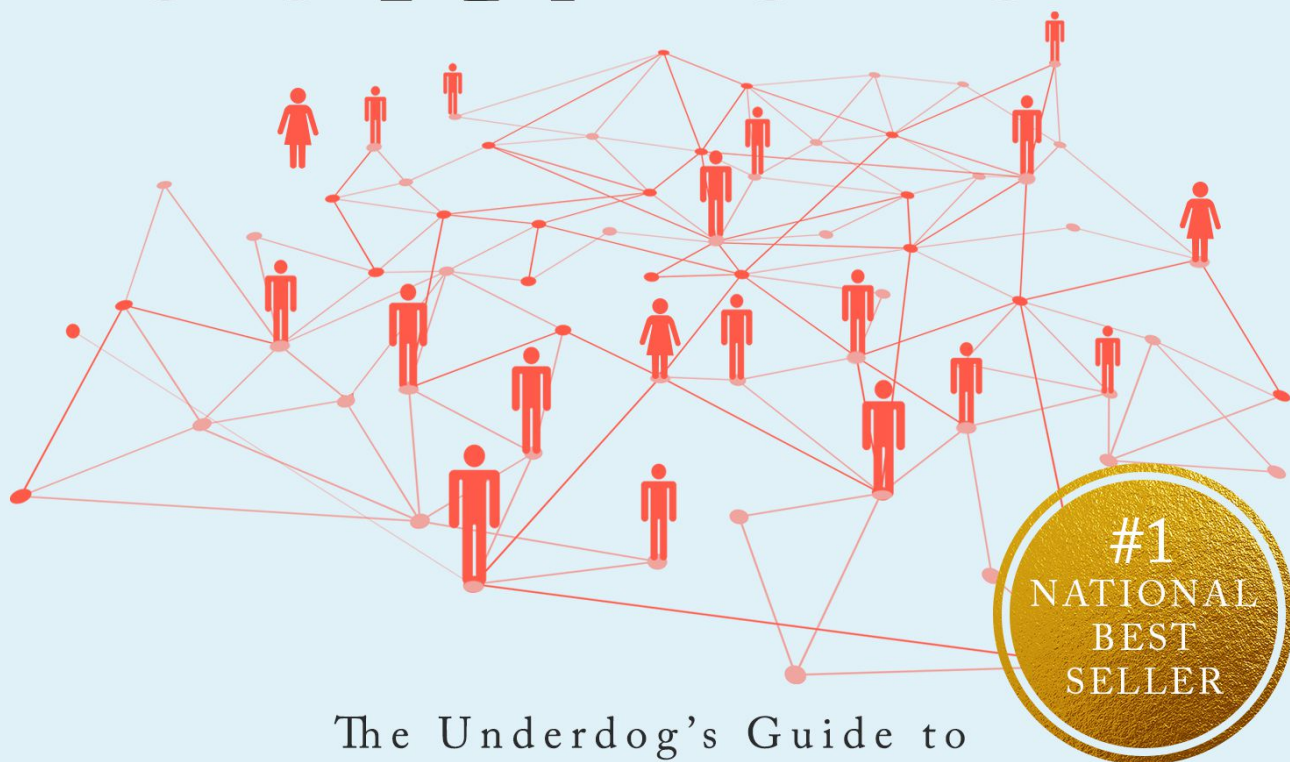


The Easiest Way to Become *Powerful*,
Regardless of Your Situation

THE CLEVER CONNECTOR



#1
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The Underdog's Guide to
Networking with Billionaires,
Celebrities, and Executives

ALI SCARLETT

Foreword by Lucio Buffalmano

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my high school teacher, Jeremy G. Johnson. More than the best school teacher I've ever had, but a good friend and a great man. For showing me the kindness I deeply needed when I was facing hardship, this book is dedicated to you.

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Foreword

Ali Scarlett and I have crossed paths online on numerous occasions, recently connected more formally, and I look forward to eventually meeting him in person.

Yes, we have not yet met in person. And yet... It feels like Ali is an old friend.

When I first encountered Ali, he reminded me of a scene from *The Dreamers*.

The Dreamers is a movie about movie buffs whose lives revolve around movies. The protagonist calls himself one of the “insatiabes.” These are the guys who can never have enough, the type of guys who sit as close as possible to the screen so they can receive the images first.

Ali seemed to have that same spirit. But instead of movies, it was personal development, growth, and strategies for success. He was one of the insatiabes, asking the most questions, reading the most books, and always working the hardest.

What a winner.

Incidentally, this is what I love about networking in the digital age we live in.

Your potential is not bound by the physical world anymore. The information, the teachers, and the people available to you today can truly give you wings and make you free, *no matter your past and regardless of your current station in life*. It doesn't matter if you're in what Trump would have called a shit-hole country, a God-forgotten village of farmers (like where I grew up), with an abusive parent (like Ali had), or if, at a certain point in your life, you were desperate and couldn't see a light at the end of the tunnel (like both Ali and I have been).

Somewhere out there, there is someone who can help you stand back up and show you the way to a level of success that you could have never dreamed of.

I don't know your current station in life. Maybe you are having difficulties seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

Or maybe you're well outside that tunnel, but you are one of the “insatiabes” driven to have more, be more, and do more in your life.

Or maybe you just want something better for yourself. In any case, this book will help you.

But before you plunge in, a quick heads up: the power of your network is potentially limitless. But, as Ali will explain, networking is an exchange. This means that the only limits to who you want to network with, learn from, and work with are your personal drive, your skills as a networker, and the value you bring to the table.

People skills are *crucial* in this world.

Right now, I am living a digital nomad lifestyle, doing exactly what I love doing and living exactly the life of freedom I dreamed of living. People and networking have been crucial to getting where I am right now.

Yet, there was a time not long ago when I was as clueless as the next guy when it comes to people, networking strategies, and psychology.

I still remember when I first learned the power of networking, relationships, and general soft skills (which I now refer to as “executive skills”). I was in my graduate talent program, interviewing to get into the big restructuring project that had just started.

McKinsey was launching the program for us. It was a colossal opportunity to network with the upper management and learn from the most driven consultants—always get into any restructuring projects if you can.

That day, Michael, an IT SVP, was interviewing in the teleconference room. He asked me why I wanted to join the program. Working with the little I knew, I said I wanted to join so I could “learn the lean methodology.”

His answer was a tectonic shift at how I looked at personal development and career growth. He said, “Are you here to learn the lean methodology, or to learn about people skills? The methodology is useful, but an even bigger opportunity is to learn soft skills. Things like leadership, persuasion, presentations...”

Yep. I went in there focusing on technical skills, but Michael Schlitt (I still remember his name) showed me that the methodology—the technical skills—meant little to those who had real power. He even did it without making me feel like an idiot for my answer. He showed me, with a brimming smile, what being an SVP was all about—and it wasn't about technical skills. Michael didn't know shit about lean methodology.

Power is all about people skills, soft skills—what I now call “executive skills.” The executive skills—which Michael didn't mention, because those are part of the “unspoken skills”—also included knowledge and mastery of power dynamics. It included things like speaking with confidence, looking authoritative, and knowing who to ally with.

His answer had left me speechless. It was that day I realized: tech skills give you job security. People skills give you board seats.

It's all too common that we see younger folks focusing solely on developing their hard skills in an attempt to make more money and achieve their goals quicker, but life satisfaction rarely comes from money or getting a "good job." This book will teach you how to leverage an even more fundamental form of power that will make you not just more successful, but far happier and fulfilled. At the end of the day, only other people can give you happiness and fulfillment.

As Brene Brown said, "Connection [with other humans] is why we're here."

Oh, P.S.:

Ali insisted that I write something about me.

I hold a master's degree from La Sapienza, department of communication and sociological research, and I am a member of the American Psychology Association (APA).

My mission is to empower underdogs with knowledge of the unwritten rules of the world—things such as life strategies, psychology, persuasion, and anything related to people and social dynamics.

I believe that without that knowledge, good people and underdogs alike will always be screwed by the ones who are born rich, ruthless, or less conscientious (or all of them). Learning power dynamics and effective people strategies is the only way to level the playing field.

That's what I love about Ali's work: he was not blessed with a silver spoon in his life. He had to carve his way up, and he used people skills to do it.

This book will help you, too, carve your way up. It will empower you with the knowledge, tools, and resources you need to do your best with those who matter the most to your success: other people.

Are you thinking you don't need this? That's exactly what all the average folks think—and no offense to average folks, truly.

In my work and in my life, I see an endless stream of people who are killing their chances because of silly, people-related blunders.

They screw themselves up by breaking the basic, unwritten rules of social interactions.

They ruin a relationship with unneeded confrontational frames, they inadvertently offend superiors, or they simply fail to come across as people worth networking with (and that includes people who *are* worth networking with).

Most of the time, those mistakes were avoidable. If they had only known the very basics of people and success strategies...

While those painful experiences *can* serve as great teachers, not everyone learns from them. This book will help you understand those unwritten rules so you will not make those silly mistakes in the first place.

You will instead start doing what works.

Ali has screened each strategy and technique for its effectiveness, drawing from some of the best authors around. This book is well-referenced, practically-oriented, and real-world tested, which is exactly the approach I love and use in my own work.

What makes Ali's book so unique is the perfect combination of high-quality writing, top-notch strategies, and his own highly inspirational story.

Read it, internalize it, exercise it. I am confident that this book will be a big stepping stone in your road to success, personal empowerment, and life satisfaction.

To you, my friend, and to your continued success.

Lucio Buffalmano
Founder, ThePowerMoves.com

Introduction

When I was 16-years-old, I was isolated and left to die. I've spent my life since then trying to be for myself and others what no one was for me. To be a helping hand, in order to help myself and others, so we can achieve personal empowerment. By using helpful information as the pathway to achieving more. That's why I wrote this book.

When I was isolated, I believed that wealth and status were the answer to the problems within my social life. That initial belief led me to become deeply immersed in my research of money and power. I was constantly reading, scanning, studying, and taking notes on hundreds of articles, books, journal entries, essays, and reports on all things related to money, personal finance, self-development, and self-help.

Growing up, I always thought that money was, simply, power, and that was that. It was only the rich who had the power to get away with murder (both figuratively and literally), only the rich who could afford the luxurious lifestyle that people were jealous of, and only the rich who people really had an incentive to care about, since they had so much, well, power.

However, throughout my research, my own painful experiences, and the pain I had seen others experience, I found myself calling into question how I viewed power.

I began to feel that the world was relying too much on money as a form of power. And, as a result, they were suffering from the numerous opportunities that were slipping through their fingers. Opportunities they couldn't even see.

I soon realized that my lack of money was not the problem; it was only a *result* of the real problem. The popular literature on attaining wealth only addressed the symptoms, leaving the underlying chronic problems untouched.

In addition to my research on self-development and money, I began to delve into the art of networking. I even went so far as to take a Yale University course in negotiation and persuasion. I performed field testing to discover which persuasion strategies work in ethically persuading others to join my network and which don't. By working on my networking skills and learning power dynamics (which you'll learn more about a little later), I became better at communicating, developed a more wholesome personality than the cold one caused by my hardest experiences, and built healthy relationships with people who helped me advance to life's next levels (and I didn't need tons of money to do it).

Young professionals, college students, and many others who used to struggle to progress toward their goals without the aid of a robust network have already experienced great success by implementing the tips, tricks, and strategies found in this helpful how-to guide.

Given that this is a book on mastering the art of networking, this book lays out the entire step-by-step process using the acronym MASTER:

1. Master the Power Dynamics
2. Adopt the Helpful Mindsets
3. Specialize the Basic Guidelines
4. Test the Networking Strategies
5. Enlist the Good Mentors
6. Realize the Present Opportunities

As you progress through this book, you'll learn about more than only practical networking strategies, but also about the collaborative power of a network as a whole. A power that has already created strong business relationships, attracted millionaire investors, and launched brand-new, successful careers. By the end of this book, I promise that you will have the "aha moment" that will set you apart. If you apply the concepts correctly, you will be able to achieve any goal you set for yourself in your personal life and career. These strategies and networking secrets will give rise to exclusive opportunities for your career, regardless of what industry you're in.

Now, this book is not for people who think they already know everything they need to know about networking. People with that mindset will approach the strategies and information laid out inside this book with a closed mind and won't be able to see the maximum benefits. As an acquaintance of mine would often say, "Our mind is like an umbrella; it only works if it's open." This book is also not for people who have a fixed mindset and no desire to change that mindset.

"In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort." (Dweck, 2020)

In other words, if you don't believe you can develop the abilities that will take you to the next level, there's no sense in you reading this book. It would be a waste of your time. If you currently have a fixed mindset and aren't willing to change your perspective—if you aren't willing to decide that yes, you can improve your skills in the areas necessary to advance your career and get more out of life—then, once again, this book isn't for you.

Anyone who has a growth mindset or is willing to switch to one to become better, please know that waiting to read this book will cost you in the long run. Avoid being the person who misses out on opportunities in life because you hesitated to apply the strategies that could make your life better. Be the kind of person other people marvel at. Be the kind of person other people see and say, "I don't know how they do it."

Relationships are essential to your success, as well as to the achievement of your goals. You must build the relationships you need before you need them. You must network now, or you'll be kicking yourself later! I hope you're excited to learn the most effective networking strategies to develop your personal power, advance your career, better connect with others, and become a better you. The networking tips and tricks you're about to read have been proven to create positive, long-lasting results. All you have to do to develop your dream network is keep reading. Each chapter will give you new insight as you strive to establish a robust web of powerful connections. Take control of your life right now, use the powerful strategies you're about to learn responsibly, and enjoy the new life you're creating.

Step One

Master the Power Dynamics

Growing up, I was something of a “nice guy.” I was always treating others how I would want to be treated to the maximum capacity. And, as a kid, there were days in school when I would catch someone sneaking a peek at my paper during a test. Torn between a rock and a hard place, I would ask myself, “If I needed to get the right answers on a test from someone else, would I want them to help me?” The answer was yes. Sometimes I would even secretly slide my paper closer to the student cheating off my paper, so they could get a better look. I was that guy. I was raised with values that encouraged my behavior to be like this all of the time.

There was a day when I was around seven years old that I had gotten forty dollars for Christmas. Later that day, while running some errands, I noticed a man from the Salvation Army ringing a bell. He had a red bucket beside a sign asking for donations. Without a second thought, I dropped all of my money into the bucket—and then watched in confusion as my mother shuffled through the man’s bucket to get some of the money back. I had done what I had been raised to do: to treat others the way I wanted to be treated. I knew that if I were that man, possibly freezing out in the cold, working to gather donations for a noble cause, I would have wanted that forty dollar donation. So, I gave it to him. I was raised with values that encouraged my behavior to be like this all of the time.

My mother never fully explained her reasoning behind taking some of the money back. It wasn’t often that I saw her contradicting the values she helped to raise me with, so I trusted her judgment and brushed it off as a “one time thing.” And, in brushing it off, I continued to treat others the way I wanted to be treated and carried out that value to the fullest extent.

These nice guy habits of mine almost always worked against me, but it wasn’t until I got older that I really started to notice. As I neared adulthood, I began to see that people were taking advantage of me. I maintained my kindness, because I was happy so long as I was doing what I believed was right—but as my friends started to act less like friends while still taking from me, I began to rethink the extent to which I should carry out the values I was raised with.

I could feel people distancing themselves from me and caring less about my well-being. In an effort to be more well-accepted in my social circles and feel less isolated, I started cracking more jokes and developing a funnier personality. When I was around, people liked me because I was a funny guy. However, when I wasn’t around, no one seemed to care. No one

checked on me to see if I was doing okay. And, when I did get the chance to talk to someone over the phone, the conversation was often focused on them.

The funny thing about that is that a large part of me actually preferred it that way. When I wasn't around and they didn't reach out to me, I rationalized that it was okay because that meant more time for me to focus on my schoolwork. When we did get the chance to talk over the phone and they were talking about themselves, it was usually about some sort of drama they were experiencing in school and I saw this as an opportunity to help them. I knew that if I were in their shoes experiencing that same drama and I was in need of advice, I would want that help.

Then, there came a day when I was hospitalized after having my first near-death experience. I had just been diagnosed with kidney failure and had no idea what was happening to me. As I woke up from the large doses of morphine and oxycontin, my eyes opening slowly, I quickly grabbed my phone, gripping it tightly as waves of pain surged through my body. I eagerly checked if anyone had texted me but found that there were no new messages. Disappointed, I found myself in a world of confusion. I had been out of school for weeks fighting this illness. When I collapsed and was rushed to the hospital—laying on what could have easily been my deathbed—I expected at least one of my friends to have reached out to me, since they had not seen me in so long. And yet, there wasn't a single text, no missed calls, and seemingly no care at all from their side.

As grim as this experience may sound, luckily, another one of my values is not to judge someone else's choices when you don't understand their reasons. So, stupidly, I rationalized to myself that perhaps something had happened to their phones. I remained hopeful as I scanned their social media to search for answers as to why they had forgotten to check on their dear friend. Immediately, I understood. Their social media accounts were filled with pictures of them having a good time at parties and on my soccer team. I saw them enjoying themselves at the school basketball games and playing video games at their friend's houses.

Naturally, I was angry. I had nearly died, and nobody cared.

That day, I went from being a “nice guy” to being a bully. At the time, my number one need was acceptance, and it seemed like no matter what I did, I couldn't get it. I was already being abused at home by my family, so my friends were all I had—and now it seemed like I didn't have them either.

In the following weeks, people began to distance themselves from me without caring if I noticed. Even good guys have bad days, but they could immediately tell something deep inside me had changed. I was willing to hurt anyone, because I didn't care about my own life anymore.

I was hoping someone would see the emotional pain I was in and care about me for once. I was hoping someone would see the anger inside of my heart and be able to empathize with me. I was hoping that the person who understood me wouldn't judge me for who I'd

become, because they'd understand how I felt inside. I was hoping that they wouldn't judge my choices because they would understand my reasons. I was hoping that others would treat me the way I wanted to be treated.

I couldn't understand how it could be that I was a good person before and was alone, and now I was a bad person and was still alone. I had drawn the conclusion that the people I had called my "friends" were always fake, and that my sickness was all they needed to take their masks off. I was depressed, suicidal, and couldn't have cared less about whether I lived or died.

Eventually though, I had to face the fact that I didn't have it in me to commit suicide. I wished I did because to me that would have been the equivalent of a shortcut to heaven. Back then, I felt like life was a prison. You're not given a choice to be born in the world, but it's illegal to try to suicide your way out. You don't have a choice but to wake up and deal with all the cruel experiences life throws at you on a regular basis. You're stuck here until your time comes.

It was only after I realized that I wasn't ever actually going to commit suicide that I started to work on myself and see things a different way. I created goals for myself that forced me to improve, and I took steps outside of my unenthusiastic mindset.

I eventually started to feel like death would have been the real prison. Since I'm alive, I still have the choice to either kill myself or do something with my life. When I'm dead, there's no choice. There's no freedom. When you're alive, you have the option of death—but when you're dead, there is no option of life. That realization was the wake-up call I needed to start working harder on my goals. Luckily, my goals no longer involved death.

At the time, my ultimate goal was to make everyone feel bad for isolating me by getting rich. I knew that I needed a "socially impressive" achievement in order to gain their respect. In other words, I knew they'd care more about me if I pulled up to school in a sports car. It wasn't the most noble reason to go after my goals, but it kept me moving forward. And, with a little more spring in my step, I started to research money. I needed to get closer to my goals, and I needed money to do it.

I believed money was power. Later, I was taught that there are actually three forms of power in the world: resources, information, and weaponry. We all know how money works as a form of power, and we can all look back to the last world wars to know how weaponry works as power, but the idea that information could be a form of power was still cheesy to me. It felt like an attempt to sell me the idea that "knowledge is power." And, sure, it is. But, I also knew that knowledge alone doesn't put food on the table. (If it did, libraries would be treated like banks.)

Then, I saw the examples. The way that information was used as blackmail to gain power over other people. The way that information was used to make more money than the next guy in the stock market.

The “knowledge is power” concept was still cheesy to me at the time, so I didn’t take it too seriously back then. But, the examples were still interesting. So, out of curiosity, I started to dig more into the idea of power and what it really was. That’s when I discovered power dynamics. And, everything began to make sense.

Power dynamics, at its most simplistic, is the way in which power works in a given setting. Power is the measure to which an individual can get what they want. And, the word “dynamic” is synonymous with the word “process.” So, putting the two words together, “power dynamics” is the process by which an individual gets (or can get) what they want in a given setting.

My research of power dynamics taught me that power infuses all relationships. For example:

“In social psychology, the stereotype content model (SCM) is a model, first proposed in 2002, postulating that all group stereotypes and interpersonal impressions form along two dimensions: (1) warmth and (2) competence.” (“Stereotype Content Model,” 2011)¹

In other words, the stereotype content model suggests that groups and individuals assess each other along two dimensions:

1. **Warmth:** is he friend or foe?
2. **Power:** how powerful is he?

“The original research refers to ‘competence’ instead of power (Fiske et al., 2019). But, since ‘competence’ is defined as ‘the capacity to enact one’s intentions’, (Fiske et al., 2007) that’s basically also the definition of power.”

“The two axes form four quadrants. See it below with examples for each quadrant on the categories (1) politics, (2) work, and (3) relationships”(Buffalmano, 2021):

¹ Information and graph regarding the stereotype content model provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

	LOW POWER	HIGH POWER
HIGH WARMTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – King’s servant – Clueless intern – Nice beta provider – The person nobody cares about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Beloved king + High EQ founder & leader + Women’s dream man + The person everyone wants to be around
LOW WARMTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deposed despot – Frustrated civil servant – Jealous cuckold – The person everyone loves to hate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hated dictator – “Stay-away type” CEO – Abusive husband – The person nobody wants to cross

With this fascinating research, it all made sense why no one seemed to care about me. Even as a kid, I knew that if I were a multimillionaire or a celebrity people would immediately start caring about me, even though I would have been a human being before and after acquiring that wealth or status. It was almost as if being a fellow human being was not enough.

So, when I was a nice guy, I had high warmth but low power. I had high warmth because I was always willing to give. But, by being willing to give everything to anyone, everyone felt like they had power over me and therefore saw me as low-power (cracking so many jokes for group acceptance didn’t help their image of my worth, either).

“For most non-powerful people, submission and high-warmness are signals to avoid confrontations. So we tend to associate very high levels of friendliness and submission with low-power.” (Buffalmano, 2021) So, in my relationships, I was the person nobody cares about. The overly-friendly nice guy who finished last.

When I became frustrated and turned into a bully, I was high-power. I was capable of harming anyone with no regrets about the consequences, since I didn’t care about my own life.

But, my aggression made me low-warmth. I became the person nobody wants to cross, and intimidated people into distancing themselves from me because of it.

So, with all of that said, I basically failed the social test created by the unwritten rules of social interactions. And, when I came to this realization, it was one of the biggest “Aha!” moments of my entire life.

I was able to clearly see the powerful impact of power dynamics in my social interactions (and social life as a whole). I saw, with total clarity, the conflicts between what I thought to be true based on the values I was taught as a child and the honest, true-to-life power dynamics that I was surrounded by, day in and day out.

I also learned that if your bracket changes, people will adjust their attitudes toward you accordingly. In other words, if you are high-power and high-warmth now, it’s unrealistic to think that if you suddenly become low-power everyone will still want to be around you. For example, if you were once a well-known celebrity and that’s now no longer the case, you can’t expect everyone to want a picture with you. You became low-power, so the attitudes of others changed.

Some of my high school classmates were high-warmth and considered high-power solely because they had a car, which was not common in these circles but highly desirable. One particular guy became low-power after his car broke down. People would still talk to him, but mainly to check if his car had been fixed yet. When his car was repaired, people began talking to him again normally as well as asking him for rides.

High school is a pretty judgemental environment and is different from college and the real world, so you may not run into situations as extreme as that, but the same dynamic occurs in life outside of school every day.

As you can see in the table, the highest bracket is clearly the high-warmth, high-power one in the top right. But, when you achieve that high-power and high-warmth bracket, just because everyone wants to be around you doesn't mean it's because everyone genuinely likes you. Your high-warmth personality and high-power success attract people like a magnet. Some of the people you attract will be haters, or even gold-diggers.

But, be that as it may, that doesn't change the "celebrity effect" high-power, high-warmth people have. That celebrity effect would open doors of opportunity that I wouldn't be able to open in any other bracket.

So, I continued my research. And, I started to notice opportunities to apply my newfound knowledge of power dynamics to the achievement of my goals. After all, if I could

become high-power and high-warmth, I could be the person everyone wants to be around. I could fix my social life.

I knew I could work on myself and become high-warmth again, but this time in a way that was more sensible, healthy, and self-respectful. I understood that I could create my own experience: if I looked and acted like an unapproachable bully, I would be treated like an unapproachable bully. So, all I had to do was to go back to liking people. Okay, cool. I can do that.

Becoming high-warmth again was easy compared to my next challenge. The real challenge was how to become high-power.

I concluded that I had to become high-value to become high-power. High-value means exactly what it sounds like: you have a high amount of value. You could have a high amount of value in terms of your looks, your status, your resources (such as lots of money and lots of powerful connections), and so on. So, if I gained a lot of value in certain areas, I could become high-power and mix it with high-warmth behavior to achieve the best bracket of the SCM mix. My plan was to start with acquiring value in the form of money, and then use that money to acquire status.

While that's certainly one way to go, I drew the conclusion that this was the right course of action for me far too soon. I learned one simple rule that changed everything for me.

I learned that perceptions are reality. To better illustrate this rule, let's take an example. Let's say that you're walking down the street and see a woman sitting down on a bench while waiting for her ride. You notice that she's wearing a wedding ring on the ring finger of her left hand. Most would assume she's married, but does that necessarily mean that's the reality? Does her wearing a wedding ring guarantee that she's married? There are plenty of attractive, unmarried women who wear wedding rings to keep from being approached by men throughout their day.

In another example, take the videos of millionaires "going undercover," posing as homeless people as part of a social experiment. They were perceived as homeless and were certainly treated like it because the perceptions became the reality, despite the truth being that they were well-off financially.

In other words, even if I only developed the *traits* of a high-value man—even if I only looked and acted the part—I would still be perceived as one. This would be true even if I wasn't actually high-value yet (in the sense that I wasn't a billionaire, for instance). I would be what is referred to as a "high-quality man" in power dynamics.

A high-quality man is a man with the traits that directly affect their personality (in a positive way) or, more or less indirectly, allow the individual to acquire important life assets

such as status, resources, mates, or friends. The following are the traits of a high-quality man (Buffalmano, 2018)²:

1. He is Emotionally Intelligent
 - **Self-awareness:** of one's own emotions, drives, personality, and passions
 - **Self-management:** deferring pleasure, staying power, and grit
 - **Social awareness:** of other people's emotions and social dynamics
 - **Relationship management:** building and managing positive relationships
2. He Has A Purpose
 - A man who has a purpose is a man who has a WHY (Buffalmano, 2017).
3. He Takes Care Of Himself
 - He eats well
 - He exercises
 - He keeps learning and investing in himself
4. He Has High Self-Esteem
 - Self-esteem is different from confidence (as you'll read more about later). Your level of confidence fluctuates depending on your results and skills in a given field (I could be confident in my cooking, for example, but not so much in drawing or painting). Self-esteem, however, stays regardless of those external circumstances.
5. He Generates His Own Self-Esteem
 - Some people depend on external forces in order to boost their egos and self-esteem. But, high-quality men have more personal control over their self-esteem.
6. He Has A Secure Attachment Style
 - When a man has a secure attachment style he is emotionally mature. He is also comfortable being vulnerable. Vulnerability ensures that
 - a. **He is genuine:** you get to know the real him; he's not wearing any masks
 - b. **He is more honest:** he has less need for lies because he has no need to cover his shortcomings
 - c. **He is not abusive:** he doesn't need to "prove" his masculinity
7. He Knows Power Dynamics
 - Power moves can be used for good but are, unfortunately, commonly used to sneakily sub-communicate who's top dog in the interaction and unfairly assert dominance over the other person or environment. High-quality men know power dynamics so they can understand the games being played, what's fair and what's not, what's friendly and

² Information regarding the traits of a high-quality man provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

what's rude, and what they will and will not take. They will then enforce their boundaries accordingly.

8. He Is Honest To His Own Value System

- High-quality men listen to the advice, feedback, and information of others, but ultimately they build their own value system and have their own moral compass.

9. He Has A Growth Mindset

- As explained in the introduction, people with a **fixed mindset** believe that their qualities are set at birth and carved in stone. You are who you are, and there isn't much you can do about it. People with a **growth mindset**, however, believe they can learn and grow. They *seek out* learning and growth opportunities because failing does not define them. On the contrary, they understand that failing is the best way they can improve.

10. He Takes Responsibility

- To put this another way, he has an internal locus of control. The locus of control is the degree to which people believe that they have—or don't have—control over their life. If you have an **internal locus of control**, that means you believe you are in control of your life. Men with an **external locus of control** believe life events determine the course of their life and that they don't have control over them.

All of these traits are conducive to a man's ability to acquire resources in life and become (and remain) high-value. These traits also impact your personality, so when you have these traits it shows. Other people see these high-quality traits and perceive you as being high-value. When people perceive you as high-value, they perceive you as high-power. If you're high-warmth when people perceive you as high-power, you'll be "the person everyone wants to be around" and have a much higher success rate in reaching your goals, because everyone will want to have you in their social life. "Everyone" includes powerful people. People will want to network with you, and some of those people will already be high-power themselves.

I hope I'm stating the obvious here, but a higher success rate in networking means you get higher-value connections, which increases *your* value since they are now one of your resources. (To put this another way, your value goes up in the eyes of others when you can name-drop millionaire, billionaire, and celebrity friends.) But, it all starts with becoming a high-quality individual.

This is what I didn't understand at first. Even when I came to the realization that there were more forms of power than only money, I was still missing a large part of the point. The three forms of power in the world are not information, weaponry, and money, but information, weaponry, and resources. "Resources" include money and connections.

To dive a little deeper on this point, there's no telling what you could do with a billionaire for a dad. That's a connection that boosts your value and your power even if you're only

connected because you're family. That's still a connection, and you're therefore high-power because of it. If you're not building your connections to grow your power and you are only focusing on money, you're only doing a third of what you could be doing to empower yourself to achieve your goals faster and more effectively. You're using the power of money, but forgetting the power of connections and information.

Most of us don't have billionaires for parents, so boosting our personal power and value through gaining connections starts with boosting the way we are perceived by the people that we want to connect with. Let's go a little deeper on how this works and how you can leverage the fact that perceptions are reality.

"You choose the statement you make to the world with your attitude and appearance. When you choose that statement, you choose how the world will respond to you. If you don't like the way people treat you, you can change that by changing the statement you make to them." (McGraw, 2001)

What statement are you making to the world right now, with how you carry yourself? If you act like a bully, people will treat you like a bully. If you don't want to be treated like a bully, stop acting like one.

The same logic applies to acting like a high-value individual. The first time I glanced at the list of traits that I would have to develop to be considered a high-quality man, I saw that I had my work cut out for me. It was at that point that I truly had to accept that life is not cured: it's managed. I questioned why I was treated the way I was for so long, hoping the answer would bring me peace. But, eventually, I had to accept that regardless of what that answer was, I wasn't going to be able to cure my pain with only one answer, anyway. There is no cure. There is only growth.

To better illustrate this resolution, think of passion. Many people go through life hoping to find their passion by trying different things. Hoping to eventually stumble upon that one thing that will make them happy forever. Some even hold the belief that once you find something you are truly passionate about, you have found something that you can do everyday without ever encountering feelings of boredom or tiredness.

While I'd like that to be true, the reality is that your lack of passion and happiness is not "cured" by finding that one thing you've been missing. Passions and happiness are not found; they're developed over time.

In that same respect, I could not be cured—I could only be developed over time. You are the manager of your own life, and none of us are born good managers because good management is an acquired skill. So, high-quality traits will help you acquire the management skills that you need to manage your life in a way that brings you a major step closer to "the good life" of health, wealth, love, and happiness.

This information on power dynamics is not common knowledge, so to avoid confusion, keep in mind that high-quality men and high-value men are not exactly the same. While they're similar, the two terms are not interchangeable.

A high-quality man is, in many ways, a high-value man. But, a high-value man is not always a high-quality man. This is because if a high-value man—a man with actual money, connections, and status—does not have any of the traits of a high-quality man, people will have a hard time perceiving him as high-value in the first place.

Imagine a scenario where, at a networking event, you notice a high-value man and a high-quality man speaking with each other. The high-quality man has good posture, his head held high, he smiles warmly, and has a very charming energy about him. He commands respect and elicits positive feelings from everyone with his very presence.

As you glance over to the high-value man, you assume he's high-value because he's wearing an expensive watch, but as he speaks to the high-quality man you notice that he can't maintain eye contact. He insecurely glances down with his back hunched and arms crossed defensively. He seems unapproachable, somewhat cold blooded, and seems to be an all-around rude and disrespectful person. (You can't imagine why this high-quality man would want to talk to someone so clearly ill-mannered and impolite.)

The nonverbal expressions (body language) of the high-quality man are ones of leadership and power. He's clearly a dominant man as you notice his more expansive body language. The high-value man, on the other hand, submissively makes himself smaller and smaller throughout the conversation.

Now, keep in mind that perceptions are reality. If these two men are complete strangers to you, you may assume that the high-quality man is actually more successful. From the outside looking in, there is no obvious indication that the high-value man contains any of the traits or qualities needed to acquire impressive resources. So, it wouldn't make sense to assume he has any.

People aren't walking around with their net worth written on their foreheads, so the ones who are perceived as high-power are the ones who carry themselves as if they are. Regardless of what your status or income is, if you dress, walk, talk, and act like a millionaire, people will perceive you as one. And, conversely, if you dress, walk, talk, and act like a homeless person, people will perceive you as one. How you present yourself to others is all they will have to go by as an indicator of your success—unless you share your net worth with everyone you meet.

Now, on the other hand, even if you somehow knew that the high-value man was a multimillionaire, his unlikable, unattractive, and displeasing personality gives you the knee-jerk reaction to talk with the high-quality man instead.

Since power is merely the extent to which you can attain what you want, if someone approaches that high-quality man and presents him with an opportunity, then he will have

gained an opportunity due to his skilled presentation of his traits as a high-quality man. That means that he has a form of power that hard skills can't give you: social power.

This is where “in order to ‘have’ you must ‘do’ and in order to ‘do’ you must be” comes into play. The high-value man skipped the “be” (becoming a high-quality man) and went straight into doing (making money) so he could have (the expensive watch). It's only by deciding to first “be” that you can gain success that lasts and power that doesn't rely on your financial situation or status. In this way, you can achieve social power and create opportunities where others can't.

When people think of power, they only think about high-value men using their money or status to attain what they want, but high-quality men know power dynamics. They know the rules to the game of life. They understand that the world works as a system, and they leverage that system into an ethical advantage that boosts their power over everyone who doesn't know the rules to the game.

As an analogy, we could say that you are the product. You are selling yourself every time you network and look to build a relationship with someone new. The way you present yourself to the world is the marketing. The clothes you wear, the way you talk, walk, move, act, and carry yourself all determine whether or not people will want to buy—whether or not others will want to build a relationship with you. High-quality men market themselves as what is arguably the most valuable product in the networking world: high-value (high-power) men.

And, unfortunately, the high-value men who don't bother to work on their marketing at all and, as a result, look low-value (low-power) lose out on those opportunities. The very same opportunities that go straight to the high-quality men who were prepared because no one knows how good a product is until they actually experience using it. And, no one wants to buy a product that, because of bad marketing, looks like it could be a bad experience. So, naturally, they go for the people with the best marketing. (We'll talk more about how you can improve your marketing—regardless of where you are in life—a little later.)

Now, with all of that said, if people are disappointed when they buy a product, they will return it. In other words, if you lie about being a high-value man through unethical means—such as buying jewelry that is fake gold—when people realize you are not nearly as successful as you claim to be they'll either stop wanting to connect with you or they will continue conversations with you to be polite but treat you less like an equal and more like a fan. You'll have signaled to them that, in reality, you're low-power. You will have also communicated to them that you are dishonest—which we could say is low-warmth, since it's not a very kind or friendly thing to do.

Acquiring the traits of a high-quality individual will increase your value and power in real ways, no different from the real effect that removing filler words from your speech pattern has on increasing your verbal influence. (People who avoid using filler words sound more like they know and believe in what they're talking about.)

So, you'll appear higher-power in your social interactions, increasing your ability to attain what you want in life. When you are high-power, you're much harder to ignore. When you're high-power, people feel like they can gain more from a relationship with you and they become more willing to join your network.

As you become a higher-quality person and better at networking, the principle of authority will also come into play. "The principle of authority says we are (much) more likely to listen to someone when we perceive them as having authority." (Buffalmano, 2017) When you are a high-quality individual who automatically carries themselves as a high-value individual, people perceive you as having authority. For comparison, in a most extreme situation, a person is more likely to listen to a high-quality man for tips on how to make money than a homeless man with low self-esteem, no purpose, and no personality who doesn't take care of himself.

This was initially a philosophical misunderstanding for me, but it suddenly seemed more like common sense after learning about the power dynamics of my everyday interactions.

Another value I was raised with was to judge people not based on their looks, but based on the content of their character. Maybe that sounds familiar to you as well. As a kid, it didn't make much sense to me to base someone's (possible) knowledge on their worth, looks, age, or success. Wisdom is wisdom. It's not as if the wisdom of saving money is only reserved for people with a net worth of ten million dollars. There are plenty of individuals with an average income who understand how to put away ten percent of their salary each month and can share that knowledge with other people.

Wisdom can also be found in books. It's not like books on personal finance analyze your net worth and then shut automatically with a sign popping out of the cover that says, "You're not worthy of this wisdom." Anyone can receive wisdom, so anyone can share it. So why judge people's wisdom based on how they dress or how they talk? Growing up, I always thought that looks shouldn't matter, because how good you look doesn't affect how much you know.

However, upon learning the principle of authority, it made sense to me why people would ignore the advice of some while acknowledging the advice of others.

I watched an interview with an eight-figure millionaire interviewing a billionaire. The interview was about making money and was intended to give value to its viewers by teaching some rules and basic principles of wealth building. As I scrolled through the comments section of that video, I saw a flood of comments claiming that the millionaire was talking too much.

I didn't understand how they could be so ungrateful when I could safely assume that very few of them even had one million and yet, here they were complaining that an eight figure millionaire was talking too much (giving too much advice). The comment that was repeated over and over again was that they wanted to hear more of what the billionaire had to say. The billionaire had a higher net worth, he was higher value, and so he had more authority in the field

of building wealth. Therefore, they wanted to listen to him more, because people want to listen to the people that they believe have more authority.

As a high-quality person, people perceive you as being high-value. When they perceive you as high-value, you gain a little authority and they are more open to listening to what you have to say. This helps you with your networking, but only if you're willing to leverage the added power that comes with being (and becoming) a high-quality individual.

In summary, there is power in information and, therefore, power in this book. In society, the form of power that is most respected and appreciated is resources. You can acquire resources faster by becoming a higher-quality individual because you'll be perceived as a higher-power person with more value to share and get access to the opportunities reserved for those who leverage social connection (as long as you mix that high-power with high-warmth). With the acquisition of those resources comes success, which will continue to naturally grow your value and power over time—as long as you follow the rules to the game.

This strategy of becoming a high-quality individual for better networking success works for women as well since the main high-quality traits for networking success are emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and knowing power dynamics.

Still, for those women out there reading this who want to go even further, here are the twelve traits of a high-quality woman (Buffalmano, 2018)³:

1. She Is Feminine

- "A high-value woman doesn't necessarily need to be attractive. It's a big advantage, but it's not a necessary precondition. The great news for women who are willing to work on themselves is that more and more women are losing touch with their femininity which presents a great opportunity for high-quality women. They will stand out more and reap more rewards."

2. She Takes Care of Her Appearance

- "...there certainly is a strong relationship between how much you care about yourself and how much you care about...pretty much everything else. And, caring is a sign of quality, with caring about yourself being one of the first and major indicators of overall caring. Women who care about themselves are more likely to care about their career, their family, their goals, and, eventually, their children. Remember the rule of thumb: the more you care about yourself, the more valuable you appear, and the more people will value you and care about you."

3. She Takes Care of Her Health

- "Similar to the above, but addressing her body. She takes care of the food she eats (no fast food, no adding kilos of sauce and salt), drinks (avoids pops and colas), and exercising. Overall, she keeps her body running smoothly.

³ Information regarding the traits of a high-quality woman provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

4. She Cares About People
 - “Simon Sinek says that high-quality leaders care about the people they lead. That much is true. And, women certainly do the same. Albeit in a different fashion than men...[women] let people know they’re happy to see them. Maybe a slight touch on their arm, a warm smile, a comforting word. Or, a simple ‘well done, I’m so happy for you’.”
5. She Is Emotionally Stable
 - A high-value woman is expected to:
 - a. Be relatively secure of herself and of her own worth
 - b. Not make public drama
 - c. Not be excessively anxious
 - d. Not behave in wild mood swings (a sign of borderline personality)
 - e. Be generally positive and uplifting
 - “Emotionally stable doesn’t mean she doesn’t cry or that she never gets angry. It doesn’t even mean she can’t have a nervous breakdown or have bouts of slight depression and self-doubt. Those are normal parts of life and dealing with them openly is actually another sign of high value.” Emotionally stable simply means avoiding extreme overreactions to the emotions one feels.
6. She Has A Good Command of the English Language
 - “Language highly correlates with intelligence. But, it goes beyond communication skills and intelligence. It shows that she has read and taken care of her education. And, with English being the current lingua franca of the world, a great command of the language shows an openness to communicate with the world, and a drive to make herself heard in it.”
7. She Radiates Positivity and Lifts People Up
 - “‘Radiating positivity’ doesn’t mean ‘always happy’. That would be just silly. It simply means her baseline mood is slightly towards the positive side of the spectrum, and that she interfaces with the world with a smile instead of a growl. That conveys lots of positive quality.”
8. She Is Socially Skilled
 - “Great social skills are important for everyone. And, they are even more important for women. Women, on average, are more skilled than men at building social networks and we could argue that social skills for women have been a matter of survival strategy. It’s been observed among primates instead that females tend to further their interests—and that of their families and tribes—by building networks of alliances. And it’s not that different for humans. In a way indeed, we can say that the ability to effortlessly form friendships is a sign of femininity.”
 - These social skills include the basics:
 - a. Conversation
 - b. Making friends
 - c. Small talk
 - d. Getting to know others

- e. Bonding
- This also includes advanced social skills:
 - a. Turning down a guy's advances without hurting his ego (keeping a friend)
 - b. Releasing tense social situations
 - c. Deflecting inappropriate comments without making enemies
- 9. She Plays Little Games
 - "The issue of nasty games is that they are win-lose. And, dating with win-lose games starts win-lose relationships. This is not to say that high-quality women don't play any games at all. Quite the opposite. Games are part of the marketing package. What I'm truly referring to here are the *nasty* games. Instead, the high-quality woman deploys games that build people up and make others feel good. And, once in a relationship, she decreases the number of games because she knows that a relationship based on honesty and mutual support is superior to a relationship where she's constantly gaming her partner."
- 10. Knows When to Set Boundaries
 - "The high-value woman is pleasant and welcoming, but she's not a pushover and knows when it's time to take a stand and defend her boundaries. If you're not holding your end of the relationship, she'll let you know that. When a boss is disrespectful to her, she knows how to demand the respect she deserves. Her rule of life is that she is not disrespectful to anyone, and people have no right to be disrespectful to her."
- 11. She Is Emotionally Intelligent
 - Emotional intelligence is a vast topic, but it can be boiled down to:
 - a. Understanding and acting on other's emotions and needs
 - b. Understanding and acting on one's own emotions and needs
- 12. She Has A Growth Mindset (and Doesn't Take Things Personally)
 - "I won't go into detail here, but a growth mindset as explained by Carol Dweck means that people believe they can get better instead of their traits being cast in stone forever. It might seem like a small detail, but it changes everything. People with a growth mindset are:
 - a. Resilient to criticism
 - b. Look for ways to improve
 - c. Enjoy challenges
 - d. Approach problems with a 'we can do it' attitude"

Some of you may feel like I am overestimating the power that acquiring the traits of a high-quality individual has on the way that others perceive and treat you. This is understandable, since the concept of power dynamics is not very well-known and is hardly ever taught in schools. As you progress through this book, you'll find further explanations and teachings as to how this process of becoming a high-quality person to achieve your goals works.

If you are already a high-quality person and currently have the power that comes with being high-warmth and high-power, but are still having trouble reaching your goals or getting to that next level, this book is also for you.

Just because everyone wants to be around you, doesn't mean that everyone is willing to do the heavy lifting for you. Not everyone you meet will do all of the relationship building for you, nor will they happily create your opportunities with no effort required on your end. The aim of this book is to fill that gap. The aim of this book is to empower you with the best information—the most effective tried-and-true networking strategies—coupled with a plan of action that will give you the ability to go out and get the opportunities you want. Follow the program I've laid out in this book and by the end, you'll wonder why you didn't start networking sooner.

Action Steps:

1. Remember when we talked about improving your marketing? It's time to start getting treated like a high-value individual! On one piece of paper, write down all of the traits and subset traits of a high-quality individual for your gender.
 - Ex: Emotional intelligence is a trait. Self-awareness is a subset trait.
2. Highlight all of the traits and subset traits you currently have.
 - Ex: In the high-quality man list, do you workout daily? If yes, highlight the "Exercise" subset trait underneath the "He Takes Care of Himself" trait.
 - Ex: In the high-quality woman list, do you take care of your appearance? Do you care for your personal hygiene, posture, and clothing? If yes, highlight the "She Takes Care of Her Appearance" trait.
3. On the second piece of paper, create a plan to develop each trait and subset trait that you're missing.
 - Replace your short-term willpower with a long-term program.
 - Ex: When I started out on my journey to becoming a high-quality man, I was lacking in social-awareness. So, a part of my plan to develop that subset trait was to invest in myself with a course that teaches how to read body language and social cues.

Step Two

Adopt the Helpful Mindsets

In the previous chapter, we learned how the people who have the easiest time networking are the people in society that are high-power. We also learned that, since perceptions are reality, if you present yourself to the world in a way that communicates you are high-power, people will assume that you are. This means that you'll have an easier time networking as well as a higher success rate connecting with powerful contacts.

Before moving further into this chapter, make sure you've placed your self-development and life management as your top priorities. Your mental and physical health must always come first. Take special, attentive care to work on the action steps in the last chapter by improving your daily habits. (For example, one of the traits of a high-quality man is exercising. Exercise can improve your mood.) Look after your mental and emotional health before seeking out networking strategies and opportunities.

Now, we must tackle the often complex conundrum that is mindsets. When I made the decision not to commit suicide, I made a deal with myself: I would do my absolute best to change my life in a way where I could enjoy it again. And if, after doing everything that I could I wasn't able to achieve that, I would accept that life just wasn't for everyone.

I tried therapy, and that didn't work out, so I had no idea where to start on my journey to beating my personal demons on my own. Google was giving me advice like "visualize a happy memory," (Amatenstein, 2019) which only made me feel worse when I realized how much things had changed since those happy times.

And, you might notice that I cited a source who made that exact recommendation. Psycom who, at the time of this book's writing, is the third largest site in the United States that focuses exclusively on mental health. And yet, their advice didn't work for me.

But, the following information that you'll find in this chapter did. And, if you're willing to do the work, I can promise you that it will make a positive, lasting impact in your life for years to come.

At the beginning of my journey to create a life of happiness for myself, I wasn't sure where to start. There were books lying around the house that I always knew were there but had never considered reading. After skimming across a few titles, not even bothering to read the

back of the books or open any, I came across a book titled *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale. I decided to give it a chance, and I am very glad that I did. The strategies outlined in that book only worked for me for a little over half a year. But, it was all I needed to spark my curiosity about what was possible for my growth toward a life of happiness. And, what else I could learn about life-changing mindsets.

As curious as I was though, I was still frustrated that I hadn't cured my depression yet. I genuinely thought that with a few positive mindset shifts I would feel better again. That thought was true for the most part, but I hadn't properly estimated how long making those mindset shifts would take.

When I started practicing things like gratitude, optimism (within proper reason and without the delusion), and healthy positivity, I started to become more productive. Being more positive also helped me to network better, since people prefer associating themselves with positive people. (This is because positive people are typically higher-warmth than people who are always negative, angry, and intimidating.)

So, to put you on a path toward happiness, positive life-change, and networking mastery, let's start with the mindsets that work as the foundations of the mind (Buffalmano, 2018)⁴. And, as with anything, this information is good to read, but only effective if you implement it. If you only read it and take no action, you'll experience no benefit besides having more knowledge to share with others. And, that's not enough to experience the acquisition of resources that comes with being a high-quality individual.

Now, for ease of comprehension, these seven building blocks that serve as the foundations of the mind have been organized into what I call the "IMPROVE framework".

Foundations of the Mind

The Seven Building Blocks of Ultimate Mental Power

1. Internalize the "I Can Change" Mindset

"Most of us already know that we can change and improve... In some areas. But we rarely apply that same concept to *all* areas of our lives. And this is an important belief to hold, not only because it helps you start in your journey of self-development, but also because it underpins much of your self esteem." (Buffalmano, 2018)

⁴ Information regarding the foundations of the mind (also referred to as "The Seven Building Blocks of Ultimate Mental Power") provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

- Wherever your current station in life, you can move ahead
- However you feel, you can change it
- Whoever you are, you can change it and improve it

We have enough scientific evidence today to prove that change is possible. Even the change of one's personality to one that is more conducive to social success is possible. So, before you decide to embark on this journey, acknowledge and believe that you can change because it will help empower you towards your end goals along the way.

2. Master the Growth Mindset

We discussed this briefly in the introduction, the high achievers of this world keep a growth mindset (Buffalmano, 2018).

- **“Fixed Mindset** people believe their qualities are set at birth and carved in stone. You are who you are, and there isn't much you can do about it. People with a fixed mindset shy away from challenges because losing means ‘they're bad’ and that would hurt their ego. Remember: these guys believe in innate talent, not in learning, so the outcome defines who they are. Of course, then they often shy away from challenges as the stakes are super high: their identity and self worth are on the line! ...When fixed-minded people fail, they make a lot of excuses both to themselves and to the world to ‘cover up’ their lack.”
- **“Growth Mindset** people believe they can learn and grow. They seek learning and growth opportunities because failing does not define them...Have you ever read all that glorification of failure in self-help literature? When you 100% embrace a growth mindset you won't need to remind yourself of all that stuff because it becomes who you are. Don't get me wrong now: failure can still be painful, of course, but the key is that it does not define you. Failure does not make you a failure with a growth mindset. People with a growth mindset are naturally grittier and determined because struggling doesn't mean you're being bad, it means you're getting good.”

People with growth mindsets believe that failing is the best way they can improve while fixed-mindset people believe they can't improve at all.

You might've also guessed that it's the individuals with growth mindsets that get up the most when they're knocked down and, therefore, make it farther along their journeys to their dreams. Meanwhile, the fixed-mindset individuals refuse to move once knocked down because they believe their failures are a sign of their limits because they believe their abilities are fixed at birth.

3. Practice the Antifragile Ego

Your ego is your sense of self-esteem and self-importance. So, for ease of understanding, when you hear “ego”, think “self-esteem” (at least for right now).

Most people feel proud of themselves whenever they win. And, that makes sense because winning feels good. But, you can't *always* win. So, whenever you lose, your self-esteem takes a hit because losing doesn't feel very good. And, since we often pride ourselves on winning and losing is the opposite of winning, we often feel disappointed when we lose and lose a bit of self-esteem in the process.

But, what if instead we prided ourselves on always going for it and doing our best? You can always go for it and do your best, so if you pride yourself on that, you could always have high self-esteem. Winning or losing would become irrelevant so long as you're giving it your best effort. And, if losing is no longer relevant, then you can never mentally lose. And, if you never mentally lose, then your self-esteem never tanks.

This is the antifragile ego and its power. Build your self-esteem on winning, and your self-esteem depends on external circumstances. And, those circumstances can change. But, build your self-esteem on doing your best, and your self-esteem depends on *internal* circumstances. And, you can always choose to manage (and improve) your internal circumstances. You can always choose to go for it and do your best and then feel proud of yourself simply for having given your best *effort*. You can generate your own (high) self-esteem.

More on this a little later.

4. Remind Yourself of the Locus of Control

“The locus of control is the degree to which people believe that they have—or don't have—control over their life.” (Buffalmano, 2018)

- “**Internal Locus** of control means that you believe you are in control of your life.”
- “**External Locus** of control means that you believe life events determine the course of your life and you don't have control over them.”

“People with an external locus of control feel helpless, are sadder, get angry more easily, and are more prone to depression. On the other hand, people with an internal locus of control are confident, energetic and optimistic. They even tend to be healthier.” (Buffalmano, 2018)

5. Obligate the Psychology of Finding Your Passion

There are many different approaches to finding one's passion including:

- **Taking a personality test** and choosing a recommended career path based on your Myers–Briggs personality type results.
- **Taking a positive psychology character strength test.** “One of the main aims of positive psychology is to help people find their strengths and use them for a fulfilled life.” So, it's not uncommon to find people using positive psychology tests to assess themselves and make guided decisions based on those test results.
- **Working through the pains now until it eventually becomes a passion later.** And, this is based on Cal Newport's philosophy that it's not passion that leads to mastery, but mastery that leads to passion (Buffalmano, 2018).
- **Trust your innate interests and enthusiasms.** And, this is rooted in Robert Greene's philosophies on passion discovery to either rediscover your passion as a child or pursue “whatever it is you feel viscerally about while doing it”.
- **Start with what you like and grow it into a passion over time.** Angela Duckworth (who is a psychology researcher) has a philosophy that you don't find your philosophy, you develop it.

So, what to do? Sociologist Lucio Buffalmano (who is also a researcher of human nature) offers a possible solution (Buffalmano, 2018).

1. **Try different things that seem interesting to you:** “Angela Duckworth says that in her interviews most people found their passion exploring many different interests they had.”
2. **Pick one that is particularly interesting for you:** “Avoid whatever you tried that you hated or that didn't give you any good vibes. Pick one that piqued your interest instead.”
3. **Proactively develop that interest:** Strive to go get better, deepen your knowledge, ask questions and look for answers.
4. **Deepen it over a lifetime:** “Keep going. Passion is all about mastery, it will grow over a lifetime as you strive towards the top.”

Buffalmano also adds, “This is the same path that I read Amoruso undertake in #Girlboss. She says: once you find your passion for what you love, become an expert at it.”

As an addition to this answer for the question of discovering your passions, reframe your job as a “calling”.

American psychologist, Martin Seligman, says, “Any job can become a calling, and any calling can become a job. ‘A physician who views the work as a job and is simply interested in

making a good income does not have a calling, while a garbage collector who sees the work as making the world a cleaner, healthier place could have a calling.”

Therefore, once again, your perceptions will be your reality. How you view your job will determine how you feel about your job.

“...whether you have a calling or a job, is largely up to how you view your own job. And the cleaner example [by psychologist Martin Seligman] is not random. Amy Wrzesniewski’s research among hospital cleaners found out there were cleaners who saw their job as a calling. [So] Ideally, to help you reach a ‘full life’, your calling should use your signature strengths and allow you to serve the greater [good].”

And, finally, if you don’t have a burning passion, that’s also OK. Your other options are:

- **Aim to turn your signature strengths into passions later.**
- **Do your work for the money and do something you're passionate about outside of your work.**

This advice is great for raising your quality to become more successful at networking. And even so, all professional and business networking applications aside, the bigger picture here is your happiness and life satisfaction. If you can discover your passion or make a way to enjoy your work, or even accept your work while pursuing passions in other aspects of your life, it will lead to more joy.

And, as a final note to close out this step, Buffalmano makes sure to note, “If the hospital cleaners successfully do it [make a passion for themselves], and some of them probably don’t even read self-development literature, then surely you also can.”

6. Value the Art of Outcome Independence

In his book, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving A F*ck*, Mark Manson teaches that you need to define (or redefine) what it is you care about in order to empower yourself to stop caring about everything else. (“Everything else” being the negativity that typically drags down people’s core confidence and self-esteem.) (Manson, 2021)

So, to be completely outcome independent, to worry incredibly little about how things will turn out in order to feel at ease and comfortable in situations that would be nerve-wracking for most, you must only care about going for it and doing your best.

Again, we go back to the antifragile ego because it’s completely reliant on being the type of person who cares about learning from his failures and the type of person who learns by

going for it and doing his best. Not on being the type of person who cares about winning (and, especially, not the type of person who cares about winning all of the time).

Here's how to embody this mindset (Buffalmano, 2018):

1. Reward yourself with pride every time you go for it and do your best.
2. Emotionally punish yourself when you do anything less than your best, even if you still end up lucking onto a win. (Don't be proud of the wins where you didn't try your best and don't celebrate them.)
3. The more you keep rewarding yourself for the effort (and not for the outcome), the more automated it will become.

7. Embrace the Science of Happiness and Optimism

On top of the benefits of being generally healthier (both psychologically and physically), optimists have a better social network (they're better at making friends and attracting support).

One way to practice optimism (without the naivety) is with your explanatory styles.

"Explanatory styles are self-talk and patterns of thought with which we frame events. Optimists have positive self-explanatory styles, while pessimists have negative self-explanatory styles." (Buffalmano, 2018) Another way to put this is:

- **Pessimist:** "When something bad happens to people with a negative self-explanatory style they blame themselves and see no solutions in sight...When something good happens to people with a negative self-explanatory style, they think it was not because they were good or because they deserved it. It was a fluke, and it won't happen again.
- **Optimist:** "When something bad happens to people with a positive self-explanatory style they blame the conditions and believe the setback is either temporary or not the world...When something good happens to people with a positive self-explanatory style, they think it was because they did a good job, and they think there is more to come."

Practicing taking the optimist's viewpoints (with a conscious rationality) will lead to a more positive self-talk which will lead to a better support for your goals than the negativity of the pessimists. Now, there are always exceptions (Buffalmano, 2018)⁵. But, on average, a positive, optimistic attitude wins out over the pessimists who are negative and give up easily. And, that's important for any self-development journey, especially one that involves the pursuit of building positive relationships with others.

⁵ Information regarding optimism and realistic optimism (also referred to as "learned optimism") provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

Those are the seven building blocks of mental power packaged into the “IMPROVE framework”. With those mindset shifts, you’ll be well on your way to presenting yourself to the world as a more high-quality individual and living a more high-quality lifestyle.

Now, to clarify, a mindset is an established set of attitudes held by a person. However, mindsets can also be seen as arising out of a person's worldview or philosophy of life. For instance, when I had a serious go-giver attitude as a young child, my mindset was to always give, give, give. Always giving was one of my values, one of my life philosophies.

A mindset in this regard is referred to as a frame in social dynamics.

“In social psychology, we can define frames as a set of beliefs, morals, and perspectives with which people interpret the world, or a specific topic.” (Buffalmano, 2020)

The concept of frames is also mentioned in Stephen R. Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* but is referred to throughout his work as a “paradigm.”

“The word paradigm comes from the Greek. It was originally a scientific term, and is more commonly used today to mean a model, theory, perception, assumption, or frame of reference. In the more general sense, it’s the way we ‘see’ the world—not in terms of our visual sense of sight, but in terms of perceiving, understanding, interpreting.” (Covey, 2004)

This is important to understand, because mindsets and frames go hand-in-hand for success at networking. All of our behaviors stem from our mindsets, because it’s hard to act outside of our beliefs. For example, if one of your frames is that networking is a complete waste of time and that money is the only way people can get to their goals, your actions will align with that frame and your success rate in networking will go down. Your belief, moral, and perspective with which you interpret the topic of networking isn’t conducive to success at networking. So, if you truly believe that networking is a waste of time, it will be hard for you to act outside of that frame and suddenly start networking like all of your goals depended on it without changing that counter-productive belief first.

It’s imperative that you adopt the mindsets and frames that are good for your networking goals. We each have many different frames that we interpret everything through. Those frames can be split into two categories: our frames on how things are (“realities”) and our frames of how things should be (“values”). Two frames that you will commonly find on your networking journey are collaborative frames and competitive frames.

When people network within a competitive frame, they are networking with the belief that they have to look out for number one. The lens that they use to view the world interprets life as a game, a race, a competition. They have to either win or suffer the consequences that come with losing (Covey, 2004).

When people network within a collaborative frame, they believe in creating win-win situations. Their frame (their belief and lens they use to view the world) involves benefiting everyone in the relationship and interaction. In other words, they approach networking with the belief that “more for you means more for me, as well.”

People who network within a competitive frame don’t see things this way. They are influenced by the fixed-pie bias, which is basically the idea that “the more they win, the less there is left for me.” Even if their frame on how things should be (their values) is that they should be more collaborative, their frame on how things are (the realities) leads them to do more taking or else they will “suffer the consequences of losing.”

Chris Voss, a former FBI hostage negotiator, says, “Everything in life is a negotiation.” And, the collaborative frame allows you to negotiate for what you want while keeping your eye on ways that you can make the pie bigger for everyone in the process. (Buffalmano, 2020)

Let’s take an example that pulls all of these ideas together. Let’s say you hold a competitive frame while meeting a professional in your industry. Throughout the duration of the entire interaction, your mindset is: what can I gain from this person?

Eventually, he asks you what your goals are. You let him know some of the things that you’re working toward and he asks you how he can help support you. He inquires as to how he can help you reach your most important goal. You both brainstorm ideas, eventually settling on a great deal.

For the sake of this example, let’s say that this professional you’re talking to is great friends with an expert in graphic design and he’s offered to connect you two so you can improve your business cards. You let him know that his offer would be a great help and you thank him for his goodwill, but you don’t ask him about his goals. You don’t ask how you can help him. You exchange numbers and walk away, feeling good because you gained something; you won. You’re operating within a competitive frame, so there’s no incentive for you to help anyone but yourself.

Now, it is possible for you to get ahead in life using this competitive frame. The purpose of this book is to give you networking strategies that work, not a lesson on ethics and morality. This strategy could work, and has been proven to work, but only in the short-term. In the long run, you’ll be labeled as a “taker” and your behavior will breed distrust. Your actions while networking—even if you’re using so-called good human-relations techniques—will be perceived as you only looking out for yourself (Covey, 2004) because your reputation will precede you. Before people see you, they will see your reputation. And, having the reputation of someone who is a “taker” will cause people to hesitate to befriend you and will eventually diminish your success over the long run.

As we discussed earlier, perceptions are reality. So, seeing a woman without a ring on the ring finger of her left hand could lead you to perceive her as unmarried. However, perceiving a married woman as unmarried doesn't change the fact that she's married if she actually is. In that same regard, perceiving competitive frames as superior to collaborative frames doesn't guarantee that competitive frames are superior, especially if they lose their effectiveness over time.

So, what should you do if you have a competitive frame? You could try working on your behavior more—"you could try harder, be more diligent, double your speed. But your efforts would only succeed in getting you to the wrong place faster."(Covey, 2004) This is because you still haven't changed your lens; you're working harder, but using the same unhelpful beliefs and mindsets. To put this a simpler way, you would be networking faster as a taker, and because you still hold a competitive frame, you would only succeed in eroding your chances of long-term success faster. You still believe you have to come out on top, and if you truly believe that, it's illogical for you to start acting collaborative out of nowhere. Our attitudes and behaviors grow out of our assumptions, and your assumption is that you have to be number one.

"The way we see things is the source of the way we think and the way we act." (Covey, 2004)

"...conditioning affects our perceptions, our paradigms [frames]...what about the conditioning of a lifetime? The influences in our lives—family, school, church, work environment, friends, associates, and current social paradigms [social frames]...all have made their silent unconscious impact on us and help shape our frame of reference, our paradigms [frames]..." (Covey, 2004)

We've had our frames conditioned by society our entire lives. We are often unaware that these frames even exist until we choose to deeply examine them. To achieve sustained, lasting success, work within a collaborative frame. Keep an eye on how to make the pie bigger for everyone. Avoid the urge to take as much as you can in an interaction before walking away.

While collaboration is what I strongly recommend (since collaborative frames are superior to competitive frames in the long run), your "why" is the determining factor of which frame you decide would work best for you.

Your "why"—your life mission—inspires your reason for working hard to get better at networking. It inspires your reason for wanting to build a strong network. And, your reason for wanting to achieve your goals and dreams. Knowing your overarching "why" in your life is important for your productivity as well as your life fulfillment. Even more than that, your "why" is

important for your ultimate decision on what approach you want to take to networking. Your “why” has four different levels (Bet-David, 2016)⁶:

The Evolution of Your “Why”

1. Survival

- “The first level of ‘why’ is survival. Let me explain what I mean by survival: Everybody who has a job that makes money is making that money, why? To survive and pay bills. When people make enough money to pay their bills and cover their mandatory living expenses, some people stop there and never graduate.”

2. Status

- “The second level of why is all about status. You’ll hear people say things like, ‘You know, I want to make six figures.’ Why? Status. Or, they may want a nice car, house, or to go to a good school. They want to be able to talk about having this or that. This is all about keeping up with the Joneses. Status is still lightweight, but it’s better than survival.”

3. Freedom

- “The third level of ‘why’ is freedom. People may say, ‘You know what? I’m so sick and tired of six figures. Man, I want to be free. I want to make money. I’m not worried about working hard, I want to make money and I want to have freedom. I want to have some breathing room. What do I need to do to have breathing room?’ They may want to live in a particular community because they want their kids to be able to play outside and not have to worry about them. Or, they may want to have a big backyard so their kids can run around and play safely.”

4. Purpose

- “The highest level is purpose. Now what are we talking about with purpose? Some people say, ‘My ‘why’ is to one day own a football team.’ That’s still empty. Is that really the purpose of making millions or billions of dollars? No. There’s got to be a bigger purpose. So how does one go from survival, status, freedom, to purpose? What is truly your purpose? What is the bigger picture? When your ‘why’ is purpose, you know what you’re driven by. But, that doesn’t happen overnight. As the saying goes, sometimes on the way to a dream, you get lost and find a bigger one. A bigger dream. It takes time, patience, self-discovery, and experience. You think it was all about the car. You think it was all about the recognition. You think it was all about the fame. You think it was all about the status. You think it was all about landing that girl. You think it’s all

⁶ Information regarding the four whys (also referred to as “The Evolution of Your Why”) provided by author and entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David. See References List section for more.

about all these other things, but it's much bigger than that. Then all of a sudden, one day you have a conversation with somebody or watch a video or a movie, or you meet someone and boom; it just hits you in the face, and you realize what you were put on this planet to do. Now you're talking purpose."

To illustrate my point, if your "why" is survival and you only care to do well enough in life to get by, maybe you don't care about the long term. In that case, you might read this book and walk away with the decision to hold a competitive frame and maybe that frame will help you achieve your short-term goals. After all, the takers of this world make money, too. But, for anyone who has a 'why' any level above survival, networking within a collaborative frame is the most effective and beneficial mindset for the achievement of your goals.

When you know your 'why', and you've decided on your frame of choice, you can start networking with more intention and clarity on your approach. But, even though your networking is intentional (because you know your why) and strategic (because you have clarity on what frame you're networking with), that doesn't mean you'll be networking confidently.

And, being a confident networker is important. We already established how important it is to be perceived as high-power. A strong indicator of who is the most powerful in an interaction or a group is whoever the leader is. Powerful people lead. And, it's uncommon to see people with weak confidence and low self-esteem who are also effective and influential leaders. Your typical powerful leader is usually confident in themselves and has a healthy ego. That means if you want to be perceived as powerful, you need to be (or at the very least, appear to be) confident while you're networking.

In society, people tend to make the mistake of conflating confidence and self-esteem. The two are often (incorrectly) used interchangeably. Confidence is your trust in a single ability. Where I could be confident in my ability to cook, I may not be so confident in my ability to skydive because I've never skydived before.

Self-esteem, on the other hand, is defined by how highly you value yourself. If you don't respect or love yourself very much, you would be defined as having low self-esteem. What you need to understand for this section of this chapter is that because most people see confidence and self-esteem as the same thing, by developing your self-esteem, you will be perceived as more confident. And, as a result, treated like more of a high-quality individual.

Now, being a confident networker doesn't only help you appear more powerful; it also helps you appear as though you have been networking for a long time. Since confidence is your trust in a single ability, if you are confident while networking, people will see that you trust your ability to network and begin to see you as having more authority in the art and field of networking. This is definitely an added benefit, because authority helps build your networking success.

Once again, “The principle of authority states that we are (much) more likely to listen to someone when we perceive them as having authority. Especially if we’re dealing in his field of supposed expertise.” (Buffalmano, 2017) When you introduce yourself with confidence, build relationships with confidence, and use effective networking strategies that show you know what you’re doing, people perceive you as having authority in networking. This gives them the impression that you’ve networked many times before and leads them to believe that you are high-power. After all, if you meet someone who always knows the right thing to say and networks like they’ve done it a thousand times before, chances are you would wonder how big their network is and what kind of cool connections they might have.

This is the effect you have on others when you’re networking with high self-esteem and sound networking strategies. They take you more seriously. They may even wonder what kinds of powerful connections you might have to be so confident while building professional relationships with people you have never met before. But, it all starts with having the high self-esteem of a high-quality individual.

To gain this power, you must cultivate an antifragile ego. And, since this is such a fundamental part of being able to go after new opportunities, thrive through failure, and create a better life experience for yourself, we’ll dive a little deeper on this mindset⁷.

“Antifragile, as defined by Nassim Taleb, doesn’t mean strong and it’s not even a synonym of strong. ‘Strong’ is defined by its breaking point, while antifragile means that the more you attack it, the stronger it gets.” (Buffalmano, 2018) To generate a self-esteem that doesn’t rely on external forces and circumstances that are always in your favor, you must build an identity that is antifragile and derive your self-esteem from that identity (Buffalmano, 2018).

“Most of us form our self-esteem around two typical identities and one event. The first identity is being good at something (meaning: their ego/identity is ‘I’m good at X’); the second is ‘being good in general’ (meaning: ‘I’m a great fella’). The event is usually about achieving a certain goal (meaning: getting that job, making X amount of money, sleeping with that person, and so on). Being good at X becomes a bit like adopting a fixed mindset. You start becoming defensive about your defining qualities, because failing at them would mean showing, to you and to others, that you are not so good after all. That means that you get worried about failing. That means you stop experimenting, and trying and learning and growing. That means you slowly start building your own mental straight jacket. Not good. And what if something happens and you’re not good anymore? Or if you have to switch fields, or a bunch of new and more skilled people enter the scene? Identity crisis! The solution?” (Buffalmano, 2018)

⁷ Data and information regarding the anti-fragile ego provided by essayist and author Nassim Nicholas Taleb and sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

“When you build your ego around antifragile qualities you shield yourself from plateauing and from ever becoming defensive of the status quo. Here are some examples of antifragile identities:

- I’m an eternal learner
- I go for it and do my best no matter the situation
- Winning is great, but the real art, poetry, and beauty is in the struggle
- My worst moments are my best learning experiences (and fuel to achieve more)
- I love reality, even when it’s not good. Especially when it’s not good

See what the beauty of these is? The more difficulties you throw at them, the more chances you have to validate yourself. Your pride grows when you move forward. These identities you pick for yourself are aligned with eternal self-development [eternally moving forward] (and greatly increase the likelihood of your success).” (Buffalmano, 2018)

You have to be willing to fail to learn. You have to be willing to learn to grow. You grow in order to become the kind of person capable of achieving their goals, but it all starts with being willing to fail. Now, that doesn’t mean that your antifragile ego will make failing totally painless; failing still hurts. But now you’ll have the self-esteem to get up and go again.

The antifragile ego is connected to networking in more ways than only how people perceive you. The antifragile ego helps you understand and internalize that networking is an art form. It takes practice, like any other art form. There will be moments in networking where you don’t succeed in building that relationship or that connection that you wanted, but now you can detach your identity from always needing to win. You will have more personal and mental power than those who must win to protect their ego and feel good about themselves.

Achieving “the good life”—health, wealth, love, and happiness—requires self-development. Self-development demands you grow as a person. Growth requires learning lessons, and learning lessons requires failure.

Whenever I’m afraid to send an email to a top-dog in my niche or cold-call a celebrity, I think to myself, “I take pride not in doing things perfectly, but in having the courage to do it even when it’s far from perfect.” (Buffalmano, 2018) Then, I send that email and I make that call. As a result, many of the people who I’ve connected with were surprised that I had the “confidence” to reach out to them without the help of a mutual friend introducing me. Little did they know, it wasn’t confidence. It was high self-esteem from a healthy ego.

I used the antifragile ego to work on my progress toward becoming a high-quality man. Throughout my own personal journey to becoming a high-quality man, when I worked on the action steps in the last chapter, I realized that I needed to work on my personality. I wanted a personality that was charming because I knew that the charmers of this world made the most friends, the least enemies, and had the most romantic options.

More than all of that though, I knew how charmers made me feel. They made me feel like I mattered. One day, when I interacted with one, I remember he was very patient with me, caring, kind, and it was easy to see that he had a genuine, deep love for people—regardless of their station in life or their social standing within the status hierarchy. He made me feel like being a fellow human being was enough to be worthy of fair treatment and respectful communication. He made me feel like I do deserve to be loved and cared about too. And, I wanted to bring that to others, a sense that they matter even if only for being a human being like anyone else—like me. I wanted to give others that deep love and empathy that no one gave me.

So, I embarked on a journey to becoming a social charmer. One obstacle I diagnosed that was holding me back was a certain coldness I'd developed from my harsh experiences. I didn't trust others and I was still angry at the world. So, to overwrite this counterproductive habit of thinking, I started walking along the beach every day, walking past people and doing my best to greet them warmly.

It was very difficult at first and, at this time, I was living in a small neighborhood where everyone knew everyone. So, it felt as if every interaction was a high stakes, "make it or break it", fragile first-impression moment that could carry over into my future interactions in that neighborhood because, well, it could have. So, naturally, I was nervous. I didn't want to mess *any* of my first impressions up.

As I got more practice, I started to get the hang of things with the help of the antifragile ego. Every time I started to get closer to someone while I was walking, I'd start to feel nervous. But, I would say to myself, "I always go for it and do my best no matter the situation because it's who I am. And, I'm proud of myself every time I do." Then, I'd do exactly that. I'd go for it and do my best. And, regardless of how that interaction turned out, I'd emotionally reward myself by saying, "I am proud of myself every time I go for it and do my best (no matter the situation) because I am able to prove and validate to myself my strength of character while raising my quality. And, that's a well-won victory on its own."

Sometimes an interaction would go worse than anticipated and hurt a lot more than usual emotionally. At times like those, I'd remind myself, "The more it hurts, the more proud of myself I can be because I am able to prove and validate to myself my strength of character while raising my quality—every time I go for it and do my best no matter the situation. And, that's a well-won victory on its own." And, I'd feel a lot better and move on with my day.

There was also a time when I suffered from a cognitive distortion that held me back from reaching this level of progress. "Psychologists use the term 'cognitive distortions' to describe irrational, inflated thoughts or beliefs that distort a person's perception of reality, usually in a negative way." (Staff, 2015) And, I suffered from one called the "emotional reasoning" cognitive distortion. What that means is I'd basically remind myself, "I always go for

it and do my best no matter the situation because it's who I am." But, then I would think to myself, "But, it doesn't *feel* like it's who I am." So, I'd start to back-rationalize that it might not be who I am.

I was treating my emotions like they were accurate representations and reflections of reality and self-inducing identity-crises on a weekly basis. Don't let this happen to you. Remember that your antifragile ego is more than your mindset, it is who you are. And, who you are is determined by your behavior more than anything else.

As the old saying goes, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." And, yes, excellence is not an act, nor a thought, nor a feeling. It's a habit. Make a habit of going for it and doing your best and you'll begin to internalize this behavior as who you are. You'll make the antifragile ego your identity.

It's not easy. I know. This may be the hardest part of your journey. But, it will also be the most rewarding. Endure the growing pains and it will all be worth it in the end.

Now that we've established the topics of frames and the self-esteem of a high-quality individual more in-depth, we can transition into another important part of your mindset: motivation.

When I was getting started, I used something called "dark motivation." These are thoughts filled with anger about how I would get enough success to get back at anyone who ever mistreated me.

This is a warning: be very careful with dark motivation! It can increase your productivity but hurt the quality of your results if taken too far. Usually dark motivation causes you to be productive for the wrong reasons. It can develop into a toxic mindset if the dark motivation is held onto for too long and you never provide yourself with the closure you need to move forward with a more healthy motivation as fuel (accepting that your partner cheated on you, accepting that your father was never there, and so on).

For me, "dark motivation" came from a time when I had just become an actor and won my first acting award. My mother told me, "The entertainment industry isn't going to want some skinny black kid with kidney failure, and nobody's going to want to hire some black kid with a GED. I hope you enjoy getting raped in jail." My mother told me things like this every day, and every word was a constant source of fuel for my goals if I could manage the emotional pain well enough.

And yet, you can still imagine how I must have felt hearing those things. I had already decided not to commit suicide, but she wasn't making that decision easy. There were days when she told me I "have the devil inside of me", days when she went through my wallet and

stole from me, and eventually there came a day when she kicked me out of the house and I was forced to find somewhere else to stay or be homeless.

I took all of my pain and turned it into motivation, but this became toxic to my mental health. Success became all that mattered to me and it ended up holding me back, because that mindset made me less of a high-quality man and less strategic in my decision making. My emotions clouded my judgement because of my mindsets that were rooted in pain. I was working all of the time and hardly talking to anyone. This caused my personality to suffer again which, as you know, is one of the subset traits of emotional intelligence, an important component to being a high-quality man and achieving more in life.

I gradually learned to let go of that pain and transition into healthier forms of motivation. So, be careful. My story is only one of the many ways that dark motivation can screw your chances of achieving your goals. Avoid making the same mistakes that I did by letting dark motivation fester and build up uncontrollably. Take control of your mind and give it the love and attention it deserves. Your mental and emotional well-being can either save your life or destroy it.

Productivity tips and motivation hacks fit outside the scope of this book. And, in truth, taking the time to form constructive habits that support a strong, consistent work ethic are often more effective than any “tricks to getting more done” you might hear about in the media.

But, to build on this topic of your “why” and your motivations, you may be wondering why you lack the will or motivation to work toward your goals in the first place. This question is reminiscent of the same questions posed by members of our older generation who find it hard to manage millennials. They ask, “Why don’t millennials want to work hard?” Older college deans who notice students who seem underdeveloped and ill-prepared for the journey ahead ask, “Why don’t students want to grow up?”

Tim Elmore provides the following theory as a response: “the adult world you are entering has never been more complex, and the older generation is not adequately preparing you for what you will soon face. Furthermore, the adolescent world has never been more pleasurable. Many in the Generation Y demographic see no need to leave their current reality of leisure to enter a long, hard adult lifestyle.” (Elmore)

So, to overcome these issues set by circumstances you can’t control, here is one motivation tip to keep in mind as you embark on the long journey ahead of you:

Accept Doing Whatever It Takes.

If you're unwilling to accept how much you have to do, you won't want to do it. The first step to building any good work ethic is being willing to accept the amount of work ahead. Even when your workload increases due to circumstances beyond your control.

On my journey, there were times when I was encouraged to take the easy route and give up on my dreams. One example is the night my mother stole money from me. I pretended to be asleep as I heard my door creak open. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw her approach my night stand, open my wallet, and leave abruptly, closing my door softer than how she opened it. I would get up, shine my phone light into my wallet, and find that my money was missing. The same money I needed to move closer to my goals was now gone. Fighting with my mother would result in me getting kicked out, so I had no choice but to start all over and work harder. My only other option was giving up, and I had made up my mind not to let that happen.

When my kidney failure struck, I was in my sophomore year at a private high school. I missed so much school due to my long hospitalization that I had to do summer school if I wanted to keep my sophomore year credits. This private high school was in a different county, so I would wake up at four in the morning to get ready for school, make the two-hour drive with my dad, work throughout the day, then do homework on the two hour drive back so I could get enough sleep by the time I got home to wake up early again. Needless to say, transferring to a public school that was closer to home was a smarter choice given my newfound health situation.

When I transferred schools, the private high school refused to release my high school transcripts with my two years worth of high school credits unless I paid a \$1,000 transfer fee. Money that I did not have.

The funny thing is, I didn't receive this important information until I was in my senior year of high school. So, take a guess what happened. I'm in my senior year of high school working to acquire three years worth of credits. The only credits I had that remained were from my junior year. Keep in mind that this public school wasn't the best. Some of the teachers were racist toward me and grouped me in with the majority of African-American students doing drugs, selling drugs, stealing school equipment from the music room to launch their rap careers, and getting sent to jail for one reason or another.

So, what do you think I did? Do you think I dropped out? I worked hard. Online classes became my best friend. No one thought I would graduate. A few months after my mother found out about my situation, it was then, as we stood in the kitchen, that she stopped and said, "No one is going to want to hire some black kid with a GED. I hope you enjoy getting raped in jail." She didn't think I was going to graduate.

So, what do you think I did? I got angry, naturally, but I didn't give up. I worked harder. Eventually, I did graduate with my high school diploma. But it all started with accepting the

work that I had to do to achieve the goals that lay before me. There was no giving up for me. And, there was certainly no rolling over to let life have its way with me.

We're not victims unless we decide we are. You can decide to be the hero of your own story. I stopped believing in the cavalry a long time ago. Now, I believe in doing whatever it takes to survive and achieve. Adopt that mindset towards life of being willing to do whatever it takes to make your dreams a reality and with enough hard work, they will be.

When I first decided to become an actor, I was working as a cashier at a grocery store. I had enrolled in a modeling and acting class that cost me \$2,145 in tuition. Luckily, I could split the payment into six monthly payments of \$350.

I was the only African-American in the grocery store and also the only person making \$9.25 per hour. Everyone else was making \$10 per hour or above. I asked my boss for a raise, doing my best to reason with her that I had been working for over a year and deserved it. She denied my request.

I worked eight-hour shifts and picked up extra shifts from anyone who "called out". Having kidney failure with no transplant or dialysis made that daily work rough on my body. Toxins compounded inside of me that my kidneys weren't strong enough to clear out, making me sick, sluggish, physically weak, and tired. I woke up early, worked eight hours, went home, and practiced my acting until midnight. Then, I would repeat.

Once, my boss didn't give me enough hours to pay off the acting class's full monthly payment. If I couldn't make that payment, I would get kicked out of the school. I asked my mother for help, but she didn't support my goals. She told me if I couldn't make the payment I should drop out. This is when, in her living room, she told me, "The entertainment industry wouldn't want to hire some skinny black kid with kidney failure." My father didn't believe in me at the time either, but was willing to loan me \$100.

Eventually, through consistent hard work, I pulled it off. I made all of the payments and completed all of the classes. In the final class, all of the students were invited to join an acting competition. The only problem was, the competition had a \$1,000 registration fee. I had already poured all of the money I had into the classes, and I barely made the \$350 payments. The deadline to come up with this new payment was too close. Way too close. Luckily, I was willing to do whatever it takes.

I grinded every day. There was still no kidney transplant yet and no dialysis to remove the toxins from my body that were slowing me down. I had to rely on my strength of will and my work ethic to keep me going. I had to rely on my attitude that I wouldn't let anything stop me. I would take customers to my register as a worn-out cashier, then practice my acting at that same register when things slowed down later in the day (when I had fewer customers to assist). People thought I was mentally unstable because I was talking to myself, but they didn't

know I was training for the big day. They didn't know my dreams, they didn't know my goals, and they certainly didn't know the sacrifices I was being forced to make, so it didn't make a whole lot of sense to me to care about what they thought.

My mother called my boss and told her to cut my hours. When I found out, my mother told me that I should be spending less time at work and more time cleaning her house. My parents were going through a divorce that hadn't been officialized yet, and she was taking her pain out on me. Her explanation for not giving back my hours after I cleaned her house was that I "had the devil inside of me." With the odds of me making the money I needed being so slim, I could have given up right then and there. But, once again, I had already accepted that I would do whatever it takes.

After my long work days, I would walk home, eat dinner, and work on writing the commercial I would perform at the competition. I would act in the mirror, revise the script, rewrite the script, and work until midnight only to wake up early the next day and go back to work.

My mother didn't want to drive me to the competition, so I went with my dad. There were roughly three hundred contestants and about forty judges.

I won the entire competition, with over twenty-one callbacks from the judges and an acting scholarship as icing on the cake. I was proud. My hard work had paid off. My dad had tears in his eyes as he told me that after everything I'd been through, I deserved that win. That was the first time I had ever seen my dad cry. He called my mother and told her the news, and she drove the same two hours she didn't want to drive to take me to the competition to brag to the other parents that I was her son.

Two weeks later, she made another phone call and cancelled my scholarship. I begged her to give it back but she smiled and told me that I wasn't going to go and ride off into the sunset with my father. She was assuming my father and I were going to be successful off of my acting career. My father told her to leave me out of their divorce situation but she didn't listen. I told her I would do anything if she would give me the scholarship back, but she said she didn't want anything from me. I searched for my passport and birth certificate to see if I could call the department and verify my identity to get it back somehow. Turns out she took both, as well as my father's, and hid them. I ended up losing the scholarship.

I was still willing to do whatever it took to make my dreams happen. I emailed every judge that gave me a callback and did online research to get the contact info of all the other judges who attended. Regardless of if they gave me a callback or not, regardless of if they were interested in me or not, I sent them an email and got on their radar.

Eventually, I got an email back from a producer who aired the whole competition on TV. Since I won, that producer was open to interviewing me on her show and with the help of my

dad, we made it happen. I had my first credit on my acting resume and an opportunity that opened doors to many others, but it all started with being willing to do whatever it takes.

You may think that was a lot of work for my ill body to endure, but then you'd only be seeing half the story.

The work I put in to achieve the accomplishments I have today took more than only physical strength: it took mental strength, as well. Whatever it is that's standing between you and whatever it is that you want, you have to be willing to do whatever it takes. That way, you can do your absolute best to achieve your goals and, when it's all said and done, emotionally reward yourself for having given your all regardless of how it all turned out.

Now, even though all of this chapter's information means that you'll perform at a much higher level when applied, mindset shifts and changes in how you view the world are not instantaneous. They often take time and can be a grueling process.

Many people make the mistake of trying to work on only their outward behaviors without touching their mindset. In other words, if someone held the frame that networking is a total waste of time and energy and provides no ability to advance your career, they might try to network anyway without changing their belief. However, "both your attitude and your behavior while networking are going to be congruent with the way you see networking because our frames, our beliefs, are the source of our attitudes and behaviors, so it's hard to act with integrity outside of them." (Covey, 2004)

This is why one thing to keep in mind as you network is the importance of networking. Just because you know why you want to achieve your goals doesn't mean you fully understand why networking is a good vehicle to get you there.

I had to become more aware of my frames and assumptions and become aware of the extent to which I had been influenced by my experiences so I could take responsibility for those frames, examine them, and test them against reality. That meant I had to change my frame to one that took networking more seriously as a method for getting to the top.

The highest achievers know and understand that a good network means proven and specialized knowledge whenever you need it. People come across problems they don't know how to solve every day and stress themselves out over figuring out the best course of action to take. Having a good network means you don't need to have the answers, you only need to know someone who does.

High achievers also know that networking means more opportunities, influence, and income. When you network properly, people want to work with you. The bigger your network, the more opportunities you become open to, which means more potential income and success. With bigger players in your network, you expand your influence because you become

“higher-power.” This leads to you being able to create opportunities if you aren’t satisfied with what you’re getting from your network, because people will begin to see you the same way you see celebrities. There are even situations where you are rewarded for introducing or connecting two people to help them solve each other’s problems. In those situations, a good networker is rewarded twice, once by each party, since you helped them both by connecting them to each other and they were both able to benefit from the introduction.

A good network also means time saved. The young people who focus on making more money to achieve their goals typically take longer to achieve them. The young people who focus on building their network in addition to making money cut their learning curve in half, saving time by learning from professionals who have proven that they know what they’re talking about and survived their journey already.

As I changed my frames and saw networking differently, I began to think differently and feel differently about networking as a vehicle to success. I also began to think differently about my ability to reach my goals faster with the right people in my corner. This caused me to behave differently. I didn’t have to worry about controlling my outward attitude or behaviors because my entire mindset had changed. It all started with controlling and changing my frames. I didn’t have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behavior; I was filled with wonder and motivation, determined to discover just how far I could go if I included millionaires, billionaires, and celebrities into my network.

As I developed a more well-rounded respect for networking, I had to wonder: what would have happened if I’d had a high-quality man in my network when I had my near-death experience? Maybe he could have taught me that the way my friends treated me at that time was nothing personal. How much pain and suffering could I have avoided? How much time could I have put into becoming more high-quality myself instead of asking so many “why” questions that I never got the answers to? All so those suicidal thoughts could have been a lot easier to overcome if I had known that the world played by rules I hadn’t followed. I had to find out the hard way years after dealing with my emotional trauma.

My mother told me to never tell anyone about the things that went on in the house. “What happens in the house, stays in the house,” she would say. She told me that if I ever told anyone about the abuse, they would call child services and take me away from my family. I would never see anyone I knew again.

It was because I believed I couldn’t reach out to anyone that I thought I had to suffer alone. Every day that I had to suffer through my pain wondering why the people in my life treated me so cruelly was a day I could’ve given up on life and made the choice that I could never come back from.

We think about networks solely in terms of how our network is our net worth. We tend to only focus on the monetary gain we can get from connections. Rarely do we remember that

our network is a connection of people who are human beings first, and therefore the people we add to our network can help us in more ways than only our career goals. They can help us remove doubt, overcome pain, and move closer toward a life of overall satisfaction.

Your network is, at its most fundamental, a web of relationships. And, any good, supportive group of relationships can help you with more than only your acquisition of wealth.

So, as you embark on your networking journey, I urge you to consider adding people who can also help you in life as well as in business. The keys to the good life are health, wealth, love, and happiness. I recommend you begin with health, finding anyone who can help you get in better physical shape, improve your mental and emotional health, and develop a healthier and more positive attitude towards life.

Giving special attention and care to your overall health will help you in more ways than only networking. Then and only then, should you focus on the other three keys to the good life.

Action Steps:

1. Keep in mind that if you want to change your situation, you first have to change yourself. To change yourself effectively, you first have to change your perceptions (frames/lens with which you view the world). (Covey, 2004)
2. Take the time discover your “why”
 - In this chapter, you discovered your “why.” But, if you’re still on the fence on what stage of “why” you’re in, take the time to journal using the “mind dump” strategy.
 - Dump out all of your thoughts onto paper, doing your best to use your journal to sort out and organize the thoughts in your head. Then, compare your thoughts to each “why” level to determine which stage you’re on.
3. Use this chapter’s information to reframe accordingly.
 - If you’ve been a taker (competitive) for most of your networking journey and would now like to network using a collaborative frame, reframe accordingly whenever you’re networking.
 - By “reframe,” I mean that if you catch yourself slipping into the old habit of being the only one winning in the interaction, find a way to help everyone win. Find a way to walk away after having already given something to the other person.

Step Three

Specialize the Basic Guidelines

In the previous chapter, we covered the mindsets that will be most helpful to your networking journey. (Be sure to complete the action steps at the end of the last chapter before moving on to this one!)

You may be struggling at this point, but stay focused and stay the course. If it helps, keep track of your daily victories on a piece of paper. As you advance throughout the day, log each victory. If you went for it and did your best to exercise, log it as a victory. If you gave your best effort to learn something new about power dynamics, put it as a victory. If you accepted a failure as a learning opportunity, write it down as a victory. Review your victories every night before you go to bed and finish your day by reminding yourself that you are making progress and moving forward.

This chapter is all about the basic networking principles that are most beneficial if you're looking to achieve your goals as well as long-term success. This chapter will contain principles and rules to networking that are helpful to anyone with a more short-term agenda, but is geared more toward those who are looking to develop long-lasting, consistent success.

"In the short run, in an artificial social system such as school, you may be able to get by if you learn how to manipulate the man-made rules, to 'play the game.' In most one-shot or short-lived human interactions, you can get by and make favorable impressions through charm and skill and pretending to be interested in other people's hobbies. You can pick up quick, easy techniques that may work in short-term situations. But secondary traits alone have no permanent worth in long-term relationships." (Covey, 2004)

You need a strong, clear focus on principles if you want any hope of maintaining long-lasting connections for long-lasting success. Techniques are great, but techniques aren't always the answer because techniques change depending on the situation. Principles are an unchanging reference point you can refer back to whenever you're unsure of what to do, what to say, or how to act.

The principles you will learn about in this chapter are not suggestions rooted in teachings found in religion. The principles in this book are independent of any specific religion, doctrine, or other socio-cultural system from theology. These principles are unwavering aspects of the human condition, firm ingredients to the consciousness that exists in all human beings, regardless of any social conditioning. They are the fundamental principles of human

effectiveness concentrated toward the art of networking. And, it's always good to start with the basics.

The Circle of Influence Rule (Voogd, 2020)⁸

Always be in charge of your circle of influence by managing it on a constant basis. We have found ourselves in a world where some men and women in their forties and fifties are going broke, while some teenagers are making six or seven figures. Due to technology, age has become a less relevant factor in success. Today, success is more about who leverages their power and, as we previously discussed, one form of power is information.

If they have something you don't have, chances are it's because they know something you do not yet know. One of the most underrated rules to success that some people think they fully understand but really don't (or do know about but don't apply) is to keep your circle of influence in check.

Young professionals will look to older adults for guidance because adults have years of experience. But, if you look to a professional who's older than you for guidance and that particular adult hasn't improved their income or success in twenty years, then they don't have twenty years of experience. They have one year of experience repeated twenty times. This means that you could get more value, knowledge, and experience (in other words, better information) from working with another young professional who's closer to your age that has seen consistent growth and a steady increase in success.

Screen the people in your social circle using your goals as a filter. Your circle of influence is the most important key to your success in life and in business. These are the three elements to your circle of influence:

1.) Support

This category is for family, friends, and the people you hold day-to-day interactions with.

Who is in your support system? The people you keep in your social circle on a regular basis will make or break your ability to achieve your goals. How many millionaires do you talk to on a daily basis?

Bestselling author and entrepreneur Peter Voogd said, "If you want to become a millionaire, talk to billionaires. You'll get there quicker."

⁸ Information regarding the Circle of Influence Rule provided by author and entrepreneur Peter Voogd. See References List section for more.

I grew up with people who said, “Yeah, but I have my whole life to make money.” I grew up with people who delayed building their wealth and focused more on partying. Any money they did have they either flaunted it or spent it on expensive clothes and video games. This social circle wasn’t the best motivator for me to stay on track to achieving my goals, so I cut out the people who didn’t align with my vision for the future and for myself.

As your vision gets bigger, this circle should get smaller.

2.) Peers

These are the people you work with. Who do you bounce ideas with at work? You need what is called a “mastermind network.”

These are the people you brainstorm with and exchange ideas with. Ideally, your peers should be people you would trade places with in terms of lifestyle. These are the people who have wisdom and information that can help you get to where you’re trying to go. You discover more about your goals and the best ways to reach them through a “mastermind session” with them.

Imagine having a billionaire in your network. Now, your peers don’t necessarily need to be that high-power, but that’s when you realize that you’re really only one connection away from achieving your dream lifestyle. If you want someone like that in your network, you want them as a peer.

This element of your circle of influence is built around the concept that if you hang around five millionaires every day, eventually you’re going to become the sixth. Keep that in mind when evaluating your peers.

3.) Mentor

Who can you learn from that you would trade places with in terms of success and lifestyle that can also cut your learning curve in half?

You’re not only learning from how this person gained their success; you’re learning from this person’s failures so that you don’t repeat them. And, so you don’t take longer to get to where you want to go. Learning from your own mistakes is good, but can be costly and time consuming. Learning from your own past mistakes and the mistakes of others who have already reached the end of the road you’re on can help you save time, which is how your learning curve is shortened.

Mentors give you the education, guidance, and the straight-talk to call you out when necessary (respectfully, of course). They will help you think outside of the box and expand the box you've been thinking in. The best part of all of this is that you can be mentored online. With today's technology, there is no need for you to be mentored in person. You can get even more time with your mentor in our current world because it's much easier to meet virtually. You don't need to schedule around both of your calendars for a block of time in the day that works for both of you every time you're ready to learn something new from your mentor.

The Immersion vs. Maintenance Rule (Anthony, 2016)

"Immersion is the concept of completely engaging in a certain activity for the sake of improving yourself. This is beneficial, because it allows you to focus *all of your resources* on improving a single skill set or facet of your life." (Anthony, 2016)

"Maintenance is the concept of doing just enough to 'maintain' your current level of proficiency or balance in a certain facet of your life." (Anthony, 2016)

As you learned from the Circle of Influence Rule, it's best to manage your social circle, which means periodically evaluating who's good and who's bad for your personal and career goals. As you weed people out—as your vision gets bigger and your circle gets smaller—you may feel an urge to start networking more frequently to rebuild your social life, since you've gotten rid of so many bad apples (most of whom were people you talked to every day).

Those initial feelings of loneliness are normal and the desire to network and build relationships all of the time to get rid of those feelings are completely understandable, but be careful. There has to be a balance.

While the power of money is hugely overestimated in terms of how big a factor it plays in your ability to achieve your goals, it's still important. To immerse yourself fully into your job, internship, or whatever it is you do that makes you money while, at the same time, immersing yourself into networking constantly could cause burnout.

As an example, if you choose to immerse yourself fully in the work that generates an income for you, working two jobs, working sixty hours a week or whatever the case may be, it's best to keep your current network on maintenance. Follow up with them every now and then and stay in touch.

Let's now say, for instance, that you choose to immerse yourself fully into networking. You're spending money on tools to help build your social media profiles, attending networking events, constantly sending cold emails and cold calling people you want to connect with, and so on. At that point, it would be best to put your other work on maintenance.

You have to have both immersion and maintenance if you want any chance of being successful. The man who does not immerse himself in anything can end up a jack of all trades and a master of none. However, the man who immerses himself in two or more things overexerts himself and collapses mentally or physically before he can achieve any goal or accomplishment worth achieving.

The WIIFT Rule (Buffalmano, 2017)⁹

“WIIFT” stands for “What’s In It For Them.” To understand this, we look to social and power dynamics where we find a term called “the law of social exchange.” Put simply, the law of social exchange is the theory that social relations are based on exchanges of value.

The three major byproducts of this law are that (Buffalmano, 2017):

1. To get what you want, you have to give others what they want
2. The most popular and powerful people are those with the most to give
3. Strong relationships have a balance of give and take (or at least, the people in them must feel they are balanced)

This is how the “fake it ‘til you make it” concept works. People can fake being high-power (having lots of money, having lots of followers on social media, etc.). And, when high-power individuals perceive these types of people (who are faking) as high-power, they rationalize that they can create a balanced relationship with them. (That is, as opposed to creating a relationship with someone who is low-power.) In a relationship where one is high-power and the other is low-power, the one lower in power typically spends more time taking in the relationship since they have less to give.

Faking can be done ethically and unethically. Those who have actual power—who are actually high-value—but who do not have the traits of a high-quality individual are perceived as low-power anyway, and therefore miss out on opportunities for networking and collaboration. The millionaire who dresses and acts like the homeless beggar does not have the same networking advantage as the millionaire who dresses and acts like a charming billionaire. In that regard, faking can be done ethically to improve how others perceive you and can open doors that would otherwise be closed.

I hope you see now why it’s so important to be perceived as high-power for success at networking. As a high-quality person, you can offer value not only in the forms of money or status, but in the forms of information and personality. High-quality men invest in themselves and are almost always learning. They are also emotionally intelligent, which develops their

⁹ Information regarding WIIFT provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

personality into one people want to be around. You can use being a high-quality man to balance out the difference in value between you and the high-power professionals you're networking with. And, the same dynamics apply for high-quality women who want to close the gap between her and the people she might be networking with who are further ahead of her in life.

Here is an example that further illustrates my point. How willing are you to start a conversation with a smelly, homeless drug addict in tattered clothes? That is the extreme example of the law of social exchange with someone who is low-power (at least that's how we perceive them. That same homeless drug addict could be an undercover millionaire and we wouldn't know). The point is, the relationship is off-balance in terms of value—unless you're also a homeless drug addict.

“Collaborative frames without power will be seen as a kind of weakness and people might try to take advantage of you. That's why the goal is not just to collaborate, but to seek fruitful collaboration from a position of strength. You make yourself into someone who can put value on the table of whatever negotiation in life you go through and then seek others who also have plenty to put on that table and who are willing to collaborate and go for win-win.”
(Buffalmano, 2020)

To further explain, if you were to find yourself in a situation where that same smelly, homeless drug addict is looking to collaborate with you or do a win-win deal, you may look at that deal as more of a win for him than a win for you, since he is so low-power. There are people who will see this “win-win” deal and use it to take advantage of the poor homeless man. They view his willingness to collaborate as a sign of weakness, since he's not in the best position to be negotiating for anything.

Especially when cold emailing or cold calling people (reaching out to people you've never spoken with or met before), it's best to see the interaction as an exchange of value. If you don't, you put yourself at risk of coming across as awkward and even annoying. WIIFT means focusing on the other person's possible wants and interests.

Examples of good WIIFT moves (Buffalmano, 2020):

1. Invite them to lunch or dinner and make it obvious you'd treat them
2. Tell them you'd be happy to pick them up at the airport
3. Propose that you will get them into some cool places or clubs that you have exclusive access to

Common mistakes (Buffalmano, 2020):

1. **"I wanna pick your brain"** = communicates "I want you to give me your time and sit there and answer all of my questions while I give you nothing."
2. **"Let's have a coffee"** = you usually grab coffee in the morning. Here, you're communicating that, "In the middle of the day, right when you're probably working, let's go out and have a casual conversation while I ask you a ton of questions. And just in case I decide to pay, it will be cheap for me (that's what your input is probably worth, anyway)."

As you can see, the balance in these last two examples are off in terms of the exchange of value. You're using phrases that highlight what you get out of the relationship, but do not take into consideration their interests or what they might want. It's an unfair exchange and can make you come across as someone who doesn't get how relationships or networking works. High-quality people know power dynamics, so they understand and implement this rule—which is another reason why they are typically perceived as high-power and have greater success in networking in the first place.

Also bear in mind that high-quality men stick to their values. If you do something that violates their values, such as aiming to create a relationship with them where you're only taking, then you've soured your relationship with that high-quality man regardless of how high-power you are.

High-quality men don't care too much about how high-power you are. High-quality men stick to their ideas of right and wrong and use their knowledge of power dynamics to effectively create fairness in their lives. They understand that we teach people how to treat us and will choose to uphold their beliefs, morals, and values regardless of your net worth.

A high-quality man compromising his values for you would be the equivalent of teaching you that it's okay to cross his moral boundaries whenever you see fit simply because you have a lot of money. And, a high-quality man simply won't do that. Instead, he'll treat himself well and with self-respect so that others will be prompted to treat him well and with respect. If you treat him unfairly, you're asking him to set a precedent that it's okay to disrespect him. And, a truly high-quality man will make the hard choice and draw a line in the sand.

It's smart to network with high-quality men. If they aren't already high-value, they have all of the traits that will lead them to acquire resources and status soon. So, if you want high-quality men in your network, be sure to keep the relationship fair and in balance.

The Fairness Principle

I hope that now, after reading the WIFT rule, you're starting to realize how much truth there is to Chris Voss's words when he said, "Everything in life is a negotiation."

The Fairness Principle is important not only for the law of social exchange, but for collaborative frames. Use WIIFT to make sure everyone in the interaction walks away from a win-win situation that you helped to create.

“Principles are guidelines for human conduct that are proven to have enduring, permanent value. They’re fundamental. They’re essentially unarguable because they are self-evident. One way to quickly grasp the self-evident nature of principles is to simply consider the absurdity of attempting to live an effective life based on their opposites.” (Covey, 2004)

I doubt that anyone seriously believes that networking by taking as much as you possibly can and leaving everyone else with as little as possible is a solid foundation for long-lasting success in life or in business.

The law of social exchange is used to ensure fairness and is not to be confused with the “law of reciprocity.” The law of reciprocity states that the more you give the more you will receive, but this is not always the case.

For example, networking expert Bob Littell encourages the concept of the “Irrefutable Law of Referral Reciprocity” which means that the more you refer others, the more you will be referred. However, observation as well as real-world evidence (and my own personal experience) has shown that there are circumstances that cause this “law” to lose its effectiveness (Stotz & Littell).

1. If you're actually still networking within a competitive frame (a taker's mindset). Even if you don't realize it, you may be putting some strings attached—I'll scratch your back, but only if you scratch mine. Any time you add conditions to it, it eliminates the feeling of obligation to give on the other person's part.
2. When you network within a collaborative frame, you believe in win-win. This means that at some points you will give so the other side can win. What do you think happens when you give to takers? They take and take and take.
3. When someone makes an introduction for our benefit (and this is especially the case if it's a powerful introduction), we tend to take ownership of that new relationship. As the saying goes, “We often forget the girl who brought us to the dance.” For me, I think of this as the equivalent of someone scoring a goal in soccer, the crowd going wild, and everyone forgetting the player who made the pass for that goal to happen.

The Integrity and Honesty Principle

Integrity and honesty. “They create the foundation of trust which is essential to cooperation and long-term personal and interpersonal growth.” (Covey, 2004)

Faking it until you make it is sometimes dishonest if it's overdone. Becoming a high-quality individual is different from faking it until you make it. High-quality people have all of the traits that are the highest predictors of success and that pave the way to acquiring resources as well as status. Therefore, in many ways, they are high-value.

Faking it until you make it dishonestly and with a lack of integrity would be lying about how many followers you have on social media, posting pictures on social media of stacks of money giving the illusion you're rich when, in reality, you pulled those images from a website, and other actions of that nature that inflate your value dishonestly. These methods of "faking it" may work in the short-term, but have serious consequences in the long-term. For long-term success, focus more on networking with integrity and honesty, only "faking it until you make it" ethically.

You can appear higher value than you are to attract bigger fish without dishonesty by leveraging and improving the qualities people usually notice about you upon first impression:

1. Attractiveness/Beauty
2. Style
3. Physical fitness
4. Body language / Nonverbal cues
5. Posture
6. Grooming
7. How you walk and move

With an improvement in each of these categories, people will perceive you as higher value and think to themselves that a relationship with you would be balanced. This leads to higher networking success.

The Service Principle

You'll notice that the majority of these principles are about being less of a networker and more of a human being. You're a human being first and should exhibit the qualities of a human first and foremost, such as being compassionate, thoughtful, and giving.

If you want to build connections with people you have to do just that: connect. One way to connect with others is by giving value to them.

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." - Maya Angelou

Following the Service Principle means serving. The best way to do that is by giving value that makes others feel good. Congratulate them on their promotion or their birthday. A

collaborative relationship is about giving value and building each other up. A competitive relationship contains a lot of value-subtracting behavior, such as bragging, lying about your accomplishments, trying to hog attention, or using others for unfair social climbing (making yourself look better by pushing others down). These are things that might make you feel good, but not the other person in the relationship or interaction.

As much as this principle is about serving others, there are definitely times when you should serve yourself. A part of the WIIFT rule is taking into account the other person's interests. So, it's insensitive and unwise to assume that the other side is interested in digging around the internet and your social media to figure out what you bring to the table. Therefore, a part of following the WIIFT rule is self-promoting in a way that signals to the other side you have value without coming across as crude or narcissistic.

When some people follow the Service Principle, they network with a "go-giver" attitude and can make the mistake of giving too much. An example that illustrates this point well is a popular habitude (an image that forms leadership habits and attitudes) used by Dr. Tim Elmore:

"The starving baker spends so much time baking bread for others he forgets to eat and starves himself. It looks noble and is noble to keep giving, giving, giving. But just like I need to lead myself before I lead others, I need to feed myself before I feed others." (Stotz & Elmore)

There's a difference between selfishness and self-care. Promoting your strengths and areas of value is caring for yourself and your career. If you keep quiet, you risk losing out on valuable opportunities because only open mouths get fed.

However, as a general rule, it's best to think of the service principle in terms of serving others, not only serving yourself.

The Growth Principle

The Growth Principle is about accepting learning opportunities, even if those opportunities require you to fail in order to learn. If you're afraid to reach out to that CEO or celebrity but you know you would like to connect with them, do it. Accept that opportunity to learn and grow.

Remember, even if you're a master networker, you're not a networker. First and foremost, you're always a learner. That's who you are. The rest follows closely behind.

It's only when you accept that you're a learner first that you can have the self-esteem to network with an antifragile ego. It all starts with being willing to claim and own your identity as a learner.

You want to call that billionaire? Do it. You're not a networker, you're a learner. That means that no matter what happens, as long as you're practicing that antifragile ego you started building in Step Two—as long as you're a learner—you're proud of yourself. You take pride not in making perfect cold calls, but in having the strength of character (the courage) to make those calls even when they're far from perfect.

The Patience Principle

Patience is a virtue. Patience is also an important principle to remember if you want to be successful at networking.

Let's take an example. Let's say that you sent a text to someone you're interested in that you can't seem to get out of your head. Let's also say that you know they read your message but still haven't responded after fifteen minutes. You decide to be patient. A half an hour goes by with no response.

So, what do you do? You quadruple-text them. That's right. You text them three more messages.

What do you think happens when they hear their phone going off? What do you think goes through their head when they realize that all three of those rings were not from the entertaining group chat they're in with their friends, but from you?

"They back-rationalize that if they haven't replied so far it's because they didn't like you." (Buffalmano, 2019) Now your chances are next to ruined.

This is close to the same result that impatience will have while networking. If you send three to four emails out of nervousness or any other reason that doesn't involve a life or death emergency, it will not work in your favor.

Be patient. They'll appreciate it more. The last thing you can expect them to appreciate is an inbox full of "Why didn't you return my call" emails.

Like I said, these principles are about being a human first and a networker second. Be a compassionate human being and give them the benefit of the doubt. An example of the right response would be to assume that something came up. The right next action would be to reach out to them at a later date with *one* email, asking if your previous email got lost in their inbox.

As a side note, if they don't respond right away, sometimes that's good. It means they're busy. Anyone who is always available with lots of free time is typically not that high-power. That could be a sign that they would be a taker in the relationship. You can tell who's really worth your time by how busy they are.

The word “busy” has three different categories to it (Scarlett & Bet-David, 2020)¹⁰:

1. “The first kind of busy is the fake kind of busy. Nobody wants to do business with someone who has a lot of free time on their hands. If you were a potential customer for a business and you were looking to connect with the business owner, that business owner having a lot of free time would indicate that they probably don’t have too many customers they’re busy taking care of. That might be a bad sign for you. Why don’t they have any clients? Why are they always so available? Then, to make up for their lack of clients, they go around telling everyone they’re busy and make up fake appointments, so you have to fit into their supposedly ‘busy schedule’. (Fake busy is a tactic that can help you from day one, but you can only do that for so long.)”
2. “Then there is actual, genuine ‘busy.’ When they are really busy versus fake busy, you can feel the difference. You will feel it and see it in how they interact and carry themselves.”
3. “The third type is when they are *extremely* busy. Say they used to meet with you for an hour and a half, but now they only have thirty minutes. They used to have one assistant; now you notice they have three. They do this so they can focus more on what matters to them. All the other tasks they used to do themselves, they have moved to somebody else below their current position. Their value (power and success) has gone up and, as a result, so has their level of ‘busy.’”

In other words, a part of you should want it to be hard to create the relationship with them that you’re looking for, because if you manage to do so, you’ve made the cut. Everyone else who couldn’t persevere lost the chance to build that relationship, but you didn’t.

If it’s too easy to build a relationship with someone because they contact you back right away as if you’re the most important thing in their entire schedule, you should be concerned about what their true intentions might be. What causes them to be so invested in building a relationship with you when you’ve hardly had to put in any effort on your end? Not only is it a sign that they may be low-value and could end up being a taker if their schedule is so free, but if they’re not even going to pretend to be busy (or fake busy), what does that say about what they might want?

Avoid getting upset when someone doesn’t respond right away. Be glad. It’s a sign you’re probably networking with someone worth knowing.

Action Steps:

¹⁰ Information regarding the three different categories of “busy” provided by author and entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David. See References List section for more.

Circle of Influence “Support” Steps:

1. Evaluate your support network. Ascertain whether they build you up or tear you down
 - Do they help you advance toward your goals? Do you walk away from conversations with them feeling emotionally good and capable of doing what you put your mind to, or not?
2. Create a “Make It or Break It” list
 - Make a list of the five people that you feel like you need to keep around regardless of if they make you feel like you’re incapable of achieving your goals. These are the people who might be negative but who you really want to keep in your life. Title this list your “maintenance friends.”
 - Make another list of the five people in your life who most closely share your vision, your goals, etc. These people are encouraging, supportive, and positive. These people motivate you, help you think bigger, and give you solutions. Title this list your “growth friends.” You don’t need to know these people personally; they can be people you’ve only heard of and plan on befriending soon.
3. Lower the time you spend with your Maintenance Friends and increase the time you spend with your Growth friends
 - Right here is tough. Right here is where you need to ask yourself if you’re willing to do “whatever it takes.” And, more practice internalizing your antifragile ego can help you cope with the sudden change in social life you’ll experience if you choose to follow these action steps.
 - Remember, the pillars to the good life are health, wealth, love, and happiness—and health always comes first. It may be dangerous for your mental health to suddenly cut everyone off whom you feel may be holding you back. So, gradually and slowly shift your time with your maintenance friends to your growth friends. Avoid making any major or rash decisions out of sudden surges of motivation.

Circle of Influence “Peers” Steps:

1. Evaluate your peers against who you can bounce ideas with; who gives valuable feedback; who you can share strategies, tips, and tricks with; and who can provide you with accountability and support.
2. Connect more with the peers you feel are an ideal fit for your network.

Circle of Influence “Mentor” Steps:

1. Wait until Step Five, where we go more in depth on the mentor category.

Step Four

Test the Networking Strategies

If you've gotten this far without giving up, kudos to you, I like your willingness to commit to this process. It's not uncommon to surrender in the face of a daunting mission, so congratulations on continuing your work through all the action steps.

The last chapter was all about setting you up with the best (and most effective) networking rules and principles so you can be most effective when you implement the strategies within this chapter.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others." - African Proverb

Now, we get into the good stuff: strategies to connect with others so you can go farther than you ever thought possible!

Each networking situation may call for a different networking strategy. There is no one size fits all approach to connecting with anyone at any time. Luckily, there's a process you can use to formulate and craft your own networking strategy as the situation calls for it. This process for designing your own networking strategy for your target connections is called the "AIM" approach.

1. Align Your Approach
2. Identify Your Method
3. Make Your Strategy

Author, Zig Ziglar, has a saying that goes, "If you aim at nothing, you will hit it [nothing] every time." And, especially in the case of networking, that's true. So, this "AIM" process will guide your aim toward the right target connections and help you craft a strategy to build a real, lasting relationship with them.

1.) Align Your Approach

The first step is to line up your approach. Know what approach you're going to take to the situation before you find yourself in it. And, as previously explained, for you to have greater success in networking, you need to be perceived as high-power. Therefore, your approach should achieve creating that perception for you.

For the most part, you can behave one of two ways while networking: dominant or submissive. Both have their perks, but in most networking situations you want to be dominant because dominance is power measured in terms of strength. And, people who are high-power want to network with other people who are high-power. That way, there is more opportunity for collaboration where both parties are giving and there is less room for the chance of a “one is giving and one is taking” relationship.

High-power individuals seek out other high-power individuals to network with, in order to make sure the relationship they would be creating is balanced. So, one way to advertise that you’re high-power is by behaving dominantly.

The problem with behaving submissively while networking is that “submissive body language and behavior communicates that we accept the dominance of someone else over the environment and/or over ourselves. In a nutshell, submissive behavior relinquishes control and gives power to others.” (Buffalmano, 2021)

So, if you behave too submissively while interacting with professionals, they’ll assume that they have more power than you. That leads to them perceiving you as high-warmth and low-power according to the stereotype content model that we reviewed in Step One. And, we already know that’s not the bracket you want to be in.

So, you should be behaving dominantly while networking. Yet, different people display and advertise their power (strength) in different ways, so there are many styles of dominance for you to choose from:

Styles of Dominance (Buffalmano, 2021)¹¹:

1. Physical Dominance: The Meatheads
 - “Meatheads exert dominance through the (unstated) threat of physical violence. It’s not uncommon to find executives and CEOs that present a layer of physical intimidation.” However, this style is low-warmth and ineffective for networking.
2. Holier Than Thou: The Smart Alec
 - “Smart alocs leverage knowledge to portray authority. Smart alocs carry themselves with a ‘better than you’ attitude. They act aloof and use big words, slow speech rates, personal distance and quotes to show off how smart they are. Their strategy for social power is elitism and superiority.” I’m sure you can see how smart alocs leverage the stereotype content model by presenting themselves as high-power this way. “Since we respect intellectuals in our society, Smart Alecs also have easier access to the elites of power,” hence the elitism and superiority behavior.

¹¹ Information regarding different styles of dominance provided by sociologist Lucio Buffalmano. See References List section for more.

3. Masters of the Universe: The MTU
 - “This style mixes physical aggression and confidence with lots of resources. Masters of The Universe (MTUs) temper their physical aggression with suits and the trappings of more civilized social power. They think of themselves as both smart and strong, and they have the confidence of those who believe that nothing and nobody can stop them.” You are likely to run into a couple of these types on your networking journey, because these are the guys who most reliably reach top dog positions in their lines of work. After all, mixing civilized aggression, confidence, and an unrelenting focus on making money is one of the most reliable ways for dominant individuals to get rich—and that’s exactly what these guys do.
4. Attention Hoggers: The Jesters
 - “Attention hoggers dominate by having the spotlight always on them. Attention hoggers are high energy, loud, and mischievous. Their weapon of choice to dominate others is social embarrassment. They have the power to play outside the rules and the freedom of embarrassing both themselves and the people around.” If you find yourself networking with any celebrities who are comedians, you will typically find that they use this style of dominance, maintaining the spotlight on them as they command the attention of the room with a funny story and possibly make light fun of the people around.
5. Flash and Confidence: The Upcoming Young Gun
 - “Mixes physical threat with attention-grabbing flash. It’s a style suited for those who are not yet at the top. It’s the style of the new kid on the block. These guys talk loud and big, dress snazzy, aim to the top and always make a big show.” If you find yourself networking with rappers who have not yet reached celebrity status or whose music is not yet well known, you may find that this style is common. They may be wearing flashy jewelry and have little to no reservations when it comes to physically threatening anyone who does not consider them a “real rapper.”
6. Flashy Trendsetters: The Dandies
 - “Notoriety is the dandies’ power. They feed on people’s attention and their reward is their attention. Dandies reward with their presence and punish with their disinterest. They are artists, hipsters, VIPs, dandies, fashion stars, and trend-setters.” You’re likely to come across these types if you’re networking with high-power celebrities.
7. Social Skills Power: The Charmers
 - “Their power is social seduction. This is the prototype of the suave man. It’s versatile and adapts to different environments, it’s sexually attractive and makes lots of friends without many enemies.” There are very few cons to this style of dominance and it is the typical go-to for master networkers.
8. Mission-Driven Power: The Charismatic
 - “‘Follow me, I know the way.’ Charismatic leaders deeply believe in something. They are on a mission, they are going somewhere. And they want you to join

them.” You’re likely to come across a charismatic leader or two on your networking journey if you’re networking with high-quality, high-value individuals.

9. Sexual Power: The Seducers

- “Seducers use sexual lure and sexual energy to influence others. They are like the charmers, but on steroids. Sexual steroids.” This style of dominance is more common than you might think. Remember, dominance is connected to power and power is the measure to which an individual can get what they want. Seducers use sex as a lure to hook in a big fish—a high-quality or high-value individual. You may notice the use of this style to gain other favors, such as seducers using this style to book modeling gigs. Refrain from using this style as a networking strategy; it can be very costly in the long run, as I’m sure you can imagine.

10. Cold and Distant: The Cold Blooded

- “Their power is social pressure: they unsettle all other ‘normal’ people. They could smile at you now, kill you in half an hour and not feel a thing. They don’t smile, don’t joke, and talk little.” This style is very low-warmth and does not make it easy to create friendships. You’re likely to have a very hard time networking if you behave like a stereotypical mob boss.

11. Been There, Done That: The Dominant Archetype

- “They exude the calm and confidence of someone who’s been at the top for a long time. With little to prove and long experience behind them, these guys are the ultimate archetypes of dominance. They mix the knowledge of their long experience with the coercive power of their ‘goons’ and the power of the vast resources they accumulated. They get people to move for them with the smallest gesture while they themselves move little and slowly.” If you spend enough time networking with financially successful CEOs, you’re bound to come across one or two of these.

When I was cracking jokes to get everyone to like me, I was playing the Jester style of dominance. When I became a bully, I was a meathead most of the time, only switching back to the Jester style whenever life with everyone afraid of me got too lonely. This severely diminished my social power and is far from the best option for building solid relationships.

There are also other styles of dominance not included in this list and yet you may have already seen a style of dominance that you like. The common favorite is the Been There, Done That: The Dominant Archetype (DA) since that would present you to the world as someone who is already at the top. However, using this style of dominance without having earned those stripes is misleading and could leave a bad taste in the mouth of those you connect with who realize that you’re not as successful as your attitude led them to believe.

The most common dominance style of master networkers is the Charmer because the other styles have cons that prevent effective relationship building. For example, Masters of the

Universe tend to be narcissistic and build their confidence on materialism, while Smart Alecs are unrelatable and many secretly resent them.

2.) Identify Your Method (Bet-David, 2016)¹²

Now that you've chosen your style of dominance (let's say you chose the Charmer), it's time to choose your networking method. Different professionals whom you want to connect with may require different methods.

Networking is about building relationships. Therefore, for explanatory reasons, I'll simplify the concept of each method by defining them in the context of a man (the charming networker) looking to build a relationship with a woman (the target connection).

1. The Flirt

- This is the most common method used by charmers. This is the man—the charmer—who has a way with words.

2. The Detective

- This is the charmer who, when he likes a girl, does research to find out everything he possibly can about the girl he likes. He researches all of her interests, passions, and things in this world that she loves. This way, when the time comes for conversation, he already has a lot of information he can use to help build a connection. (These types of networkers are incredibly effective.)

3. The Promoter

- This method is all about self-promotion. When this charmer sees a girl he is interested in, he befriends all of that girl's friends. He presents himself as an incredible guy to all of the friends of the girl he likes. He treats her friends well, takes care of them, and may even go so far as to become friends with the parents of the girl he likes. Now, all of the people in her life who hold the most influence over her are telling her what an amazing guy this charmer is. With that, she decides to give the charmer a chance and the opportunity to build a connection is created.

4. The Success

- This is the charmer who might fit into the high-warmth but low-power bracket and is currently the person no one cares about. He understands that he needs to become higher power to get the girl he likes and decides to become so successful he can't be ignored. He aims to acquire enough power to fit into the high-warmth high-power bracket so he can be the guy everyone wants to be around and get that date with the girl he likes. (This is the charming networker who's so successful, everyone is talking about his success.)

5. The Man

¹² Information regarding networking methods provided by author and entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David. See References List section for more.

- This is the charmer who understands that before people see him, they see his reputation. He takes care to consistently create and maintain collaborative relationships with the people in his life by giving value. He may give that value in the form of encouragement or compliments, or even in something simple and small such as a smile. He does this consistently, because he understands that there is no value in having an old reputation. His charm loses its power if he's recognized as the guy who used to be good, so he continually renews his reputation by giving value on a regular basis. There are no competitive relationships between him and others that involve value-subtracting behavior such as "I'm better than you" or "I told you so." On top of that, he has a reputation for being amazing with other girls, spiking the curiosity of the girl he likes and getting her to decide to see for herself what he's like. (As said by Mark Pagel in his book *Wired for Culture: Origins of the Human Social Mind*, "A good reputation can be used to buy cooperation from people, even people we have never met.")

6. The Comedian

- This is the charmer who can make the girl he likes laugh. (This is similar to the Jester style of dominance, but with less competition. By less competition, I mean to say that this networker can make people laugh without having to embarrass others. By operating this way, he maintains his charming qualities.)

Generally, you'll find yourself using more than one method at a time to connect with someone. An example is mixing the Flirt with the Detective. You may research a celebrity you want to connect with, find their number, and then call them. Upon calling them you use the Flirt method. You have the social skills of a charmer and a way with words that makes building of the connection feel natural over the phone for both of you, allowing you to add them to your network.

3.) Make Your Strategy

By now, you've gotten a handle on how the best networkers approach networking. It's time to start thinking more in terms of networking strategies that are a bit more actionable for your method of choice.

There are hundreds of networking books out there with hundreds of strategies. Some focus on teaching you how to build your personal brand, which would be using the networking method The Success. You may have seen some that teach how to network as The Flirt but are curated more toward introverts who struggle with social situations.

I believe that every situation is different. Ideally, you should oscillate between different networking methods as the situation calls for it. I have outlined a general strategy that will get you started without confusing you too much with advanced material.

Step 1: Play The Detective

Research your target connection. If you're attending a networking event, research who will be showing up and which of the attendees you want to connect with. Many events have a pre-attendee list that you can use to figure out who's going to be there, who you want to meet, and who you *have* to meet (Sosnick, 2021).

As a pro tip, it would be wise to consider adding the event organizer to your list of people you have to meet because they're the ones who determine whether or not you're invited back (Sosnick, 2021).

Then, make a list of those names of people you want to meet and people you have to meet and do a thorough review of all of their social media profiles. Make notes on anything you have in common to prepare you for the networking ahead. (What's their favorite book? Who's their favorite sports team? What ethnicity are they?)

Step 2: Connect on a Personal Level

It's good to connect on a personal level with the people you meet, especially if you're networking with high-value or high-quality individuals.

We as human beings each have the capacity to be bad or good, takers or collaborators. Different circumstances and mindsets will determine which side of us is drawn out—the win-win side or the taker side. People who are high-power are typically wary of takers and know that advertising their high-ranking position or revealing other indicators of their high value could unintentionally draw out the “Wow, I wonder what I could get from this guy,” side of people. That's one of the consequences of creating a circumstance where you start by connecting on a business level (which is connected to your income) instead of connecting on a personal level (which is connected to your humanity).

So, think of this step as a suggestion to avoid being too quick to talk about work with the people that you meet for the first time. It's rude, and a good way to be perceived as a taker looking to quickly assess their value to judge if they are worth talking to or not. Not a very charming thing to do.

Step 3: Converse to Find Commonalities

This is where playing The Flirt is going to come in handy. Converse with the goal of first finding things in common. You can use The Comedian for this as well, cracking jokes along the way.

I've heard some describe networking by saying, "Every first impression with a potential connection is an audition to be their friend." I completely understand where this statement is coming from. First impressions are fragile and hold sway over whether or not the target connection will be interested in continuing to build a relationship with you.

However, I don't entirely agree with this statement. It encourages a mindset where you feel the need to prove yourself to the professional you're looking to connect with (since it's an "audition"). In reality, if you're auditioning, they should be auditioning too. As a high-quality person, you should be qualifying others as good candidates to be in your network. If you and someone you're talking with don't have anything in common and don't see the world the same way (in the sense that you're a collaborator and they're a taker), then there's no sense in connecting with them, even if they want to connect with you.

Finding commonalities helps you to screen out your connections. But, it also helps you to shift your target connection into viewing you more like a peer and equal. Psychologically (and logically), we like people who are more like us more than we like people who are nothing like us. We want to connect with people we have something in common with.

So, whatever you do, avoid getting hung up on all of the differences you come across. This could cause you to miss the common ground you need to pull down the walls preventing you from doing business. Keep asking questions and include some clarifying questions to dig deeper, such as, "Can you tell me more about that?" or "How'd you come to that conclusion?" For example, if someone you're talking to tells you that they recently attended a big yoga event, even if you don't share their passion for yoga, you can say, "Wow, that's interesting. What was your key takeaway?"

On the conversational journey to finding common ground, you can start with the reason you both decided to attend the event at which you met and go from there.

A small word of advice: try not to ask too many "why" questions. In negotiations, the word "why" can make your question come across as accusatory. For example saying, "Why did you do it?" has a more negative undertone than "What caused you to do it?" Experiment with using the word "what" in place of "why." (Buffalmano, 2018)

That means that while networking, instead of saying, "So, why did you decide to come to this event?" you can ask, "So, what brings you to this event?"

Step 4: Learn More About Their Passions and Motivations

Continue sticking with either the Flirt or the Comedian for now. It's hard to use the other methods, such as The Success or The Man, at this particular stage in the strategy.

Ask them what they're excited about and learn more about their passions. This gives them the opportunity to steer the conversation toward something they really care about and want to talk about. Most people prefer to talk about the things that are important to them (MacLeod, 2016), and charming people focus on the people around them, not on themselves. "Charming people ask questions, love people, and converse well by talking little about themselves." (Buffalmano, 2018) Even though these charming qualities, such as loving people, can be faked (and have been by some politicians), be sure to ask questions with sincere curiosity and work to develop a genuine love for people.

A good question to ask might be, "What do you like most about your position?" Uncover their motivations, reveal their passions, and be sure to listen attentively to their response. If people don't feel like you're genuinely interested in them when you're asking these questions, they'll start to ask themselves what your true intentions might be and whether or not they can trust you. This is because you're acting incongruent. Your questions lead them to believe you're interested, but your attitude and behavior lead them to believe that you're not. Make sure you're congruent by being a good listener with an authentic curiosity so they will want to trust you.

When looking to uncover their passions and motivations, also keep in mind that asking the *right* questions is key. You can ask questions like, "When you've worked on a project that you felt really good about, what did you like about it?" Then, you can take the conversation a step further and ask them to teach you a little bit about whatever it is that they mentioned. The idea is to get them to expand on what it was that they liked about the project, because it invites them to share their passion with you in more detail and creates more opportunities for connection. By finding their motivations, you can find out what they care about and what's meaningful to them.

For example, if they felt good about a fundraiser for mental illness in children, asking them what they liked most about that project will get them to talk more about what they're passionate about. You can also ask them to teach you more about what most don't know about the effects of mental illness on children. You can dig into these topics that serve as key indicators of something that motivates them.

This will also help you later, when you need to think of ways to give value. Can you make a donation to that person's favorite charity in his name?

Step 5: Become Their Wingman

Let's say you're heading to a networking event. It can be easy to walk into that networking event trying to call to mind everything you've learned throughout this book and hope you're doing a good job networking. It can be easy to want to know how well you're doing on your networking journey, but let's now think about others who may be just starting out on their networking journeys. Have you ever thought that maybe there are people in the room who are brand new to networking, or otherwise not so good at it?

I won't go so far as to assume you picked up this book because you're new to networking or are rusty around the edges; maybe you only picked it up in search of new ways to refine your skills.

Regardless, chances are that there are people in the room looking to network who aren't exactly sure what they're doing. They may be walking around starting and holding conversations, hoping that with enough talking an opportunity will present itself. This is an opportunity for you to add value to them in a unique way.

As it stands, they are probably trying to rely on The Flirt method without knowing anything about it or how to do it properly. Do them a favor and shift them into The Promoter method.

Remember, The Promoter is all about self-promotion. Introduce yourself to the struggling networker and get to know them. Then, after some work finding things you both have in common and learning more about their passions, go introduce that person to other people at the event that you think he or she should meet. As you introduce that person, shine a light on them by sharing an interesting fact about them.

You're helping to present this person as an incredible businessman, father, bowler, or whatever you've learned about them that's interesting and can be used to promote them.

Charming people build others up, and this is also why it's so important to become a high-quality person first. People only feel good being built up by people with value. In other words, if a homeless person walked up to you and told you you're kinda cute, are you going to be flattered and blush uncontrollably? Chances are that's a "no."

This step in the strategy can be used on anyone you meet, regardless of if the person you're introducing is a proficient networker or not. Giving value this way is something people will undoubtedly appreciate, including your target connection that you started researching in Step One of this strategy. It will help you build your personal brand as someone who operates in a collaborative frame and avoid coming across as a taker who only wants to build himself up (which would be a competitive frame).

After you've completed this step, grab their contact information. Here, Bob Littell recommends that if they handed you a business card, you can go off to a corner and jot down a couple of notes about them on the back of it so you can remember more about them and have more to work with when it's time to reach out to reconnect. (If they didn't hand you a business card, consider jotting down notes on your phone.)

And, finally, as a quick pro tip, always do a final lap before leaving a networking event. You never know who you might run into at the end. When it comes to networking, just as important as arriving early is leaving late.

Step 6: Give Value to Your New Connection

Hopefully, you didn't throw yourself on your hands and knees for that executive's business card. And, hopefully, that professional didn't hand you a fake smile and say, "Welp, it was cool meeting you," and then walk off without exchanging contact information.

Unless you did something crazy to make them change their mind about exchanging contact information (or you both had absolutely nothing in common and they decided that they completely hated your personality), gaining their contact information shouldn't have been too hard. If it was hard, good. You're a learner, so those are the exact experiences you need to improve.

One way to give value to your connection is by giving them power. You're giving them power by being a high-quality person—a person with value—and connecting with them. By then, you're both connections in each other's networks, which helps build up both your resources. (Connections fall under resources and resources are power in society.)

However, if you think that only being a high-quality person and connecting with them is enough to start asking for favors, then you may have an entitlement mindset. This is the person who has a skewed idea of their worth. This person might actually know their worth, but know their worth a little too well. They ask for favors without giving any tangible value, because they have the mindset of, "Do you know who I am?"

If you don't want to come off like a self-entitled prick, give more than only yourself as a resource. There is power in information, and you can leverage that. You can offer your unique perspective on a problem that they're having. This is especially valuable, since sometimes it can be hard for a person to get unfiltered access to on-the-ground perspectives about their problem, organization, website, and so on.

This is less about *how* you give value and more about following the Service Principle by giving, regardless of how big or small the gesture is. If you're attending a networking event or a

seminar, you can volunteer to help set up the chairs before the event starts. A small gesture, but enough to follow the Service Principle and enough to initiate a conversation.

Step 6.1: Give Value to Your New Connection Creatively

Now, let's say that you want to connect with an executive. Typically, especially if they're higher up than you, their network is bigger (and possibly higher value) than yours. Therefore, you can't rely on giving value through introductions. The connection you're introducing to the executive likely won't be someone the executive feels like they need to add to their network since they're so far ahead in life.

So, you're going to have to get really creative with how you give value because you need to give value that the target connection will appreciate enough to want to build a further relationship with you. If you can't give value to your target connection, you can operate as The Promoter and give value to the people in that target connection's social circle that they care about.

So, for example, let's say that you're having trouble finding ways to give value to that forty-five-year-old executive who has been in the game for years and has the kind of massive success that makes it hard for him to find the time to chat with you.

This is where it might be time to switch methods to The Promoter. Can you connect with and give value to his twenty-five-year-old son? Maybe he's pursuing music and you can make an introduction to someone you know in the music industry.

If the person you want to connect with is responding to you, work with them to find ways to give value creatively. Volunteer for charitable causes they support. Join their table at a fundraiser or participate in a walk-a-thon with them.

Step 7: Make (More) Networking Notes on Your New Connection

By now, you should have a good idea of who your connection is and what they're like. You might've taken some notes on them already in Step Five of this strategy. But, now you can take the time to make more detailed notes on their interests, preferences, and any other details that you deem necessary to remember.

What is a good follow-up schedule for this contact? Monthly? Quarterly? What is their preferred medium of communication? Email? Phone?

The point is to make sure that you don't break rapport with your connection by accidentally calling them at an inappropriate time of night because you accidentally confused their time zone with another connection's.

This is also where you might want to make a few more small notes on any good follow-up topics that you can use as a quick excuse to get in touch. For example, you can shoot them a quick email if their favorite football team wins the Super Bowl, or you can congratulate them if their company wins a large contract. This is another testament to the power of information, but can only be taken advantage of if you remember these details. The absolute best way to make sure you don't forget is by taking note of them.

Remember, information is a source of power. So, keep your relationships strong by keeping an eye on the big picture. Stay up to date and know what's going on with their company at large. You can follow their company or organization on social media, join their mailing list, and even set up Google Alerts to email you any time their company is in the news. That way, when it's time to deepen your relationship with your target connection you'll know what's going on and be able to add value to the conversation on a business level using the information you've acquired.

Step 8: Work to Create a Big Touchpoint

Small touchpoints are small ways of keeping the relationship alive, such as a quick short and sweet email to stay in touch. Big touchpoints, on the other hand, are the actions you take that truly deepen the relationship, such as meeting face to face for lunch.

When working your way toward creating that big touchpoint, you should be focusing on giving value so that when you field your request to meet up, it doesn't seem like you're taking their time or their energy. The idea is that since you've already given so much, a meeting is a fair ask.

A great way to give value that builds your progress toward that big touchpoint is by sending them a bottle of their favorite wine and then sending them a short video message letting them know you're grateful for their connection and that their willingness to respond to your emails gives you the encouragement to continue working towards your goals. Bring the video to a close with something like, "So enjoy this bottle of wine on me," coupled with a warm smile and boom. A kind gesture like that, asking for nothing in return, is guaranteed to help deepen your relationship to where you feel more comfortable advancing towards bigger touchpoints without feeling like you're asking for too much too early.

Relationship building is a gradual process. Forcing a friendship is a losing networking strategy. So, instead of sending only a few small touchpoints like emails and then jumping to a big touchpoint like a business dinner, go from small touchpoints to a medium touchpoint. What

I recommend as a good medium touchpoint is asking for a ten-to-fifteen-minute phone call—something almost anyone can fit into their schedule.

Make sure that, when making this ask, you make it easy for your target connection to say “yes.” Communicate why you want to meet them with a good reason. Leverage the persuasive power of “because.” In negotiation, I refer to this as preparing your persuasive motive.

“Everything in life is a negotiation.” If you told your target connection that the reason you want a ten-to fifteen-minute phone call with them is to pick their brain on how you can get rich, they may not be too open to the idea of speaking with you. If, however, you said, “I want to grow as a person and respect you, so I would like to learn more about your leadership journey,” that persuasive motive has a higher chance of eliciting a positive reaction and getting you another step closer to that big touchpoint you’re working towards.

During the phone call, focus on connecting. Your connection can hear your voice, which makes the interaction feel closer than conversing over email. Get to know them better and, as much as possible, do your best to present yourself as a collaborator, not as a taker. Look for opportunities throughout the phone call where you can add value. If it comes up in the conversation that your connection has a lot on their mind because of work, maybe you know a meditation coach you can refer them to.

This phone call is a great time to ask how you can help your connection reach their goals. You can use that phone chat to focus the conversation toward how you can help them, so that when it’s time for them to help you (by agreeing to a big touch point, like a lunch meetup), it seems like a fair ask.

At the end of this conversation, go back to periodically staying in touch and giving value. Then, ask for the big touchpoint, schedule it, and confirm the meeting.

Step 9: Ask for Advice

Now you’re at that big touchpoint meeting with your target connection. It could be something like a dinner or a lunch meet-up. Whatever the case, it’s a more intimate form of contact than the usual emails and phone calls.

The general idea here is to value their perspective. You wouldn’t be putting in so much effort to connect with this person if you didn’t feel like they could provide you with value or help in some way with your goals, so you want to give them the opportunity to provide you with value by allowing them to give you power. In this case, the power we’re looking for is information. Get their advice.

Throughout this conversation, continue building trust, building their likability for your genuine, authentic self, and connecting on a personal level. Even though you're taking advice that relates to your goals, avoid making it all about business. It will break rapport and trust, because it's incongruent to how you've been interacting up to this point.

Step 10: Ask for a Referral

Now you've built a relationship with this person. Congratulations! Throughout the duration of your meeting, you two have spent a decent amount of time exchanging ideas. They have provided you with some great advice and the conversation is now drawing to a close.

Before the conversation ends, ask them if they can refer you to two more people who can give you some more advice or clarity on a subject you both discussed.

You're not asking for a job and you're not asking for them to refer you to someone who can give you a job. You're not asking for anything major. You only want some more advice and clarity on your goals and you'd love to be referred to someone that they trust to give good advice.

If you've been using this strategy correctly, you've built a professional relationship with this connection that feels like a friendship. Ideally, they should be happy to help you. If your new connection can only refer you to one person, that's good. The point is to be able to connect with more people by using the good name of your connection, so you don't have to endure the hassle of connecting with new contacts as a stranger all over again. You want to use this process of asking for referrals from people you already know to eventually build up a rolodex of people who you feel trust you, respect you, like you, and want to help you.

This is The Promoter method being used to secure new relationships with the help of a current one.

Step 11: Rinse and Repeat

Repeat this process until you have a robust network of high-quality and high-value individuals who can all contribute to your career development and goal progression.

As a quick note, you may not always need a big touchpoint before you can ask for referrals. In some cases (especially if your social and conversational skills are more on the advanced side), you can ask for advice during your ten-to fifteen-minute phone call in Step 8.

Whether or not you're able to do this is mostly dependent on how well you've built a relationship with your connection. If you've been following all of the steps but by the time you

get to the call you can tell that your connection still views you as a stranger, focus on continuing to give value and wait until the big touchpoint.

Your Top 10 Networking Tips¹³

1.) Take Care of Your Personal Brand. Be As Presentable As Possible.

Your reputation precedes you, so keep your brand consistent. Your personal brand in person could be that you're a charming, driven, goal-oriented, high-quality individual who loves introducing people and aims to start a legal practice someday. But, if your social media—your online brand and reputation—contains pictures of you partying Friday nights and drinking irresponsibly like tomorrow's don't exist, I can almost guarantee that problems will arise on your networking journey.

That's an extreme example, but if you don't treat your social media like an online business card you may miss out on key opportunities. If you leave your strengths and areas of value out of your online presence, people will meet you in person and realize that you were a hidden gem because your social media didn't reflect how amazing you really are. Had they not taken that leap by deciding to meet with you, you easily could've missed out on that opportunity.

So, keep your online presence consistent with your personal brand if you want to remain as open to receiving opportunities as possible. An example of one way to do this is by keeping your professional pictures up to date on online platforms geared more towards business (such as LinkedIn).

Everybody has a personal brand. Whether you're a CEO or a college student, everybody has a personal brand, because everyone who's alive has a story. And, in its most simple terms, your brand is what people say about you when you're not around.

"Think about some of your favorite celebrities, public figures, or athletes. Even if you've never met them in person, whatever you thought about them, that conclusion is a reflection of their personal brand. The same thing happens in business because your personal brand isn't just your name, it's what you're known for." (Bailey, 2019)

You can start crafting your personal brand by getting clear on your values and then sticking to them. The best networking values are to serve, to help, and to share. Stick to those values like a high-quality man and, in addition to having a brand as a college student or young

¹³ Information regarding networking tips provided by author and entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David. See References List section for more.

professional, you'll have a brand as someone who operates within a collaborative frame: someone who is not a taker. That's a brand that attracts great connections and opportunities.

Also be mindful that your value is attached to your brand. People may know you based on your success or your goals, both of which are strong indicators of your value and help to define your brand.

But, there's nothing wrong with a part of your brand being that you're wildly ambitious and that you love getting things done or that you love people. Your brand can be about things you are as opposed to things you've accomplished. Either way, keep tabs on your value and your brand. Your value changes as you gain skills and experience. And, you can use any improvements in your value as a way of improving your brand so that it will bring you more success.

2.) Be Shameless

Being afraid to self-promote can hurt you in the long run. If you're the one approaching professionals but never give them hints at your value, you're essentially expecting them to put in the work to learn more about you and your achievements. That may work in some cases, but only rarely. The key is to know how to promote yourself in a way that doesn't make you come off as the cocky guy who is unpleasant to be around. In other words, learn how to brag about yourself without bragging about yourself.

Here's an example. Some people understand that when you ask a question you are likely to get asked the same question back. It's an unwritten rule of conversation. So, to self-promote, they will ask, "So where did you go to college?" and when asked back, they will say, "Oh, I went to Harvard."

That's sloppy work right there. Instead, tell your victories through personal stories: "You know, it's interesting, I like the fact that you're a baseball fan because one of my good friends, who I knew when we went to Harvard together, he was also a big baseball fan and I remember when..."(Bet-David, 2016) That's right. You were subtle about it and kept going down the conversational path you were on, as if you didn't just name-drop an Ivy League school.

Now, I don't think I should have to mention this last part, but I've seen it done before. Don't name-drop celebrities you've never met or don't really know as a way of self-promoting. Don't say you met a famous singer when really you were in the stands of a concert with forty thousand other people.

3.) Be Seen

Make sure you're constantly seen. Comment on social media posts, go to the big events in your industry that everyone attends, always be sure to remain relevant in the lives of others.

The "mere exposure effect" says that simply being exposed multiple times to someone leads us to like that person more (Kolenda, 2013). When people see you repeatedly, that's how they get closer to deciding to connect with you (and, eventually, making introductions for you). After all, if you were to notice the same woman at every networking event you go to, eventually you're going to wonder who that woman is. You may even decide to spark a conversation with her, solely to figure out who she is. That's the mere exposure effect.

4.) Follow the "Serve Others" Principle. Be Extremely Helpful.

If you spend your time asking without giving, you become obnoxious and annoying and are no longer a charmer. That means you've lost a large part of what made you an effective networker. Be of service to others. Give. Be extremely helpful.

5.) Be Warm and Be Positive.

Even when sending emails, make sure they have a warm tone. Do your best to use positive sentence structure as often as possible while networking (Buffalmano, 2020).

I once had a meeting that kept getting pushed back because the assistant of the person I was trying to connect with wasn't updating her boss's calendar. So, after the third time of this fumble, the meeting having been pushed back three weeks now, I reached out with my follow-up email using "positive sentence structure." Here is an example of what I sent:

"Hi Barbara, please adjust your system's calendar to be more coordinated with John's and you will help us avoid the confusion caused by scheduling mix-ups. Thanks!"

Negative sentence structure would have been, "Hi Barbara, please do a better job adjusting your system's calendar to be more coordinated with John's. Our meeting has just been pushed back for the third time which is disrespectful to my time due to an unnecessary mixup on your end. Thanks."

Some more examples of positive and negative sentence structure are (Kolenda):

1. Example 1
 - a. Negative Frame: Don't be late.
 - b. Positive Frame: Arrive on time.
2. Example 2
 - a. Negative Frame: Don't drink excessively.

- b. Positive Frame: Drink responsibly.
- 3. Example 3
 - a. Negative Frame: Don't use negative frames.
 - b. Positive Frame: Use positive frames."

6.) Learn the Art of Small Talk.

Follow the Immersion vs. Maintenance Rule in conversation. In other words, if you are both immersed in a deep topic of conversation, staying there for too long could eventually cause uncomfortable tension. Balance deep conversations with lighter topics that help the conversation flow without becoming awkward.

After going small, you can transition back to deep conversation again. A good way to do this is by using networking expert Bob Littell's GLP conversation system¹⁴. When done properly, GLP—Global, Local, Personal—is a process to enrich the conversation by creating meaningful dialogue (as opposed to small talk).

For example, let's say that you are having a conversation with an executive named Dan. You say, "Dan, didn't you mention that you're in the music industry? I know a little bit about the music industry, but I'd love to learn more. If you would tell me on a global or international basis, what are the two or three major challenges that the music industry is facing today?" That would be the "Global." Then you say, "Are those the same challenges within your company that keep you up at night?" This covers "Local" and "Personal." (Littell & Stotz)

When you're moving away from that small talk and more towards real conversation, keep in mind that a prerequisite of good conversation is knowing your goals of socializing and preferred approach to socialization. You can keep the following goals written down on a piece of paper before your social interactions to help keep them in mind and gradually improve your conversation skills (MacLeod, 2016):

1. Goal 1: Have an interaction that's rewarding for everyone involved.
 - a. Not every second needs to be absolutely fun, informative, rewarding, and/or attention-grabbing, but try to make sure everyone is getting something out of the exchange.
2. Goal 2: Learn about the other person and try to find common ground.
 - a. MacLeod notes that this is a seemingly basic but great goal for conversations regardless of if you've just met the other person or known them forever.

¹⁴ Information regarding the GLP conversation system provided by networking expert Bob Littell. See References List section for more.

- b. PRO Tip: Don't be afraid to literally ask them what they're interested in. MacLeod provides the example script, "So, aside from drawing, what else are you interested in?"
- 3. Goal 3: Share things about yourself with the other person.
 - a. Share your interests, personality, sense of humor, values, and recent events in your life.
- 4. Goal 4: Show you're a reasonably friendly, sociable person.
 - a. "When you talk to someone, come across as if you like talking to them. Not as if you're aloof and feel put upon for having to speak with them."

And, you can choose from any of the following approaches to socialization to test and see what you feel works best for you:

- 1. Approach 1: Be interested in and curious about the other people and make it your goal to find out what's fascinating and unique about them.
 - a. MacLeod says here, "The idea is to be primarily someone who asks questions and listens to the answers which leads to focusing the discussion on the other person. Your mission in the conversation is to discover what makes them interesting...You should bring up things about yourself and share your own opinions when relevant. Generally focus the conversation on your partner, but not to the point where you share nothing about yourself [and become forgettable]."
 - b. Why this works: "The underlying assumption about this approach is that everyone's favorite subject is themselves. And, that people like someone who takes a genuine interest in them and the things they like to say."
 - c. Note: This is the most popular, general approach to making conversation. (This approach is also referenced in Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.)
- 2. Approach 2: Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
 - a. This approach is about focusing on what the other person is interested in talking about (hobbies, their life decisions, etc.). Then, centering the conversation around that. So, instead of only taking an interest in their uniqueness (what makes them fascinating, their good traits, and so on), you take an interest in their interests—and ask thoughtful questions as they tell you about them.
 - b. Why this works: Similar to the one above, it's what MacLeod calls a "listening/other person-centric approach."
- 3. Approach 3: Figure out what topics you have an easy time talking about. Then, try to steer the conversation in that direction.
 - a. MacLeod says, "This strategy may help you organize your thoughts and simplify how you approach an interaction...In reasonable doses, it's perfectly fine to talk about the things you enjoy."
 - b. Why this works: If you're more comfortable expounding on a topic in your comfort zone, this approach can help you have a smoother time conversing.

As a final note to keep in mind here, MacLeod shares the following advice on conversation mistakes: “Everyone makes mistakes when conversing from time to time...even if you converse in a way that most people find acceptable, you’ll encounter the occasional person who has a different perspective and will see something as a mistake on your part.”

And, especially in cross-cultural communication, what’s considered a “mistake” to one can be considered good social skills to another. So, be lenient with yourself when acknowledging your own mistakes and remember to take a constructive, learner’s attitude to how you view each experience, good or bad.

7.) Keep Your Listening Skills Sharp.

You can listen with your ears, but you can also listen with your eyes. In other words, pick up on the social cues of the environment and the person you’re interacting with to know if you’re still being charming.

The person you’re talking to could be furthering the conversation, but only to be polite. For example, if they’re listening, but their feet are pointed towards the door, they’re using closed body language—maybe they’re crossing their arms over their body to check the time—and they’re tapping their feet.

Make sure you listen to what they are sub-communicating. They may be in a hurry, and you should be respectful of that by politely bringing the conversation to a close (unless it’s very important that they hear what you have to say).

8.) Be Your Authentic Self.

If you try to use the Comedian method and you know you don’t like making jokes, it will make you come across as insincere. Be yourself. If you’re The Flirt, be that. Be what is most akin to your current personality, but don’t act outside of yourself. Pretending to be something that you’re not will raise eyebrows (and not in the good way).

9.) Periodically Look in the Mirror.¹⁵

You want people to “refer” you to other possible connections. So, keep in mind that a recommendation is different from a referral. A recommendation is like recommending a good movie. “Hey, you should really watch this movie.” A referral is where you have skin in the game

¹⁵ Information regarding the “Periodically Look in the Mirror” networking tip provided by networking expert Bob Littell. See References List section for more.

and, as a result, your name is on the line. You might put skin in the game by writing an email, making an introductory phone call, or doing something that involves risking your good name.

In other words, if your contact really values their reputation and doesn't feel the confidence to return the favor after you've introduced them to two or three other people, it's time that you look in the mirror. If you're doing everything right and nothing is coming back around, ask yourself what mistakes you might be making that are causing people to perceive you as not being worth the risk that comes with referring you to a good connection. Frankly, chances are that people don't see enough in you that they're willing to take that risk (Stotz & Littell).

10.) Be Prepared.

Finally, proper preparation prevents poor performance. Know what you're going to say before someone asks you what you do or what your business is. Have a non-salesy, quick description ready to share with your counterpart.

Networking Best and Worst Practices¹⁶

WORST Practices for Connecting with New Professionals (Hain)

Don't:

- Fail to offer an interesting—even compelling—reason why a new contact should be willing to meet with you. Don't assume that an invitation is enough.
- Offer at least two to three dates or times as options for meeting.
- Offer a convenient (for them) restaurant or other possible meeting place suggestion in your communication.
- Think that meeting with you is the most important thing on their plate.
- Become angry or irritated in your follow-up communication if they don't respond immediately (see above bullet point). Also, don't assume the worst. They could be sick, traveling, etc.
- Fail to give appropriate context as to why you are reaching out to someone you don't know. For example: "Mike, we are both friends with Bill Smith, who encouraged me to meet you regarding a new project I am working on. Your insight would be invaluable and I would be grateful if we could meet to discuss the work. I would also like to see if there is anything I can do to help you. Can you meet for lunch near your office any days over the next few weeks around 12:00 p.m.?" vs "Hey there Mike. I work for ABC Company and would love to grab lunch. When are you available?"

¹⁶ Information regarding Networking Best and Worst Practices provided by author Randy Hain. See References List section for more.

- Fail to be courteous. Don't forget to be grateful. You have one shot at a first impression. Don't blow it!

BEST Practices for Connecting with New Professionals (Hain)

Do:

- Try to make a "warm" connection. Can someone who knows the both of you make a warm introduction? This can help overcome obstacles and get you inside the door.
- Suggest a brief introductory phone call before pursuing a meeting, if reaching out to a new "cold" connection.
- Your homework. Check LinkedIn and Google for information about them to find what you have in common. For example: "Jim, I looked at your LinkedIn profile and learned that we both went to UGA and worked at Home Depot, although in different divisions. I am interested in meeting people from your organization and sharing some of the ideas my company is exploring in the supply chain. Do you have time next week on Monday, Tuesday, or Friday for coffee near your office at 7:00 a.m.? Isn't there a Panera Bread down the street from you? I would be very grateful for your time and I would love to see if there is anything I can do to help you in return. I hope to hear from you. Thanks."
- Respect their preferred method of communication, but understand that connecting cannot be done exclusively via email. Follow up your email with a call. The power of personal connections is important in making this work well.
- Try to view all of this through the filter of "doing business with friends." If you see connecting and business development from this perspective, you are much more likely to build a solid relationship with a new contact before doing business together.
- Be flexible without sounding desperate or like you have nothing to do. Here is a correct example: "Susan, I am open most mornings for coffee except Tuesdays and Fridays—the earlier the better. I am also available for lunch the next three Fridays from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. Meeting near your office is very easy for me." Notice how, with this approach, we showed flexibility and offered several options, but they were our options.
- Think long and hard about what value you are bringing to this potential new relationship. Instead of only focusing on what you want, make sure you are considering what might be interesting and helpful for them.
- Always be courteous. Always be grateful. Acknowledge to the other person that you know they are investing valuable time in meeting you and it is appreciated. The basics always work, and this is as basic as it gets!
- Be authentic. To quote Oscar Wilde, "Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."
- Avoid closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are questions that are aimed toward getting the other side to answer in a certain way, typically yes or no. Phrasing questions this way closes the opportunity for open discussion. Instead of asking a closed-ended question such as, "Are you happy with your results?" Ask an open-ended question such as, "How do you feel about your results?"

Action Steps (Goldberg, 2013):¹⁷

1. Get a piece of paper.
2. Set a timer for one minute.
3. Write down as many first names of people you can think of who are well-equipped to help you with your goals.
4. When the timer goes off, start networking. Start at the first name at the top of your list and research what events they attend, find their email addresses, figure out who you know that could introduce you, get information, and get started.

¹⁷ Information regarding action steps provided by networking expert Michael Goldberg. See References List section for more.

Step Five

Enlist the Good Mentors

You're getting close to the end of the book. So far, we've covered the importance of becoming a high-quality individual (who knows power dynamics), acquiring the right mindsets, and following the networking rules and principles. You've also learned one of the many sound strategies for connecting with contacts who can best help you reach your goals.

So, why are we talking about mentors? Well, as explained in Step Three, you need to be in charge of your circle of influence. And, here's what many don't understand about mentors: the official definition of a mentor is, "An experienced and trusted advisor."

When most people think of a mentor, they think about business, whether that be someone you trust helping you get better at that skill you've been trying to master, or someone who is one of the biggest names in mentor history (such as Benjamin Graham mentoring Warren Buffett, or Bill Campbell mentoring Steve Jobs, Larry Page, and Jeff Bezos).

People want to think of a mentor as a formal, contractual, professional relationship. They think it only "counts" as a mentorship if you meet with your mentor once every couple weeks. People especially view mentors this way in the world of business.

We think the scam artist seminar host flashing cheesy Powerpoint slides of their Lamborghini is only a guru. We don't think that as we absorb the information they give out that they go from being a guru to being a mentor, but they do.

"A mentor is someone that you have access to (be that access online or in person) that you can watch and see how they do things while taking notes that you can implement into your own life" (Logsdon, 2018). When we broaden the perspective of what a mentor is in this way, we realize that we have more mentors in our life than we originally thought. That's why it's important to make sure we approve of the people who act as our mentors.

We must be able to identify which of the mentors in our life are "good mentors" so we can evaluate them effectively moving forward (and follow the Circle of Influence Rule to weed out the "bad mentors"). To do that, we must ask ourselves: what makes a good mentor?

Characteristics of a Good Mentor (Rhea)¹⁸

¹⁸ Information regarding the characteristics of a good mentor provided by Dan Stotz, the Director of Online Executive Education, and senior lecturer Wes Rhea, J.D. See References List section for more.

1. They're a guide
 - They're your guide, not your competitor. They shouldn't be acting superior to you.
2. They're humble and experienced
 - They should be humble and experienced in the skill you're looking to learn from them.
3. They help you help yourself
 - A mentorship should not be an opportunity to get your mentor to do things for you. The high achievers of this world do not do things alone, but they do things themselves.
 - A good mentor doesn't pretend to have all of the answers (or try to give you all of the answers). Being a good mentor is more about asking good questions that help you figure things out for yourself.
4. They are open to questions
 - They don't only answer questions about how to develop a certain skill set you're looking to improve, but will help you explore and learn more about your areas of interest.
5. They help you with both the good and the bad aspects of a job
 - There are highs and lows in both life and business. Ideally, your mentor should be someone who can help you extend the life of those highs for as long as possible and help you learn as much as possible from the lows, all while still keeping you grounded in reality. They should be able to show you that the good won't last forever, and the bad isn't nearly as bad as it could be.
6. They help you learn from their mistakes
 - Your mentor should not be someone too egotistical or narcissistic to admit that they've made mistakes. A part of the added benefit of having a solid network is that you can cut your learning curve in half by learning from your mistakes as well as the mistakes of others. You lose a large part of that added benefit if your mentor is too prideful to share his or her past failures.

I feel that now is a great time to share the sheer beauty of tearing down the strict barriers society uses to constitute a "real mentor." I'll illustrate my point by sharing a mentor who is nontraditional but has still had a massive impact: Robert Kiyosaki, and his personal finance book, *Rich Dad Poor Dad*.

In that book, he uses his personal story of having two fathers, one rich and one poor, to guide you towards a deeper understanding of the importance of assets and the consequences that come with liabilities. He's humble and tells about his own experiences on his journey to acquiring assets throughout the book. Due to the fact that he delivers his teachings through a book, he can empower you with the information you need to take action while still being unable to hold your hand (something a good mentor should not do). He creates a situation where he must help you help yourself. Last, he helps you learn from his mistakes by telling the mistakes that his poor dad made, which resulted in his missed opportunities for financial success.

In many ways, books could be considered mentors and, personally, viewing books this way helps to keep me motivated to read them. I especially love to read books written by authors who are clear experts in their field and who give action steps in their books, since it feels more like a class that way.

The reason why books are not widely considered mentors is because there is a lack of person-to-person interaction which, as you may have noticed, results in some of the characteristics of a good mentor being missing. It's hard for a book to help you with the good and bad aspects of your job, since everyone's experience in a given job is different. Typically, to give advice like this would require the assessment of what is currently going well and what's going poorly for you in your profession. It is possible for a book to provide you with that advice if it covered every possible negative and positive experience you're able to have in a job, but it would also result in that book being exhaustingly long.

This is another reason why my book is about networking. By mastering the art of networking, you can create that business relationship with your desired mentor, who can then guide you the rest of the way toward success.

Before we can get to that point though, we have to start at the beginning: finding a mentor. To illustrate this step-by-step process of finding and getting a mentor, I'll use an example with you as a twenty-two-year-old, recent college graduate who is looking to eventually enter the world of entrepreneurship and CEOs.

Step 1: Map Out Your Ideal Career Path

Let's say that you've read this chapter and are now taking step one. You create a rough map of your career path and use it as an outline from where you are to where you want to be. To save time, I recommend using the form at www.thecleverconnector.com/careermap. Refer to the model worksheet as you complete the following steps.¹⁹ (It's important to have an effective process for crafting your career plan because, once again, "proper preparation prevents poor performance".)

¹⁹ Career Map model worksheet can be downloaded by going to www.thecleverconnector.com/careermap.

Step 1: Map Out Your Ideal Career Path

Career Plan Map

Career Path Summary

I will become the CEO of a technology company before I turn 30 years old.

Steps for Career Progression

1. **College Graduate - I AM HERE**
2. Technical Support Executive
3. Subject Matter Expert/Technical Support Coach
4. Manager
5. Team Leader/Assistant Manager
6. Associate Vice President
7. Vice President
8. Director
9. CEO

Areas I Need to Grow In

1. **Speaking skills** because support workers must describe the solutions to computer problems in a way that a nontechnical person can understand.

Materials & Resources I Need for Growth

- 1.

Despite being a recent college graduate, let's say that you started networking early. Let's say that you follow the motto, "Dig your well before you're thirsty," and built the relationships you needed before you needed them. You graduated with your bachelor's in computer science, and the contacts in your network have let you know that they'd be more than happy to refer you to a great job that would allow you to achieve Step Two in your Steps for Career Progression list. With the referral from his connections, he would be able to start as a technical support executive right away.

Let's also say that you don't want to jump the gun. You don't want to assume that because you have a degree in computer science that you're automatically a dream candidate to employers everywhere in the tech space. You want to prepare yourself for the interviews that will be coming up soon, and you want to make sure that you have what your employers are looking for. So, you do a little online research.

Through that online research, you discover that employers are looking for important qualities such as customer service skills, listening skills, problem-solving skills, speaking skills, and writing skills. However, you want to know how many of these skills are actually required, and which ones are only qualities an employer would like to see. You want to make sure that most of your resume contains information that employers need in an employee, not only information that employers "would like to see" in an employee. (In other words, you want to make sure that the meat of your resume is made up of the required skills and you're willing to let any other qualities that are good but not necessary be the icing on the cake.)

So, on LinkedIn, you type "technical support executive" in the search bar and start reviewing all of the other LinkedIn users who currently hold the position you're applying for. You review their entire profile, keeping a close eye on their skills, licenses, and certifications.

You put yourself in the shoes of your employer when reviewing the profiles of those other LinkedIn professionals, realizing that an employer might still make the hiring decision even if that candidate doesn't have all of the exact certifications they're looking for. For example, you keep in mind that if the applicant didn't take a class in writing (and therefore has no certificate for it) but had experience in journalism, the employer would probably still hire anyway. So, with this in mind, you make sure to check the experience section of each profile to see if there's any experience they might have that you might need.

After covering all your bases, you realize that one of the most important qualities is speaking skills. For the sake of this example, let's say that this is something you know you need to work on. Let's also say for this example that chances are they would hire you with the speaking skills you have now. But, even if they did, there's a slim chance you'd be able to advance to Step Three in your Steps for Career Progression list (technical support coach) unless you developed this skill anyway. So, as the old saying goes, "There's no time like the present."

Step 2: Seek Out the Right Mentor Who Has Mastered the Skill You Want to Develop

After reaching the conclusion that developing your speaking skills now would help you land the job you're looking for—and help further your career later down the line—you get to work on seeking out the right mentor.

You go back to LinkedIn and search the companies that your contacts plan on referring you to when you're ready. You make a quick list of everyone in each company that holds the subject matter expert/technical support coach position and start researching each of them to get a good idea of how proficient they are in their speaking skills.

You evaluate each mentor candidate based on their skill level in the skill you're looking to develop. And, you eventually narrow down the list to five.

Step 3: Get Connected to Your Mentor Candidates

Instead of sending all of your mentor candidates messages to connect, you reach out to the contacts in your network and ask for an email introduction. If there is a technical support coach who made the list of mentor candidates *and* works in a company that one of your contacts is already planning on referring you to, you ask for an email introduction from that contact first.

For three of the mentor candidates, you were able to get connected with them through your current contacts. This is what we call a “warm introduction.” For the remaining two out of the five mentor candidates, you have your work cut out for you. You have to introduce yourself as a total stranger. And, you decide to do so via email. This is what we call a “cold email,” because, in this case, you don't have any contacts that can make an introduction for you (a warm introduction).

You use the networking strategy in Step Four to craft those emails, starting with doing some research on your mentor candidates. You started with the first mentor candidate and took note of all of the areas where you could connect to them personally, everything you had in common with that candidate, and any indication of what that person may be passionate about or motivated by.

So, for example, the first mentor candidate you researched has a social media profile flooded with images of him volunteering at a nonprofit organization that helps kids without fathers, each picture with a wide smile on his face. You pretty safely conclude that this is something he's probably passionate about and construct an email that includes that passion in

the body of the email. You hit on as many points as you can (commonalities, passions, personal connection, motivations, etc.) without letting the email run on too long.

You then repeat that process with the remaining mentor candidates that require a cold reach-out. For this example, that's only one other person.

Step 4: Schedule a Meeting with Your Mentor Candidates

You then schedule and confirm a meeting with each of your mentor candidates. Since you internalized the networking rules and principles and used the networking strategy, tips, and best practices in Step Four, this part wasn't too much trouble.

Step 5: Ask Your Mentor Candidates the Right Questions (Bailey, 2019)²⁰

You prepared for the meeting by constructing three questions to ask. Each question was made with intention and directed toward drawing out as much value as you can get from each mentor candidate's advice. You stayed away from general questions such as, "So what advice would you give me to improve my speaking skills?" and focused on curating more specific questions so you can get specific answers.

Your first question was micro-focused, which means it was directed toward your mentor candidate as an individual. Your question was, "What are your keys to succeeding in speaking excellence?"

Your second question was macro-focused, meaning it was directed more toward a wider, broader perspective from the mentor candidate's company instead of the mentor candidate as an individual. Your question was, "How are speaking skills evaluated by the C-Suite and board of directors?"

Your final question was specific to your mentor candidate's wisdom and provides a good opportunity to assess whether or not your interviewee has the characteristics of a good mentor. Your final question was, "What do you wish someone would've told you when you were starting out in developing your speaking skills? What lessons did you have to learn 'the hard way'?"

You know that if he is unwilling to admit his past failures or shortcomings, then maybe one of the other mentor candidates would be a better fit for your circle of influence.

²⁰ Information regarding asking your mentor candidate the right questions provided by author Simon T. Bailey. See References List section for more.

As each mentor candidate responds, you take detailed notes to review later. As the meeting draws to a close, before you wrap up, you make sure to ask your mentor candidate if you can be of any assistance. You maintain a collaborative frame, looking for ways to give back after receiving so much quality advice.

Step 6: Turn Your Top Mentor Candidate Picks Into Mentors

At the end of each meeting, you ask each mentor candidate if you can follow up with them in ninety days.

When you return home, you get to work. You've never been a fan of blindly following orders, so you take all of the advice from your notes and measure them against each other to see which ones you should focus on first and which might not be the best advice to follow. The same way you would double-check your work in high school and college before submitting it to the teacher, you use the advice of each mentor candidate to double-check the advice of the others before deciding which advice to apply to your daily life. (Keep in mind, this is one of the reasons why it's important to have more than one mentor.)

After filtering out the less useful advice, you then apply the best advice from your notes and get to work developing your speaking skills.

After ninety days, you'll follow up with the mentor candidates that you decide are best for you and your goals. All of the mentor candidates that you choose to follow up with will turn into mentors without even realizing it. Any mentor candidates who didn't make the cut, you keep a note of them in case you decide that you want to network and build a deeper relationship with them later.

Step 7: Gratitude, Gratitude, Gratitude

Remember back in Step 3, when you reached out to your contacts to see if they could give you a warm introduction to your mentor candidates? Well, you were able to get referred to three out of the five mentor candidates. So, you go back and thank whomever referred you to those three. You also use this as an opportunity to check in and give them updates on what you're learning, a great way of staying connected when you can't think of any ways to give value but still want an excuse to stay in touch.

And, with that, you've successfully developed a new quality that you know your employers are looking for, built relationships with people in the companies you're looking to become a part of, and skyrocketed your chances of landing the job you want.

It's not easy, but it's that simple. The key is really about knowing what to expect from a mentorship. Internships are formal. Mentorships can happen throughout our daily lives without us even realizing it.

However, if you decide to formalize your mentorship, clarify your expectations and be specific as far as what you want to get out of the mentorship. If you decide to go this route, talk about the mentoring relationship with your mentor. "How often are we going to meet? How long do we want this mentorship to last? Half a year? How do you prefer to take feedback?" (Kay, 2013) Should you meet over the phone so as to be as direct as possible, or in an email where you can read the constructive criticism in short gulps and take your time to process those hard pills to swallow? Get specific to get the most out of your formal mentorship.

As a final note, keep in mind that you could choose to use your career map to network with any professionals who hold the job you eventually want. You can network with the managers, vice presidents, directors, and even CEOs of tech companies if you decide you want to. That's the power of technology in the interconnected world we live in today. This is also the power of networking as a high-quality individual.

Action Steps:

1. Go back to Step Three of this book and reread the Circle of Influence Rule. Take the time to internalize the section on Mentors.
2. Follow the strategy laid out in this chapter and start acquiring the mentors you need.
 - "If you need help designing or implementing your plan, seek the advice of a professional career counselor. (But never pay large counseling fees in advance. Pay only by the hour.)" (Frank)
3. Build up a solid network of mentors to help you improve in any and every area that you're lacking in. This network will be referred to as your "board of trusted advisors".
 - Remember you can get mentors for more than only your professional life. Consider finding and recruiting mentors who can help with your mental and emotional well-being as well.

Step Six

Realize the Present Opportunities

You've made it to the final chapter! At the time of this book's writing, studies have shown that Americans read an average of only twelve books per year. So, congrats on making this book one of your reads for this year, *and* seeing it through to the very end.

The previous chapter was all about mentors and how to acquire them. And, in that process, you must keep in mind that building relationships is not the process of a microwave: it doesn't happen in minutes. Relationships take time to be slow-cooked to perfection. So, avoid rushing too heavily into building relationships with your trusted board of advisors.

For this chapter, I'll be sharing a couple of stories of mine to help give inspiration on your networking journey.

After winning my first acting award and getting so many callbacks, I found myself in a room full of producers, directors, talent agents, managers, and many other professionals in the entertainment industry who wanted to speak with me. Many of them were based in different parts of America and had a long flight to catch, so they had to leave the event early.

Not knowing who would be leaving first, I did my best to speak to as many professionals as possible who had given me a callback. As I went from one industry professional to another, some professionals saw me, recognized me from my performance, and pulled me aside to chat after realizing they had meant to give me a callback but didn't get the chance. A good problem to have—but the additional professionals who wanted to discuss possibilities slowed me down to the point that I was unable to get to everyone that had originally given me a callback.

The next morning, I made sure to email every industry professional who was at the event, regardless of if they gave me a callback or not. I figured that if they didn't like my performance, it didn't matter—we could still build a professional relationship and create win-win situations for each other.

A couple of months went by. Things died down and I didn't know what to do. I could wait around for another opportunity, but after working so hard for months and then getting so many big wins at once, it almost felt irresponsible to sit on my hands that way. I was offered a movie deal by a casting director for a project shooting in Philadelphia and had a folder full of business cards, contracts, and letters of invitation to meet with agents and managers. To go from taking my well-developed work ethic to fight for a win like that to sitting around waiting for

my wins felt very lazy and uncomfortable. So, I went to Google and typed in something along the lines of, “How to network as an actor.”

After about fifteen minutes of scrolling, reading, and more scrolling, I discovered LinkedIn. And, at the time, it was foreign to me. The first time I used it, I typed in “director” in the search box and a load of directors popped up in front of me. I wasn’t sure what I was looking at, but I saw a button that looked like an “add as a friend” button (come to find out that button was actually called “Connect,” for connecting with professionals).

As soon as I realized that this button was actually a way to add professionals as connections, I figured I would connect with as many professionals as possible. Since the button said “connect” I assumed that as soon as you clicked the button you were automatically connected, as the word implied. I didn’t know that the “connect” button was actually more of a “send a connect request button” and the receiver had to accept said request.

Needless to say, I spent a good three hours excitedly jamming my thumb on the “connect” button on every director, producer, and casting director, scrolling furiously until around eleven o’clock at night.

The next morning, I woke up to fifty-six LinkedIn notifications from different professionals who had each accepted my request. My phone buzzed periodically throughout the day to let me know that someone else had accepted my request. The buzzing continued for over a week. I now had over 200 connections on LinkedIn.

Out of that 200, only about fifteen to twenty of the professionals I connected with actually sent me a message. So, realizing I would have to reach out first (I was very new to networking at this time), I constructed a generic “thanks for joining my network” email that went something like this:

“Thank you for joining my network! I am a young actor in the MD area. I see that you have experience working in the entertainment industry. I look forward to a fruitful working relationship with everyone I connect with on LinkedIn. I see every new association as a possibility to make a friend while elevating my work to the next level!

Thank you for your time!

Ali Scarlett”

I got this networking introduction script from someone else who used it on me when we first connected. So, I copied it, made a few tweaks, and sent it out to hundreds. I assumed that if they were already on LinkedIn and had such a prepared introduction, they must know what they were doing.

Unfortunately, this is yet another reason to avoid listening to anyone who doesn’t have some form of real authority achieving what you want to achieve because, from a power

dynamics and networking point of view, there is a lot wrong with this script. We could take the time to pick this apart, but then you'd miss the rest of the story.

For a quick note on what I mean though, one problem with this cold introduction is the fact that I said "thank you for joining my network." "Thank you" sub-communicates that they've given something. So, leading with "thank you" that way frames the interaction as if I'm the only one who will be benefiting from our newfound professional relationship (Buffalmano, 2019). It takes away what could have been a great chance to underline the value that I bring to the table because typically we say "thank you" when we're receiving something like a gift. We don't often say "thank you" when we know the other side is getting something out of the exchange.

So, had I said something along the lines of "Welcome to my network," I could have avoided the slightly negative reaction that comes with signaling to others that your primary concern is finding what you can get from them. I wouldn't be surprised if the recipients of my "thank you" message were shifted into assuming that I'm a taker because of my poor word choice. The funny part is, hundreds of industry professionals received that message. Not my brightest moment, but I'm a learner.

Almost everyone who received this message didn't bother with the usual formalities you'd experience in face-to-face conversation. The main response was, "What do you want?", making me feel like most of the entertainment industry professionals were mean. Here I was, being nice, using my good manners by saying "thank you," and the few connections who actually responded were acting like I was a waste of their time (at least that's how it felt at the time, without knowing what I do now).

One of the industry professionals who was kind in response to my message was a former producer who was moving into directing. Originally, he seemed to think that I wanted something from him too, and responded by telling me he's not casting for his film at the moment. I had no idea he was casting for a film.

After some conversation, he offered to let me read the synopsis of the story for his movie. I loved the story and communicated how much I enjoyed the concept, but in the same message told him that I'm not looking for any favors at the moment. I emphasized that I'm only looking to make another friend in the entertainment industry. I established common ground, telling him what I had in common with him (from what I could tell, reading the synopsis) and his response was:

"You're close by. Would you like to meet up after the holidays in January to discuss the film and some possibilities?"

We set the date and I met up with him at the agreed-upon date and time. At this meeting, he told me that his film was an epic major motion picture with a budget of roughly

\$120 million. With a compassionate directness, he expressed to me that with a project this size, chances are I wouldn't make the cut as anything bigger than an extra.

We were meeting for the first time so, at that moment, I couldn't understand why he was underestimating me or my acting ability—but that was really my ego talking. I knew he was only trying to be nice, and I understood the situation. We continued to talk about the film until we shifted more into his passions and drives, where we connected more. We wound up talking for about four hours when he said, "Would you like to audition?"

I said "yes" and got an exclusive audition, just me and the director. Afterwards, he told me I was a great actor and embodied the character better than anyone else he had seen audition (he had seen hundreds; he had been casting for over half a year). He gave me the part. Not as an extra, but as a principal role. We went to his office (which was in another location within the same building) where he handed me a huge script and I was given a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to sign right then and there.

I tell that story to say this: re-read the title of this chapter. I gave it that title for a reason. There is more opportunity around you to be seized than you could possibly imagine if only you would create the relationships you need with the decision-makers in positions of power. If only you would only put in the work needed to get to where you want to go.

There was no time in any day where I couldn't be doing something more to advance my career. Even if the work I put into my career started with working on myself and becoming a higher-quality man, that was fine. The point is that I could always be doing something.

You may have read the chapter title and assumed that by realizing your own opportunities I meant networking your way to opportunities that benefit your career. That was definitely a big part of it, but if that's what you thought, you'd only be seeing half the picture.

There's a reason networking has the word "work" in it. What most people don't understand is that networking is more of an opportunity to work on yourself than on anything else. If you can't communicate, can't show empathy, or have a general lack of soft skills, you'll have a very, very hard time succeeding in a way that lasts.

Growing up, I didn't just have negative experiences with my family, friends, school classmates, school teachers, and soccer teammates. I was disrespected often by some of my neighbors. This is not entirely their fault. They were fed misinformation about me and my goals.

They assumed I had no plans for the future and believed the lies they were told that I wasn't going to amount to anything. I furthered that idea by choosing to lie that I had no idea what I wanted to do in life. Despite being an accomplished actor at this time with numerous connections in the entertainment industry (and an eye for real estate), I would tell them, "I'm still figuring it out."

Why did I do this? I wanted to see for myself how far the stereotype content model went. I had friends that I knew I could never abandon, simply because they had gone broke or dropped out of college. They would be low-power at that point, but I would still be there for them. I had no real family, so I considered my real friends to be my family. Regardless of any fluctuations in their value and power, I would be there. My friends were the only family I really had, so our friendships were always built on more than just money or status.

My relationships with my neighbors dissolved when they realized I was a grown adult with seemingly no direction, ambition, or goals of any kind and was not in college. There were days when they even pretended not to notice me walking by.

Every time I would get a win in my career that I chose to advertise on my social media, some of them would reach out to me. You would think that, now that my value had gone up, they'd stick around, but as soon as my win became old news they'd shut me out again. I would get another win, post about it, and the cycle would continue.

The only thing that was truly consistent in my life was self-development. I came back from wanting suicide to working on myself to make sure my choice to live was worth it. There was a time when I nearly died of kidney failure and realized how fragile life truly is. Growing up every day seeing my parents living their lives in their forties and then one day, suddenly coming close to my end at sixteen definitely didn't seem right to me. I thought I would live to at least thirty-years-old.

It made me realize that tomorrow really is a made-up idea. We never truly see it, because we're living in today, yet we plan our calendars with the expectation that we're going to wake up tomorrow. Having that experience where my tomorrow almost vanished shocked me into hustling every day to build my legacy and fulfill my purpose.

So, I worked on myself. And, as I improved, people drew nearer to me. From there, my social life slowly began to improve. I was able to identify who was wasting my time and who would be a great fit for my social circle. I weeded out the people who only saw my value and not the human being in me. I kept people around who could help my mental health. And, eventually, I created my own opportunities by first making myself into the kind of man who could create opportunities. Yet, It all started with choosing to work on myself and not just my career.

To get up from my lowest point in life, I had to push people away who were bad for me and my future. I had to say "no" to things I would've liked to have said "yes" to. I would come home, and no one would see the good in me, the hard choices I had to make day in and day out to remain a good person, or my constant struggle to develop. Instead, they saw a disappointment. My father told me, "You're a damn waste of my money," and would routinely

threaten to pull me out of the private high school. My mother eventually wanted nothing to do with me, putting me out onto the street.

I was making what could be considered “socially impressive,” career-worthy wins at that time, but I didn’t trust my mother enough to tell her about them after she cancelled my scholarship. So, since I kept all of my success a secret, she assumed I was nothing.

Here’s the key to this whole story, the primary lesson I want you to take away from this chapter is I blamed myself.

Everything my parents ever said to me, every time I had ever been abandoned, disrespected, or treated unfairly, I took full ownership. To escape the personal pain that came from never getting answers to why my negative experiences happened, I adopted what some call an “extreme locus of control.” I chose to believe that everything is my fault, because that means I can learn and grow from it. I can use those experiences as opportunities to make sure it doesn’t happen again or, if it does reoccur, that I handle it much better than I did back when I fell into depression.

Taking my pain and blaming myself for it led to me making my pain an opportunity to grow. Since it was my fault, I could change it. This was no different from me leaving my textbook at home on accident being my fault. I am able to learn from that and change by preparing my backpack the night before, moving forward.

That life-changing choice and growth in maturity led to me becoming the kind of person who could create career changing opportunities. The change in my mental health and my mindsets—my frames—led to me improving my overall health, which improved my happiness, which improved my relationships, which improved my success.

Now, that doesn't make those experiences any less painful—and you shouldn’t use this extreme locus of control to beat up on yourself. The idea is to know that you’re in control of yourself and how you react to situations in the future.

I accepted that as bad as my experiences were, they could've much been worse. My mother could've been a drug addict. Most of the abuse that she put me through was her taking her emotional pain over her collapsing marriage out on me. I don't blame her, and I thank God she never became an alcoholic.

My father was raised by physically abusive parents and that was all he knew about parenting. As I got older and after my parents’ divorce, he realized he had done all he could to provide for the family financially, but now had no family. He wasn't really around and didn't take the time to get to know me, so there was no bond.

Eventually, I reached out to him. We got closer through my kidney failure because my mother was unwilling to take me to dialysis. So, three days a week, it was only me and my father. A two-hour drive to the hospital, three hours of me hooked up to a machine that cycled my blood as I did homework, and a two-hour drive back.

Eventually, I let him know what I liked about his parenting and what I felt like he could've done better. I told him how, all things considered, I'm very proud of him. I could've been antagonistic and held resentment in my heart throughout every car ride, but I instead took responsibility and accepted all that happened.

And, eventually, I was able to forgive him for his mistakes and forgive myself for not handling my experiences better. Now my dad is my best friend to this very day. That's the power of improving your mental health and taking responsibility.

After forgiving him (and myself), we were able to talk about a lot more of our struggles and actually laugh about them. Looking back, we could remember the long, two-hour drives to my private school in my dad's broken BMW, where the window slid into the door and we had to tape a garbage bag onto the frame in its place. The interior of the door was missing (all of the metal and wires showing) and the door couldn't shut. Throughout the cold winter, I would hold the door shut for the daily two-hour drive to and from my private school. We laughed as we recalled when my father sent the car to a shop to get it fixed. And, the car repairman "fixed" the door that refused to close by welding the door onto the car. Now the car door wouldn't open.

As we laughed about the days behind us and talked more with each other, I realized that I couldn't have asked for a better dad. I only didn't know how amazing my dad was because he wasn't in my life. Before, I didn't know much about him and held resentment in my heart for that. It was only by giving myself the empowering attitude that I could take responsibility for everything negative in my life and change anything that falls under my responsibility that I could step up and warmly open the opportunity for us to reconnect, every car ride of every day.

And, in the interest of constructive empowerment, there is also an alternative to the extreme locus of control mindset that's equally as effective with none of the potential dangers.

Today, I use a variation of this "I take responsibility for everything mindset" because that extreme locus of control attitude is not for everyone. Many people would gain the same benefits of that attitude as well as greater self-esteem from an "I always go for it and do my best" mindset instead.

Some benefits of that alternative mindset are (Buffalmano, 2020):

1. It maximizes your effectiveness as well as an extreme ownership attitude can.

- a. "Once you do your best, you take the exact same actions that you would with extreme ownership."
2. It frees you from guilt.
 - a. "Once things go wrong, the question is not 'how is this my fault,' but 'what can I learn from this so that the next time my 'best' will be even better?'"
3. It better supports self-love.
 - a. "Being guilt-free and looking at yourself for the good you've done, instead of where you failed, better supports self-love (which is important for mental empowerment)."
4. It focuses on process instead of results.
 - a. "Extreme ownership is result-focused. Doing your best is process-focused. And we know that a focus on process is more likely to lead to a growth mindset. Plus, it takes the pressure off."
5. It supports a happier life.
 - a. "The extreme locus of control mindset can encourage the question, 'How is this my fault,' which is often automatically linked to the thought, 'Where did I fail' and, when things are very hard to fix, 'Why do I keep failing.'
6. Doing your best, for those who don't find the extreme locus of control as a good fit for them, makes it easier to keep a happier and more cheerful mood.

So, I encourage you to adopt an "I always go for it and do my best attitude." And, these days, I look back at my past mistakes and think to myself, "What can I learn from that to make my 'best' even better?" A healthier attitude for me than, "OK, what did I do wrong and how can I fix it to make sure it doesn't happen again?"

My final story for you here is an example of my choice to say "no" to something I would have liked to have said "yes" to. At my private high school, there were a lot of rich kids, one of whom I was friends with. Our high school campus didn't have a field for sports practice at the time, so the soccer team went to the private high school nearby for training.

This old friend of mine asked if I would do a drop for him, since I was on the soccer team. He would give me a deodorant and I would get it over to a girl at the nearby high school since I had to go there for practice anyway. And, finally, I would get a cut of the money. If you haven't already figured it out, there were drugs inside the casing of the deodorant stick instead of actual deodorant. I wanted the money, but I said "no".

The next week, I went to a restaurant with a mutual friend of ours who is also on my soccer team. When paying for his meal, he opened his wallet and pulled out a wad of hundreds. My financial situation being what it was, I had to ask how he was making so much money. He told me he picked up the same deal I had turned down and was now making good money off of it. One of my mottos was and still is "whatever it takes," but I stick to my values and follow the law regardless of how big the opportunity is. The money wasn't enough to make me break my moral code, and I am determined to never allow it to be.

Get clear on what success is to you. If you ask me, success isn't a million dollars, and it's not even ten million. It's the achievement of "the good life"—health, wealth, love, and happiness. I invested much time, energy, and money into learning the art of networking because having resources—having connections—is a real form of power.

You just learned how to network, and you can network your way to opportunities to create the good life for yourself. You also just learned how to become a high-quality individual, and can work on yourself to achieve any goal you set for yourself. Do both, and be willing to endure. Adopt a learner's attitude. Do it for yourself, because you owe it to yourself. Whatever it takes.

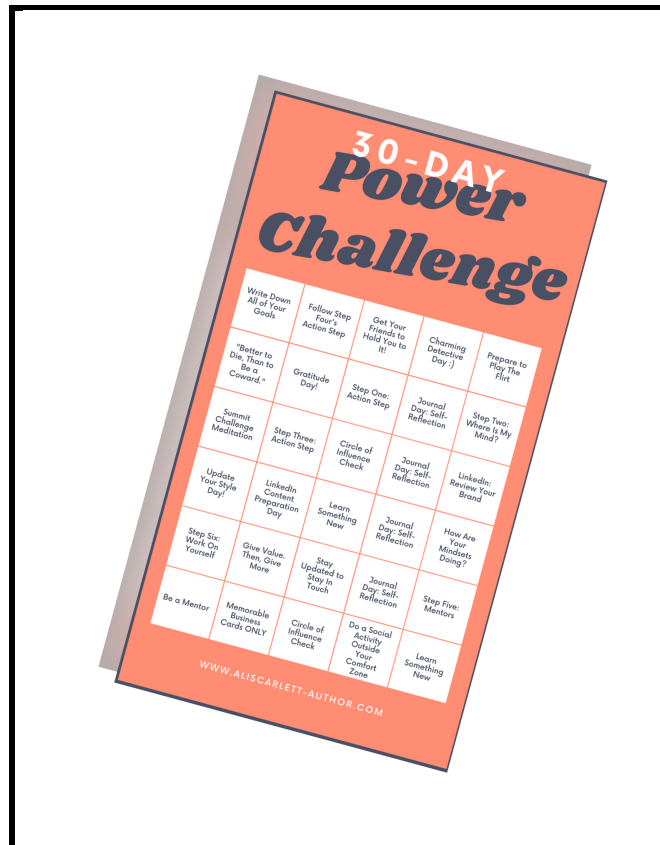
Action Steps:

1. Write down ten things you would do with a romantic partner to show them that you love them.
 - Soak in a hot tub with candles lit? Dinner and a movie? Maybe you have a hobby you enjoy that you would love to share with them such as singing, boxing, or learning a new language.
2. Schedule a day in the week where you can do as many of those things as possible on that day with yourself.
 - Learn to love yourself more. Learn to enjoy your own company. We appreciate the big things in life, like landing that promotion, but it's not often we spend time learning to appreciate the little things in life, like good food, drink, and music on a nice quiet night. Use this action step to do just that.
 - Research self-love exercises, practice a few each week, and discover what works best for you to make you feel more loved.

Next Steps

You've reached the end of the book, but don't let your learning stop here! Remember, information is a form of power, so you need to continue learning on your journey if you want the power you need to achieve your goals.

Here's a way we can continue to work together. As a part of your next steps, whenever you're ready, take this thirty-day challenge (it will take no more than twenty minutes each day) to make sure you're staying on track with everything you've learned in this book to grow your power!



This challenge can be downloaded by going to www.thecleverconnector.com/nextsteps. Upon downloading, you'll also receive clear instructions on how to complete each day's new challenge!

Afterword

Your Journey Starts Now

Do you know more about networking now than before you started reading this book? If yes, that knowledge is information that can be used as power to achieve your goals. In the beginning of this book, we talked about the three forms of power in this world and that information is one of them. Don't let this be the end of your journey. Let it be the beginning.

When I was younger, I felt like I was treated in ways that I didn't deserve to be treated in because I didn't hurt anybody. And yet, they didn't hesitate to hurt me and give emotional rewards—give love—to those who I felt weren't better people than me.

It was then that I felt trapped in a world that didn't make sense. A world that had rules I couldn't live with, and a world I didn't want to be a part of.

But, it was in learning the rules of the world that I was able to learn how to leverage those rules into my favor and win without having to change who I am. I could be a "nice guy" who finished first.

We all have the power to turn our pain into something good.

I turned my pain into purpose to satisfy an internal need for my pain to have happened for a reason. It felt like there was no reason why people should have treated me the way that they did, so I gave myself a (positive) reason so I could stay sane (and stay alive). I believed that my pain happened so I could grow into a better person. So I could have what it takes to become a great leader for myself and others.

And, when I was isolated and left to die, I was only 16-years-old. The way I saw it, I was a child robbed of his happiness and joyful childhood experiences because of the selfishness of the world.

So, now that I've moved forward and grown into someone who can help others avoid that pain I felt, I want to give. I want to be for myself and others what no one was for me. I can either be like the people who hurt me and care less about others or be like the people who later helped me and care more about others. And, I choose to be like the people who helped me so others can have the happiness I didn't get to have.

With that said, at my lowest point, I didn't see a light at the end of the tunnel because I didn't think I was in a tunnel. I thought I was in a hole. And, no one cared enough to pull me out.

But, that was stemming from a belief that I was a victim. The truth was, the only things standing between me and anything I wanted to accomplish are time and a skill set. And, the same is true for you.

Don't let negative beliefs stop you from creating a life you enjoy. The right information can help you develop the right skill sets to bridge the gap between you and your dreams. Even if your dream is reaching the light at the end of a tunnel, or fighting your way out of a hole and climbing out of hell.

Now, I encourage dreams because I believe dreams are important. And, if you decide to put a deadline on your dream, then suddenly that dream becomes a goal, which is also important. Goals mobilize our focus toward the actions that force us to improve as individuals and become the kinds of people capable of achieving our dreams. But it all starts with just that: a dream. However, what is possibly more important than dreams (or goals) is having the power to achieve those dreams.

“All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act on their dreams with open eyes, to make them possible.” - T. E. Lawrence

Many of the young people today who hold dreams, goals, and ambitions are lacking the power they need to achieve their desired end results. When this happens, they are at risk of losing the motivation they need to keep striving toward their dreams because there's another option: the easy way out.

Many teenagers are engaging in counter-productive, self-destructive, or irresponsible behaviors. A 2020 report by the Addiction Center revealed that, “1 in 5 teens have abused prescription medications, according to the Centers for Disease Control and 1 in 3 parents believe there is little they can do to prevent teen drug use despite evidence that shows parental involvement is the strongest factor in prevention.” (Juergens & Hampton, 2021) And, unfortunately, that number is only likely to continue rising.

It's easy for young people to do drugs and engage in self-destructive activities of the like. It's easy for young people who were once dreamers of the day, fighting for their goals, to turn into people who only dream by night. This means that when there are even a few young people who decide to take the hard route toward the achievement of their own personal goals, it's very important that they have access to the tools they need to stay on that positive path, so as to prevent them from falling into the masses of young people who possess no such ambition and make the easy choice.

This brings us to the root of the problem. Almost everyone knows that they need money to get to where they want to go in life, especially since most challenging endeavors and worthy goals aren't cheap to accomplish. However, the younger generation chalks this up to money being the sole resource they need to bridge the gap between them and their goals.

While they're on the right track in terms of acknowledging and showing respect for the importance of money, they recognize it as the only form of power able to bring them success. They start off on the right foot by getting a job, but most young people enter a job asking: "Where do I fit? What do you value in me?" (Elmore) They ask these questions in the hopes that with the answer they'll be able to thrive wherever it is that they believe they fit. They plan on doubling down on what others value in them so they can get that raise, promotion, etc.

That's all good and well, but this leads to them forgetting about the other forms of power they could be using to reach their desired end result. They spend too much time appreciating their hard skills and give less thought to the importance of soft skills as well as other resources. There's a great point by Dr. Tim Elmore on this, who's the president of Growing Leaders. Dr. Elmore says:

"In American history, our public school system in our country was founded by a guy named Horace Mann. At least that's what we attribute it to. Horace Mann first called the public school system the normal school because they were designed to help kids prepare for the norms of society. So I was just with educators yesterday and I said, 'Are we doing that? Can you say what you're doing in the classroom is getting them ready to have a successful career, to lead a good family, to thrive in a community, to make a difference, to change something before you die?' And, you know, most of the teachers kind of go, 'I don't know.'" (Stotz & Elmore)

In other words, our school system has failed to prepare young individuals for the real world. Chances are this isn't news to you, the real question we must answer is in "how" the school system has failed our younger generation. By understanding that, we can diagnose the problem, take a look at what young people are lacking and, in doing so, provide them with the tools they need but were not given in school.

There are many things that could serve to be taught in school that would be of great use to young people, such as taxes, personal finance, logical and deductive reasoning, and even healthy skepticism. I believe that the educators of today are doing their best, but the current educational system we have now often provides the hard skills that employers are looking for on resumes but does not spend nearly enough time developing the soft skills that help people move forward in life.

"Success in the classroom is often 75% IQ and 25% EQ, emotional intelligence. You get out into the working world, it's often the other way around, it's 75% EQ. It's your emotional intelligence." (Stotz & Elmore)

Hard skills such as math, technology, and engineering are important, but if you can't get along with a teammate, you're not very good at communicating with your boss, or your emotional intelligence is lacking, your lack of these basic skills could cost you your job and ultimately sabotage your career, as well as your personal life. So, all of the grades were right on your report card but, unluckily, you weren't able to translate those calculus lessons into a real life situation.

If you're making progress on your goals slowly, it's likely because you're lacking the soft skills needed to go farther faster. As sociologist Lucio Buffalmano put it:

“Tech skills give you job security. People skills give you board seats.” (Buffalmano, 2020)

Therefore, the obvious solution is to learn and develop soft skills. “‘People skills’ are just as important as ‘technical skills,’ because even in highly technical jobs, you have to work with others. Many outplacement candidates are technical superstars who've been fired. They knew their jobs, but couldn't collaborate or get along with others. Average performers with strong people skills often last longer. It's better to be a ‘people person’ with average skills than to be an abrasive expert who wins at the expense of others.” (Frank)

Skills alone are not enough. Knowledge alone makes you book smart, but applied knowledge will take you further in life than you could possibly imagine.

“Remember, to learn and not to do is really not to learn. To know and not to do is really not to know.” (Covey, 2004)

Therefore, the next step is to apply those soft skills to your life and daily situations. And, one of the most effective ways to do that is with networking.

But, as we discussed before, before you can start networking to achieve your goals, you have to start with your why, which is why we spent so much time on it in Chapter Two. You have to know the purpose behind why you're doing what you're doing.

Eventually, if you decide to pursue discovery of your purpose, you'll have to come to terms with understanding that you don't ask life what your purpose is; life asks you. Whatever your response, life will agree.

So, if you decide to make your purpose robbing banks, life won't grow legs and hunt you down to stop you. The only thing I really knew about my pain was that I hated it. I knew that it wasn't fair, and it was only because I grew up too fast that I was able to handle my problems like an adult at such a young age. But, what about the people who don't have my

strength of will that are suffering the same things I went through? What about the people who are the same age as I was back then and aren't sure how to handle the pain of the experiences I'd already endured? The way I saw it, I could either share what I learned on my long, arduous journey so they can save themselves the time and unnecessary suffering, or leave those people to figure it out for themselves. And, I chose the first option. That was one of my biggest motivators for writing this book. My *purpose* behind creating this project.

Once you have your purpose—your “why”—you can start networking. But, once again, as explained in Step One, you will have an easier time networking if you are high-value.

Chances are, in today's world, you'd have a hard time finding someone who didn't want to be friends with a powerful celebrity. Even if only for bragging rights, most everyone would be happy to have a powerful friend. They would enjoy having someone successful in their social circle. This is why it's important to work on becoming high-power (high-value): to achieve the highest level of networking success. Not only so you can be that powerful friend that others want to be around, but so that when you want to befriend other powerful people they see you as someone who brings enough value to the table to be worth collaborating with. If you don't bring value to the table, they could view you as a taker. And, one way to be a high-value individual is to become a high-quality individual.

As a final note, your self-talk is important. Negative self-talk will hold you back. Some will label their negative talk as just “healthy realism.” But, if you're truly using healthy realism, then you're using realistic self-talk and not negative self-talk. There is a difference.

Negative self-talk would be telling yourself you should quit. Maybe you should. I believe in quitting, but only if you're quitting something that's holding you back or distracting you from your main objective. If you know that you shouldn't quit, don't tell yourself that you should. That's negative self-talk.

Develop into a high-quality individual and use constructive self-talk to help you along the way toward getting what you deserve in life. You don't have to settle for disrespect or abuse, and you certainly don't have to settle for less than the success or respect a high-quality person receives.

As you might've noticed, the title of this afterword follows the MASTER acronym we started with in the beginning:

1. Master the Power Dynamics
2. Adopt the Helpful Mindsets
3. Specialize the Basic Guidelines
4. Test the Networking Strategies
5. Enlist the Good Mentors
6. Realize the Present Opportunities

7. Your Journey Starts Now

MASTERY. To achieve mastery, continue absorbing information like a sponge. And, use that information to go get the life of happiness you dream about.

We all have the ability to apply information and grow. We can all work on ourselves. And, we all have the power to become more than we are today. We can fight our personal demons and we can aim to turn our pain into something good. We can all climb out of hell.

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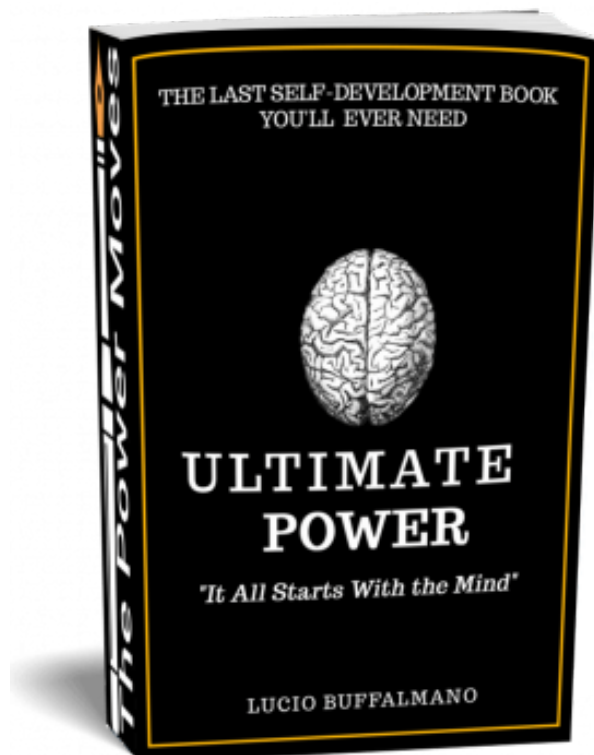
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Jared Beverly: For being the incredible listener and friend that you are from back when I desperately needed someone to talk to up to this very day.

Read More!

Want another book to sink your teeth (eyes?) into? You can grab the complete guide to growing your personal power (the last self-help book you'll ever need) by going to

<https://thepowermoves.com/downloads/ultimate-power!>



“The only things standing between you and anything you want to accomplish are time and a skillset. The question is, what do you need to learn to achieve it.” - Lucio Buffalmano

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About the Author



Ali Scarlett is a #1 national bestselling author, entrepreneur, and avid researcher of the sociology of networking.

His website, thecleverconnector.com, summarizes academic papers on various applications to business networking. Everything is clear and lighthearted.

You can get a variety of free, in-depth tutorials and resources at thecleverconnector.com/guides.

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Ali is an enthusiastic (but terrible) pool player and will occasionally make a mean Jamaican-style dish.

He has also studied the likes of professional sociologists, applied psychology researchers, and other business networking experts when defining his methods.

Ali's education and experience have provided many opportunities for him to give back. To help himself and others so we can achieve personal empowerment, Ali uses helpful information as the pathway to achieving more — by applying and sharing all of the wisdom he acquires as a lifelong student of personal and professional development.

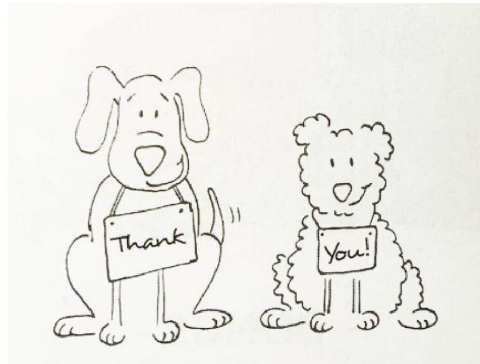
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WAIT!



Thank You and Congratulations!

If you're reading this, you can smile knowing we've officially made it to the actual end of the book!

I'm really grateful for your feedback, and I love hearing what you have to say.

So, when it comes to networking, do you know more now than before you started reading this book?

If so, please leave me an honest review on Amazon letting me know what you thought because your input is very helpful to make the next version of this book and my future books better.

Cheers!

~ Ali Scarlett