

CLICK

Ten Truths for Building
Extraordinary Relationships

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Introduction

*Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
but by the moments that take our breath away.*

—George Carlin

DOES THE IDEA of networking make you cringe?

Does the word conjure up awkward images of standing alone at a mandatory company meeting that's bustling with people who all seem to know each other—and when you do make small talk with someone, it feels fake and self-serving? Or does the word remind you of ruthless men and women you've met who seem like they're competing on a TV reality show called *Extreme Networking*? They act like the first contestant to meet, impress, and get promoted by the CEO earns a luxury corner office, a fat salary, and an express pass up the company ladder. And they'll do anything to win.

Perhaps the term *networking* reminds you of other folks who are betting on the business card game to hit their career jackpot.

You know the ones: you meet them at conferences, at receptions, and even in elevators. They pass out business cards like they're blackjack dealers, demanding your card in exchange. Then these one-armed bandits call weeks or months later, as if they've fed your business card into a slot machine, and your name suddenly popped up, three-in-a-row, in the little windows. *Cha-ching!*

They call you, trying to cash in on your contacts. These strangers boldly ask you to get them a job, purchase something from them, contribute to their nonprofit organization—even invest your time and energy as their mentor—yet they barely know you or you them.

Networking on a personal level can feel just as ruthless. If you're a single woman, for example, and you're hoping to meet Mr. Right, a professional conference can feel as much like a meat market as a nightclub. It may seem like everyone is out to get something, and that something might be you—personally or professionally.

For those of you for whom any of the above scenarios rouses a groan of recognition, I'm going to share new insights that can transform your every negative twinge about networking into something beautiful and powerful. As I've studied the laboratory of humanity and researched attitudes about networking, I've pinpointed Ten Truths for connecting and ultimately “clicking” with people. With these insider secrets, you'll be able to build extraordinary relationships. You'll feel reconnected with men and women in a world where technology, corporate downsizing, and distrust are disconnecting us more and more every day.

The first question I had to ask myself regarding this disconnection and social isolation I see in people is, why does it even exist? The culprits include communication technology, the Internet, suburban sprawl, two-career families, and television. We used to all

gather as families around the one TV or radio in a home for much of our social interaction, but as television and radio programming quickly migrates from the family room onto desktops, laptops, cell phones, portable video game players, and iPods, it forces us into isolation.

What can be done? According to Harvard University professor Robert Putnam, author of the book *Bowling Alone*, “We can solve this problem fairly easily by simply getting more involved in our communities and spending more time with family and friends. Family-friendly workplaces would help too. Reaching out to a neighbor or connecting with a long-lost pal—even having a picnic or two could just save your life.”

Here’s a novel idea. A pet site like Dogster.com “is another way for humans to connect,” writes Malak Hamive of *Newsweek*. “Owners, who communicate with one another mainly in the voices of their animals, usually wind up making human friends.”

That’s how my wife of thirty-four years, Jean, connected with almost everyone in our cluster home development. While walking Bandit, our twelve-year-old shih tzu, Jean met other dog lovers, joggers who love dogs, walkers who love dogs, and other dogs and cats who love dogs. Very quickly, Jean knew everybody and their business. Our home soon became animal and information central; a few deer even dropped by to eat our geraniums, catch up, and sniff Bandit.

“Connections with other people affect not only the quality of our lives but also our survival,” writes Dean Ornish, M.D., in his book *Love and Survival*. “Study after study finds that people who feel lonely are many times more likely to get cardiovascular disease than those who have a strong sense of community. I’m not aware of any other factor in medicine—not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery—that has a greater

impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness and premature death.”

Throughout *Click*, you’ll find sparkling gems of truth that will enable you to make magic happen and connect on every level of your life. These Truths are simple yet profound. They’re about changing the way you network so that you connect with people on a level that is much deeper and more productive than exchanging business cards. I’m talking about the kinds of personal connections that draw two or more people together for an extraordinary marriage, a lifelong friendship, a winning team, or a business relationship that creates an innovative product that enriches people’s lives. Some folks achieve this through the activity of networking, which leads to a great connection that will click. But most relationships seem to fall short.

I can best illustrate this point if you think of a key that is precisely cut to fit a particular lock. When you insert that key into the lock, and you turn the key, it clicks and the door opens. We can view our relationships the same way. A combination lock requires knowing the three numbers in perfect sequence so that the lock opens with a definitive click. The fullness of a relationship can open up to us just as easily and gracefully, or with similar ease.

In this book, I will explain exactly how you can click with people and enjoy extraordinary relationships. To do that, I will show that networking is the ongoing, lifelong activity of identifying those with whom you wish to build new relationships; connecting is the developmental process of finding, cultivating, nurturing, and building relationships; and clicking is when at least two people add special value to each other and create synergy. My main goal is to help you connect and click with more people in business and in life.

Chemistry, Fit, and Timing

We click when the following three variables align with another person's: chemistry, fit, and timing. This combination forms the DNA of all relationships, especially those we enjoy with good friends, partners, marriages, winning teams, and organizations.

Are there public figures, companies, and brands that we click with? Absolutely! Advertising and public relations are part of the equation, but even so, these brands and people wow us and we buy into what they are selling, saying, or doing. People like Oprah Winfrey, Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods, Julia Roberts, Bono, and Barack Obama all have it. And whether it's the innovation of Apple, the customer service of Nordstrom, the wholesomeness of Disney, or the rebelliousness of Harley Davidson, these companies and brands all inspire a loyalty based on their ability to connect with their customer.

To explore this idea of a “formula” for relationships, I spent a day with Dr. Lidia Cucurull, a Ph.D. in physics and math. A scientist at the Joint Center for Satellite Data Assimilation, in Washington, D.C., she was so moved by the concept of *Click* that she helped me formulate the three variables of a relationship—chemistry, fit, and timing—into the following equation:

$$C^2 \times F \times \sqrt{T} = CL$$

C²: Chemistry is squared because it is the most important variable and therefore is heavily weighted in the equation. It is a variable over which we have some control.

×: × is used instead of + because × means that all variables must be present to achieve CL, or “Click.”

F: Fit is heavily influenced by trust and common goals.

\sqrt{T} : Timing is square rooted because it has the least value or weight and can be managed or controlled to a great extent.

Chemistry involves: emotions, aura, charisma, posture, energy, physiology, smell (pheromones), gut feelings, clothing, appearance, humor, and temperament.

Fit pertains to: common goals and objectives, shared values and mores, shared experiences, shared circumstances, shared projects, shared vision/mission, high levels of trust, common interests, common focus, or unusual circumstances.

Timing can be: planned, managed, and it can relate to circumstances and happenstance.

From Networking to Clicking

I am sharing this equation and these Truths because I want to help you master your ability to create wonderful relationships in your personal and professional lives. Networking, as I have been saying for more than three decades, is the way to achieve that. However, after observing all that is wrong with the way we network, and after studying how successful people click to form phenomenal relationships, partnerships, and teams, I am taking the concept of networking to a much higher level.

My goal with this book is to correct networking wrongs and show you exactly what I do to connect and click with so many great people, to lay out for you the very thing that inspires so many men and women across America and the world who look to me for advice. I want to change the opinions of all those who cringe when they hear the word *networking*. I want to show people how to network in a better way and how to get a better result.

The frank confessions of networking gone wrong found in this book, deal a devastating blow to me as someone who's invested three decades of my life to studying and praising the gospel of this subject. I do this because it is my passion and my purpose to teach people how to tap into the richest resource on the planet—other people—to achieve goals and share their talents in business and in life. Yet the most common mistake that people make in networking is to focus on their own needs, without finding a way to serve, to give or to add value to the person they've identified to meet.

On top of that, many people view networking as the small talk that's just a ploy to butter someone up to get something. Most people loathe small talk. It feels trite and awkward. And it reinforces the feeling that networking is just a self-serving game in which people use, and in some cases, abuse each other, or as I once heard someone say, "Networking is the unpleasant task of trading favors with strangers."

Why is networking and thus building potent relationships that click so important to you personally? Because well-developed networks deliver three unique advantages, according to Brian Uzzi and Shannon Dunlap in their *Harvard Business Review* article, "How to Build Your Network": private information, access to diverse skill sets, and access to power networks.

The first advantage is the private information gathered from personal contacts who can offer something unique that cannot be found in the public domain; most serious business deals and job opportunities are the result of private information. My last three leadership positions, with Procter & Gamble, United Way, and the Ford Motor Company, all came as a result of close and trusted personal relationships with friends. These are all people I had originally met at conferences, trade shows, social events, and/or informal shared activities such as volunteering for United Negro College Fund (UNCF), The Great Lakes Theater Festival, or the Cleveland Ballet.

The second major advantage of a network of diverse connections is immediate access to a broad array of skill sets. Most of my best ideas and results have come from filtering my thoughts through a wide variety of skilled professionals in my network. Whether it's a graphic design theme for my PowerNetworking Conference or a new book idea, I seek input from a "kitchen cabinet" of people I know, like, and trust. It was Linus Pauling, the double Nobel Prize winner, who said, "The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas." Said another way, your key to success will be directly related to your willingness to ask people for help. And whomever you're asking for help is your network. Transcending your natural skill limitations through others will significantly increase your success ratio.

The final advantage of a network of diverse connections with whom you click is your ability to become a leader and/or power broker. According to Uzzi and Dunlap, "new age 'power' is now more embedded in a flatter organization as opposed to being at the top of the pyramid." So, people like me who are not high profile within the community can still be effective and be considered

a power broker. Why? Because I've used my strong interpersonal skills to develop trusting relationships with key people who influence specific intellectual, social, civic, and business groups. Thus I've helped to connect the separate clusters, synthesize opposing points of view, and ultimately stimulate collaboration and contribute to the

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—Nobel Prize winner
Linus Pauling

resolution of key issues among these independent and culturally diverse groups. My annual PowerNetworking Conference and PBS personality Tavis Smiley's State of the Black Union symposium are good examples of the manifestation of this power through a net-

work of diverse connections. To that end, great hope is available for anyone who possesses the requisite interpersonal skills to lead, have power, and therefore effect change, regardless of where he or she is in the social, civic, or business hierarchy.

My modest beginnings prove this point. I was orphaned at four and grew up in foster homes all my life. Although I was encouraged to quit school and go to work, I graduated from Thomas Edison Vocational High School in 1963; I had a diploma in cabinet making because I was not considered college material. I had little hope and no expectations. I had no special skills and no elite network of contacts to tap into. What I had, but didn't know at the time, were strong interpersonal skills that would facilitate every job offer I ever received, every promotion I ever earned, and every friend I would ever need to eventually become a top earner and a successful businessman at the very pinnacle of my evolving profession.

Within thirty years, I had become a master networker, meeting thousands of people along the way, connecting with many, and clicking with the relative few who would change my life as I would change theirs. We didn't know at the time why the synergies of our newfound relationship worked so well; we just knew we clicked on many levels. We wanted many of the same things in life; we shared common interests and common ground, and our aspirations and inspirations intersected. Several hundred of those relationships from work, family, and the community are still alive, well, and productive today.

Connecting with people determines which business deals get done, who gets elected, who becomes a star, which new drugs are prescribed, who gets promoted, who you'll marry, and who buries you. Connecting, when done with finesse, can spark spectacular partnerships. It can link groups, communities, friends, mentors, bosses, and employees. No doubt about it, connecting makes

the business world go round: no less than 85 percent of all jobs are secured through networking, connecting, and, ultimately, clicking.

It is my desire to fix whatever might be wrong with the way many people network. It's my goal to make you feel good when you hear the word *networking*. Instead of cringing, I want you to smile with the knowledge that networking is taking your life to a better place, and helping others as a result.

The very folks who tell me that networking makes them cringe are the ones who—upon further conversation—reveal that their networking techniques are profoundly flawed. These men and women—from everyday folks to CEOs—provide powerful observations in my human laboratory. Now I'm ready to report my findings to you.

Networking Versus Connecting

Let's start with the difference between “networking” and “connecting.” Think of connecting/clicking as the Ph.D. of networking. If networking is the handshake and the smile, then connecting/clicking are the heartfelt feeling, the trust, and the exciting burst of energy that sparks when we meet someone who shares our values, can add value, or takes interest by questioning our reasoning and challenges us.

In contrast, many networking relationships are flimsy because they feel self-serving. The ability to connect is blocked by a lack of common ground and shared values, principles, and goals. This occurs because you are interacting with someone whose job allows him or her to control something that you want—a job, a contract, etc. As soon as that situation disintegrates, nothing remains to sustain a relationship. In effect, this relationship is motivated by

the deal, the promotion, the dollars. Approaching relationships from this mind-set is all about take, take, take for me, me, me. Perhaps this is why a Gallup study showed that almost 50 percent of people polled say the most nagging aspect of networking is “wasting time” with people who may lack the skills, resources, or desire to help us.

Instead, Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, recommends that the first step to advancing on any level begins with studying a new way of thinking and incorporating a new model for success into the way we pursue and cultivate relationships. Covey writes, “If you want to make minor, incremental changes and improvements, work on practices, behavior, or attitude. But if you want to make significant, quantum improvements, work on paradigms.”

In this book, I offer you that paradigm. Below is a chart to help you compare and contrast the differences between what most people call networking and what I call connecting/clicking.

Connecting/Clicking is . . .
Networking often is . . .
Sharing common ground

You tend to bond with those who have similar dislikes and experiences regarding people, places, and things.

Superficial

Your relationship may never reveal similar likes or go deeper than friendly chit-chat.

Value-based

You team up with people who share your values and principles. You focus on matters of the heart before goals in the head.

Goal-based

You interact with someone to search for leads, make a deal, get a job, etc.

Connecting/Clicking is . . .**Assumed trust**

You believe in the good of people, first.

Synergistic

Both people bring something to help the other; together your efforts don't make two, but eleven!

Relational

Your relationship is about the person: building rapport, what you can do to enhance them or help others.

Mutually beneficial

Both parties enter the relationship feeling enthusiastic and excited about projects and profits that they will create together.

A conscious, strategic process

You choose the people with whom you would like to connect and stay open to attracting like-minded colleagues.

Holistic

You connect with people with the mutual goal of helping others.

Networking often is . . .**Earned trust**

You are guarded until people prove themselves trustworthy.

Compromise

Two people come together; I give up something, and you give up something, and together we have one-and-a-half.

Transactional

Your relationship is about the deal, exchange of cards, the immediate sale, the transaction.

Often one-sided

One person pursues another with the hope of landing a job, making the sale, etc.

A haphazard process

You cast a wide net hoping for a "chance" introduction to someone who can help you.

Often materialistic

You cultivate a relationship with your eye on a thing(s).

Connecting/Clicking is . . .**Multidimensional**

*You win, I win, others win.
Resources and ideas are shared
to help a lot of people.*

A long-term commitment

You plan to cultivate a meaningful relationship over time, by sowing seeds.

Networking often is . . .**One-dimensional**

It's all about me getting what I can from you.

Temporary

The relationship ends when the deal is done.

Think about how the above dynamics played out the last time you met someone new while networking. Chances are, your interaction began with a strong handshake, a warm smile, eye contact, and a short, punchy introduction about fifteen seconds long. Add good listening skills, and your networking activity shifts into high gear. All of the habits listed in the chart tell other people they are interesting and special.

Now think about how you move the conversation beyond the weather and sports scores when you are trying to connect with someone new. You evaluate them through your invisible lens of chemistry, fit, and timing:

You play golf? Oh I golf, too.
You're from Chicago? So am I.
You're a vegetarian? So am I.
You have twins? Me, too.
You're going to start a charter school? So am I.

This common ground inspires conversations, friendships, and business deals. Why? Because when we meet someone who has

something in common with us, it creates comfort and builds trust. With speed and sincerity, you communicate your goals and values; people who resonate to your intent will respond.

And if you establish a connected relationship, you can reap tremendous benefits. Your new partner will share opportunities, an empathetic ear, and fresh ideas. The more common ground you have, the better the fit and the higher the trust level. And the higher the trust level, the more a person is willing to share key contacts, information, and resources.

The “Click” equation, in conjunction with the Truths, is a powerful formula for creating phenomenal relationships in your life and evaluating relationships that do not work. In essence, it is the DNA to build on, attract, and nurture relationships that are fulfilling, productive, and beneficial to you, the other person, and others. So let’s get started. First, think about what networking means to you. For most people, networking starts with the premise: “I’m going to get something out of this relationship.”

But that’s backward. You have to flip it around and network with the goal of “I’m going to give something in this relationship.”

So let’s get started. First, think about what networking means to you. For most people, networking starts with the premise: “I’m going to get something out of this relationship.”

The goal of all networking is to find a human connection and then *add value*. Those two little words spell rocket fuel when it comes to connecting. Now say it out loud: “I want to add value to every person and situation I encounter.” And when you meet someone new, ask, “How can I use my talents, connections, and resources to enhance this person’s business and/or life?”

This is Truth #3: Love, Serve, Give, and Add Value—First! Incorporating this truth into your life allows you to

network and connect for the right reasons. It reminds you that in order to get, you must give first. Then, whatever you give sparkles back on you a thousand fold.

In this book, you'll find intriguing anecdotes from accomplished men and women who practice these Truths as the secrets for their success in business and in life. With me they share real-life—and sometimes intimate—experiences that reflect the power of my Ten Truths, even if the outcome is embarrassing, humbling, or just plain ugly.

International business consultant Hattie Hill lives by all Ten Truths, including the one about giving first. And when she encounters someone who doesn't exhibit the give first attitude, she feels a disconnect. "When I meet someone who clearly just wants to take, take, take whatever they think they can get from me," says Dallas-based Hill, "I decide it's time to prune this person from my inner circle, or my relationship tree. A great relationship is a connection in which I share with you, you share with me, and together we create something wonderful for everybody."

When Hattie talks about pruning, she's not referring to her garden. She's touting Truth #5: Bless Them and Release Them. If our relationships form a tree of life, then you've got to snip the branches that are a toxic drain on your strength and ability to grow the most succulent fruit. This is rooted in one of my favorite Fraser-isms: If you want to change your life, change your relationships. At some point we realize that we can't spend major time with minor people.

Writer Nina Brown took that to heart, as she explains in Truth #5, by pruning her relationship tree of its most luscious fruit: her lover. At first he looked and tasted like a sweet, golden apple. But as time always tells the truth about people, her lover began to bare his bitter spots. And Nina lost her appetite for him. "If a lover is our mirror image," Nina says, "then Damion reflected some things that I needed to change about myself. By cutting him loose, I

made room to grow stronger, healthier relationships, starting with myself. In fact, the other day someone said, ‘You’re glowing! Are you in love?’ And I realized, ‘Yes, with the new person I’m becoming by living these Ten Truths.’ ”

From your personal life to your professional persona, the Ten Truths for connecting with people play out in ways that make your reputation gleam in the eyes of the powers-that-be.

Craig Callé learned that the awkward way during a high-stakes business trip to Scotland. As the assistant to the CEO of an international investment company, Callé was staying at the most luxurious hotel in town. In the midst of chauffeured cars, a private jet, and big-money negotiations, Callé got a reminder of the platinum rule that’s Truth #7: Tailor Your Relationships for the Perfect Fit. “My behavior in this particular situation taught me an unwritten, unspoken point of etiquette,” says the San Francisco founder of Common.Net. “It’s something that, while small and even trivial to others at the time, was something that I incorporated into our [Callé and his CEO’s] relationship . . . to connect the dots, so I could treat him as he wished to be treated.”

Veronica Conway approaches her fairytale romance with the same idea, as she lives Truth #6: Trust First; Distrust Must Be Earned. But how do you do that when both the man and the woman are so attractive, powerful, and prominent—that flirtatious admirers are fawning at every turn? The answer is trust, which is the bedrock of every relationship. But that can be a challenge even for couples whose connection is so intense that “time stood still” when they met. Veronica offers some unusual insights into how she’s learned to trust.

“You can’t trust another person until you fully trust yourself” she says. “Trust is an inside-out job. Because once you trust yourself, you don’t need to trust others. I need to trust me and how I respond with my skills and abilities to whatever life brings. When

you trust yourself, and you trust the process of life, that eliminates that whole question of ‘Do I trust you?’ ”

She treats relationships with the kind of open mind that exemplifies Truth #9: Be Open to Everything and Attached to Nothing; the Best Idea Wins. That reinforces one of my favorite quotes from leadership expert John Maxwell, and what is Truth #10: It Takes Teamwork to Make the Dream Work.

Because you cannot do this alone, one is not a sufficient number to achieve greatness. In fact, all entrepreneurship, job searches, and upward mobility are networking initiatives. And the key to success is directly related to your willingness to ask for help from people you trust, and who believe in you. You cannot attain, sustain, or maintain success without working with and through all kinds of people. You must connect to reach success.

It’s Time to Reconnect

I’m making an urgent call for all of us to reconnect in our disconnected world. Everything from our health to our life spans to our careers to our personal happiness depends on our ability to share fulfilling relationships with friends, family, lovers, colleagues, clients, and even strangers. In fact, scientific research proves that we catch fewer colds, we feel happier, we make more money, and we even live longer when we enjoy great relationships.

But the very technology that’s supposed to connect us so quickly and conveniently—is actually disconnecting us from human contact. Need proof? Look around. Look around many restaurants at lunchtime and you’ll see folks sitting together, but everybody’s talking into cell phones or typing into text message devices. They’re using beeping, blinking gadgets to disconnect from the people around them.

Not only that, but we spend less time together. Corporate downsizing often forces one person to do the work of three. That means longer hours and lunching alone at one's desk. Working parents, business travelers, and too many others are chronically sleep-deprived. That causes withdrawal and depression.

We distrust and shun people. Crime, corporate scandals, and competition have obliterated the belief that "a friend of yours is a friend of mine." I witness the ravages of this everywhere I go, from crowded restaurants to bustling offices to jam-packed elevators. I see people who are emotionally, physically, and spiritually disconnected from each other. This makes my heart ache: the more technologically connected we become, the more disconnected we are as people.

How can we reverse this trend and progress forward into a life that's rich with emotional, spiritual, and financial reward? By connecting to create deep, powerful, long-lasting relationships. So please study and apply my Ten Truths to your life. They are the building blocks of extraordinary relationships that will help you get reconnected in our disconnected world. And you'll never cringe again when you hear the word *networking*. In fact, you'll smile, because you'll be living and loving the abundant success and happiness of connecting and clicking with more and more people.