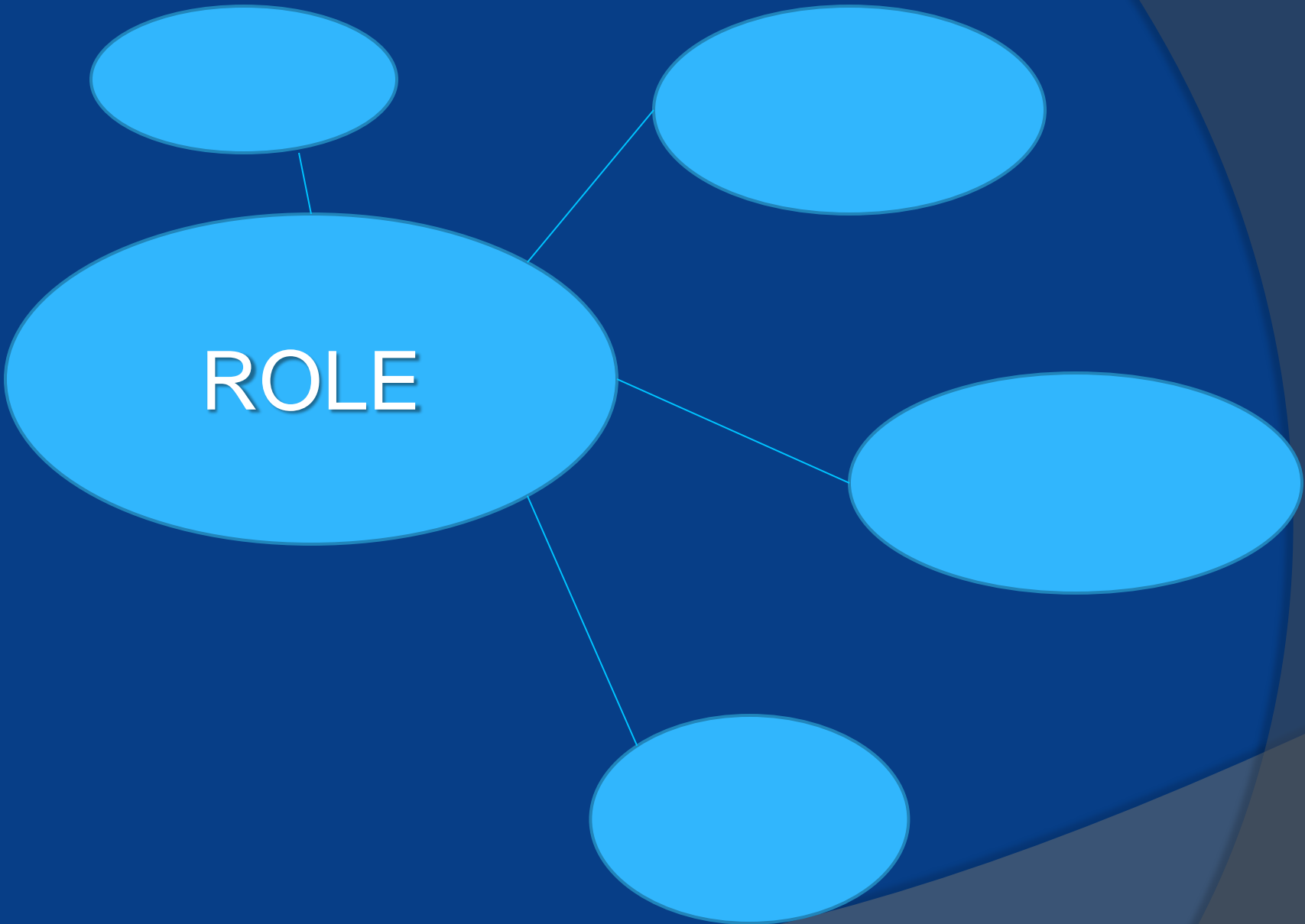
So...

spontaneous one-offs,  
irregular attendance,  
constant variety

do not count if your goal is

**RELATIONSHIP**





If you do not do anything  
to *promote positive* roles,

then society will – by default –  
impose one or more of these common  
negative roles

on a person  
that it perceives as  
having the negatively valued  
characteristics.

# What's the difference?

she likes...

- Gardening
- Walking
- Reading
- Going to church



**ACTIVITY**

She is a...

- Vegetable gardener
- Walking club member
- Book club member
- Altar guild member



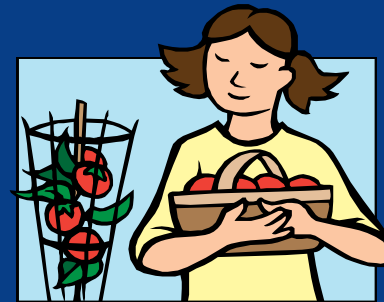
**ROLE**

# What the difference?

Taking a walk to look  
at gardens  
(activity)



Being a (vegetable)  
Gardener



# Activities related to this role

- joining a local community garden
- working in own garden
- buying gardening supplies
- visiting a flower exhibit
- entering a local garden show
- joining a gardening club
- volunteering to garden at co-op
- subscribe to gardening magazine
- send away for stuff (seeds, tools)
- design garden on computer
- exchange plant cuttings or produce with others
- donate flowers or produce
- plant a balcony garden
- experiment with an indoor herb garden
- ask others about their gardens
- can your own produce, make salsa, bake a pie
- visit and support a rooftop garden
- help a neighbour in the garden
- plant heritage seeds



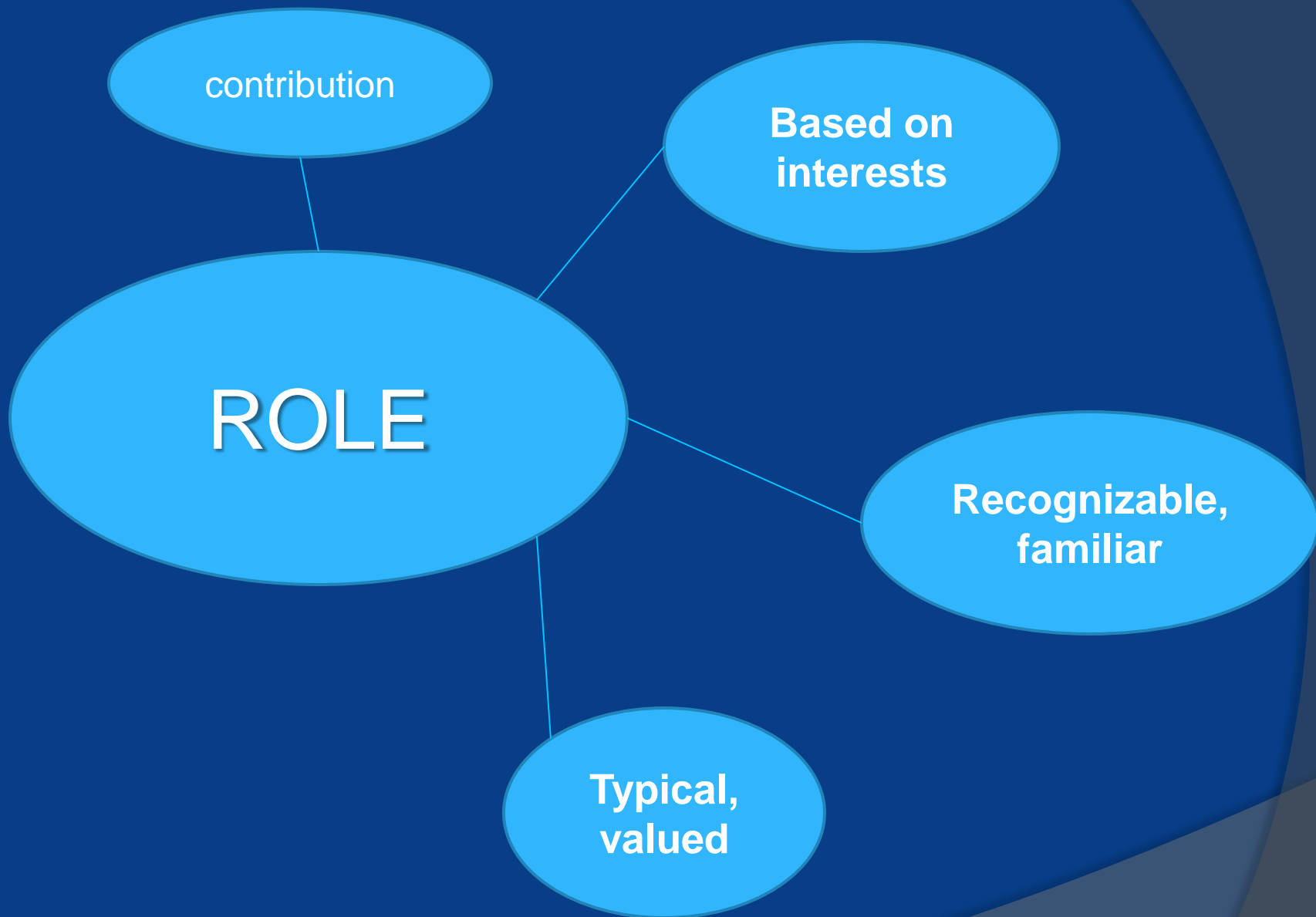
# Tiffany paints

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	Painting lesson					

# Tiffany is an artist

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Check on sales at shop	Buy art supplies	New shop to sell art?	Choose frames for art	Art studio	Reading art guild newsletter	
				Art studio	Show new art to friend at lunch	
Local painting exhibit	Painting at home			Plan new art shows		
		Art Guild mtg	Sign new art			

At the heart  
of  
ROLE  
is  
CONTRIBUTION

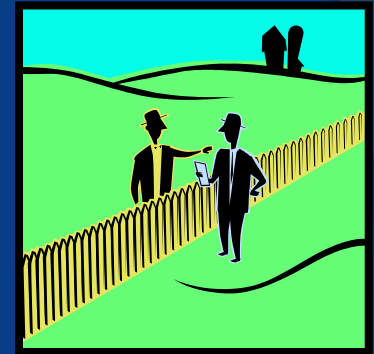


# Big “little” Roles

Family



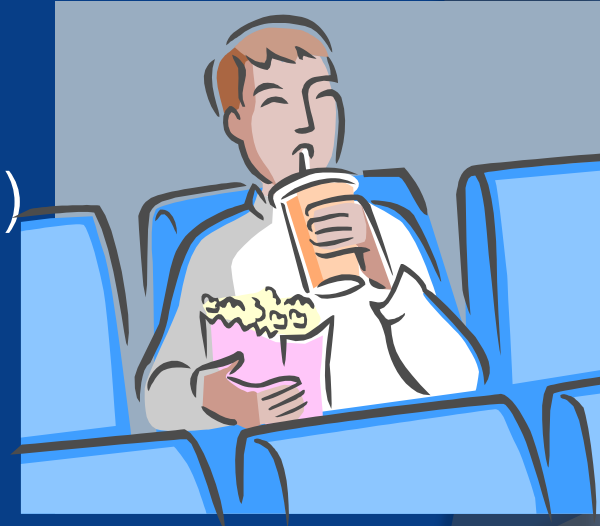
Neighbour



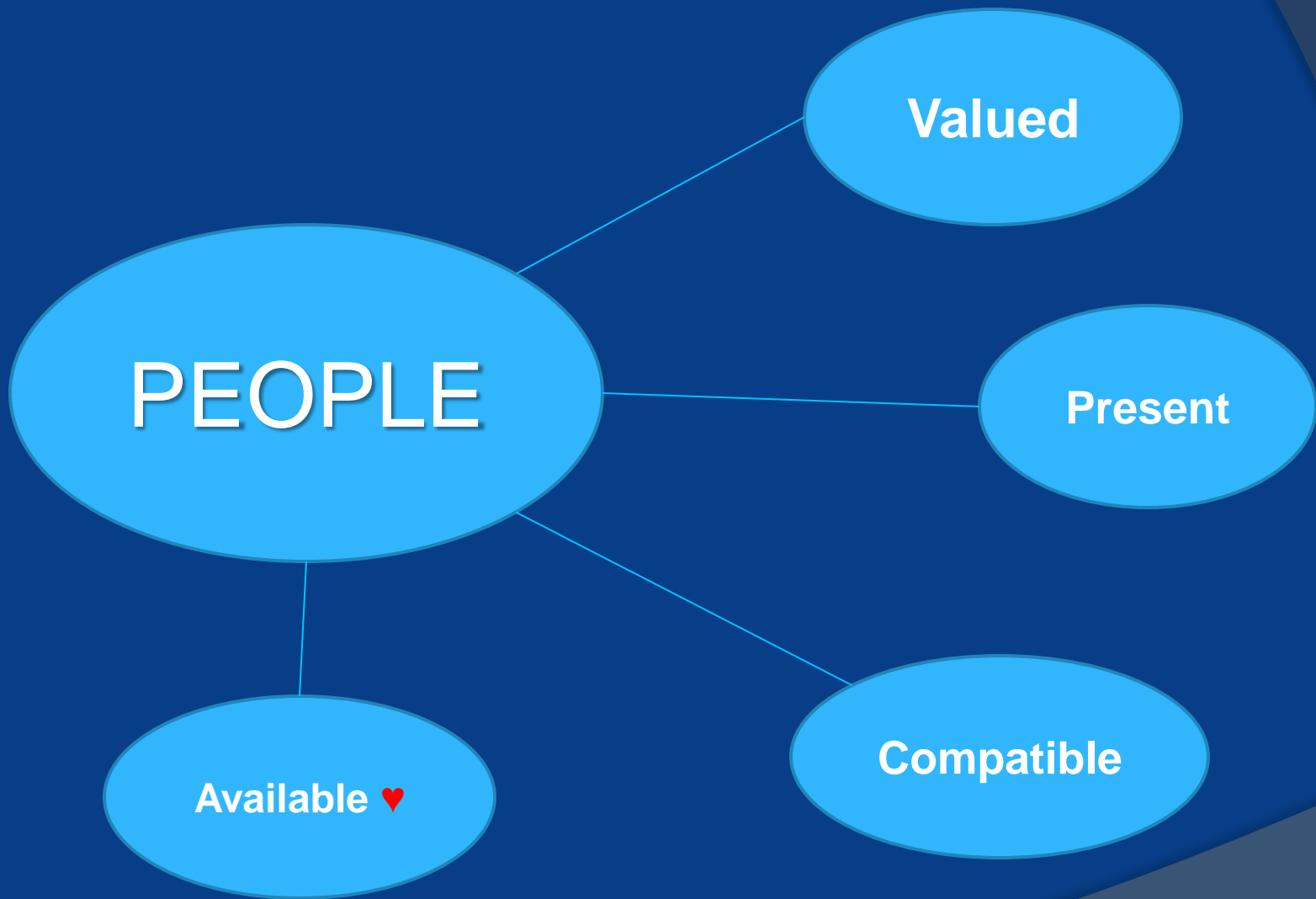
Friend



So...  
only having the roles of  
participant,  
spectator, observer  
**family member**  
(without responsibilities)  
do not cut it  
if your goal is



RELATIONSHIP



# We need to seek People...

...who will enjoy the person (share something in common)

...who are able to enrich the experience due to own life situations (offer something new and positive)

...who are open to the mutuality

...who are able to support and protect



# Seek these...

- ...age peers
- ...new friends
- ...old family friends
- ...extended family
- ...neighbours
- ...colleagues
- ... others who share a passion

# ...to balance these...

- ...supporters
- ...family of supporter
- ... other disabled people
- ...other marginalized people



So...

movies,  
mall walking,



going for long drives,  
relaxing alone at home



do not count  
if your goal is



RELATIONSHIP

# Think about...

● How often in a week are people truly involved in these kinds of situations?

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**RELATIONSHIP**



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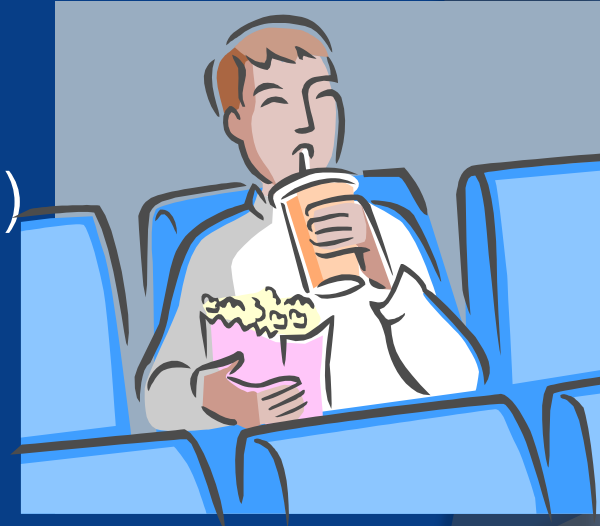
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RELATIONSHIP



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RELATIONSHIP

And how often are they  
involved in:

Household activities

Medical appointments

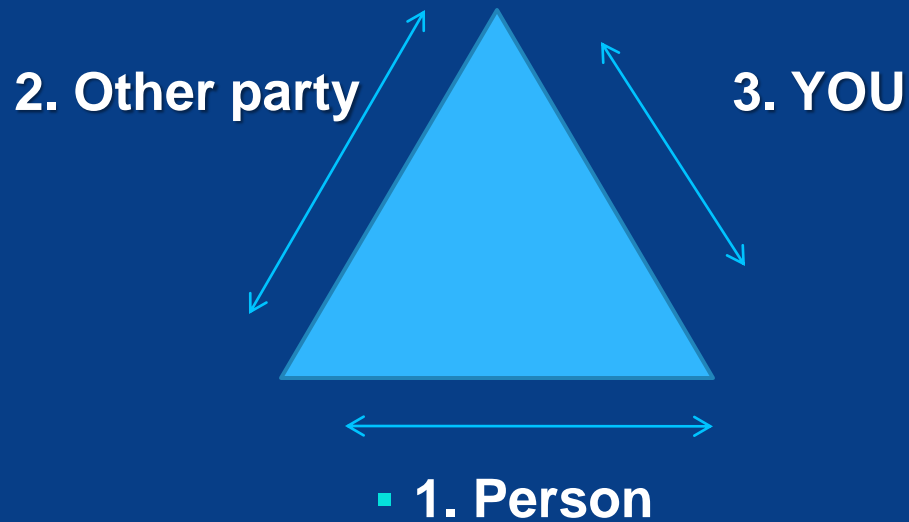
One-off celebrations and events

**WHERE IS THE BALANCE?**

**WHAT DO WE VALUE?**



# A relationship building triangle



# Newspaper/Info Basics

- ⦿ Read back to front
- ⦿ What's ahead versus what has been done
- ⦿ What is local versus what is far away
- ⦿ What's small (and needs people)
- ⦿ What is the community excited about right now
- ⦿ Range of roles
- ⦿ Ongoing opportunities versus one-off
- ⦿ Organize versus participate

# Reading the Signs

- In order to learn to SEE the abundance of our community
  
- In order to learn to think in terms of a CONTEXT for relationship

# Good

- occasional presence
- in a valued setting
- where good people of same age/interest are around
- and you are in a familiar role of spectator, participant

# Better

- frequent, regular presence
- in a valued setting
- where you see the same people again and again
- in small enough numbers that those people begin to recognize, acknowledge, and welcome you
- and where you are in a role that implies some kind of shared belonging/interest (membership rather than one time participant)

# Best

- frequent (often), regular (same time, place), intense (in various roles or activities) presence
- in one or more valued settings related to this interest
- where you see the same people across settings and roles
- and where you see 1-5 people frequently and regularly
- and engage with those 1-5 people because of the engaged role that you play (membership with status or higher expectations)
- and there is ample time in some of the regular activities to socialize
- and where your contribution is clear, distinct and recognized

If things are **not** working out...  
...then,

one of the four pillars  
of the  
context for relationship

is **not in place**  
in a minimally optimal way



# And there is more to learn...

- ⦿ About supporting relationship
- ⦿ About developing natural supports (vs unpaid support)
- ⦿ About asking
- ⦿ About the support role
- ⦿ About contribution by design
- ⦿ About working alongside families
- ⦿ Srv around the kitchen table



Ring the bell that still can ring  
forget the perfect offering  
there is a crack in everything  
that's how the light gets in.

L. Cohen

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