

BRIDGING THE HUMAN DIVIDE

10
KEYS

**TO POWERFUL
PERSONAL
CONNECTIONS**



Dan Casetta

WHAT IF YOU KNEW THAT SOMEONE YOU'LL MEET TODAY WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

How would this knowledge alter your interactions with others throughout the day? Would you....

- Dress any differently?
- Manage your emotions any better?
- Be more on the alert for opportunities to serve others?

Over the years, I have had a chance to work with literally thousands of successful sales reps and hundreds of great leaders. I have networked with amazing individuals in many walks of life, and had a chance to closely observe what makes certain people great at connecting with others. I have also studied the works of great teachers such as Dale Carnegie, Napoleon Hill, Stephen Covey, Jim Rohn, Tony Robbins, and many others.

I have implemented these ideas into my own daily life, and I have grown an amazing network of high-achievers and transformational leaders throughout the communities in which I engage, especially in my home Silicon Valley area. I am now known as a "connector of good ideas and great people." The same can be said of you in the future.

What follows is a compilation of the 10 most important ways to establish a strong connection with people around you in your personal and work life.



1. EXUDE POSITIVE ENERGY.

Most tips on connecting with people stress the importance of making a good first impression, and I certainly agree with that. This concept, though, is less about how you dress or act and more about how you make people FEEL. It's less about your appearance and more about your energy.

When you walk into a room or when someone first sees you, what type of emotional response do they have? The most successful “connectors” in life are great at producing a consistently positive emotional response from the people they encounter. How do you do this?

- First, come from a place of gratitude for your daily blessings.
This mentality will facilitate a positive vibe, and prevent you from falling into the common trap of complaining about all the little day-to-day challenges that we all face.
- Smile when interacting with others. Your countenance creates an immediate feeling in others around you. Be aware of this important point.
- Offer your name up front. Offering your name conveys interest and makes others feel more comfortable with you.
- Remember and use others' names. Carnegie wrote many years ago: “The sweetest sound in any language is the sound of one's own name being spoken.”

Just think of every interaction as either giving energy or taking it. Strive to be a light in people's days, one that gives them more energy than before they encountered you. By doing this most of the time, you will become the kind of person that people WANT to be around and want to talk with. Your opportunity for deep connection will now be wide open.

2. DEVELOP AND SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN OTHER PEOPLE.

There's an old adage that we have all heard: **"People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."** It's true. Your influence is drastically limited until you establish rapport with another person. You begin to accomplish that by taking an interest in them. Learn to question skillfully to learn more about others and find commonalities.

My good friend, Jon Vroman, teaches a simple concept for connecting with others. He calls it "Three Questions." As someone new in your life begins to tell you a little bit about him or herself, instead of chiming in more about yourself, ask three questions to dig deeper into what the other person is sharing.

- "Oh you like to _____. How'd you get into that? What do you like best about it? What advice would you give if I wanted to start...?"
- "You live in _____? How long have you lived there? Where'd you live before that? Where are you from originally? What brought you here?"

Getting people to talk about themselves is one of the surest ways of beginning to establish some connection. Remembering any important dates, milestones, or other information will be critical in further cementing your relationships, so be sure to capture any key details that they share with you!



3. BECOME A GREAT LISTENER.

The best connectors listen far more than they talk. Look people in the eyes when they speak to you, nod slightly to indicate your understanding, and resist the temptation to cut in and interrupt. Ask questions to clarify, and always seek to understand the other person's perspective before you offer up your own.

Cultivate an understanding of the other person's area of expertise, and you'll develop a clearer picture of how they might be able to help you or someone you can connect with them.

Note what the great Stephen Covey wrote as he was summarizing his life's work:

**“If I were to summarize in one sentence the single most important principle of interpersonal relations, it would be this:
Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”**



4. FOLLOW-UP CEMENTS THE CONNECTION.

Whenever possible, trade contact info with the key people you meet. Immediately send them a note or email acknowledging your meeting and stating your intention to be in touch in the future. The likelihood of someone remembering you grows exponentially when you send a quick follow-up note of thanks or acknowledgment.

Connect on social media as well. Viewing your carefully-crafted profile and seeing your insightful, positive posts will give people a great opportunity to learn more about you and cement your connection.

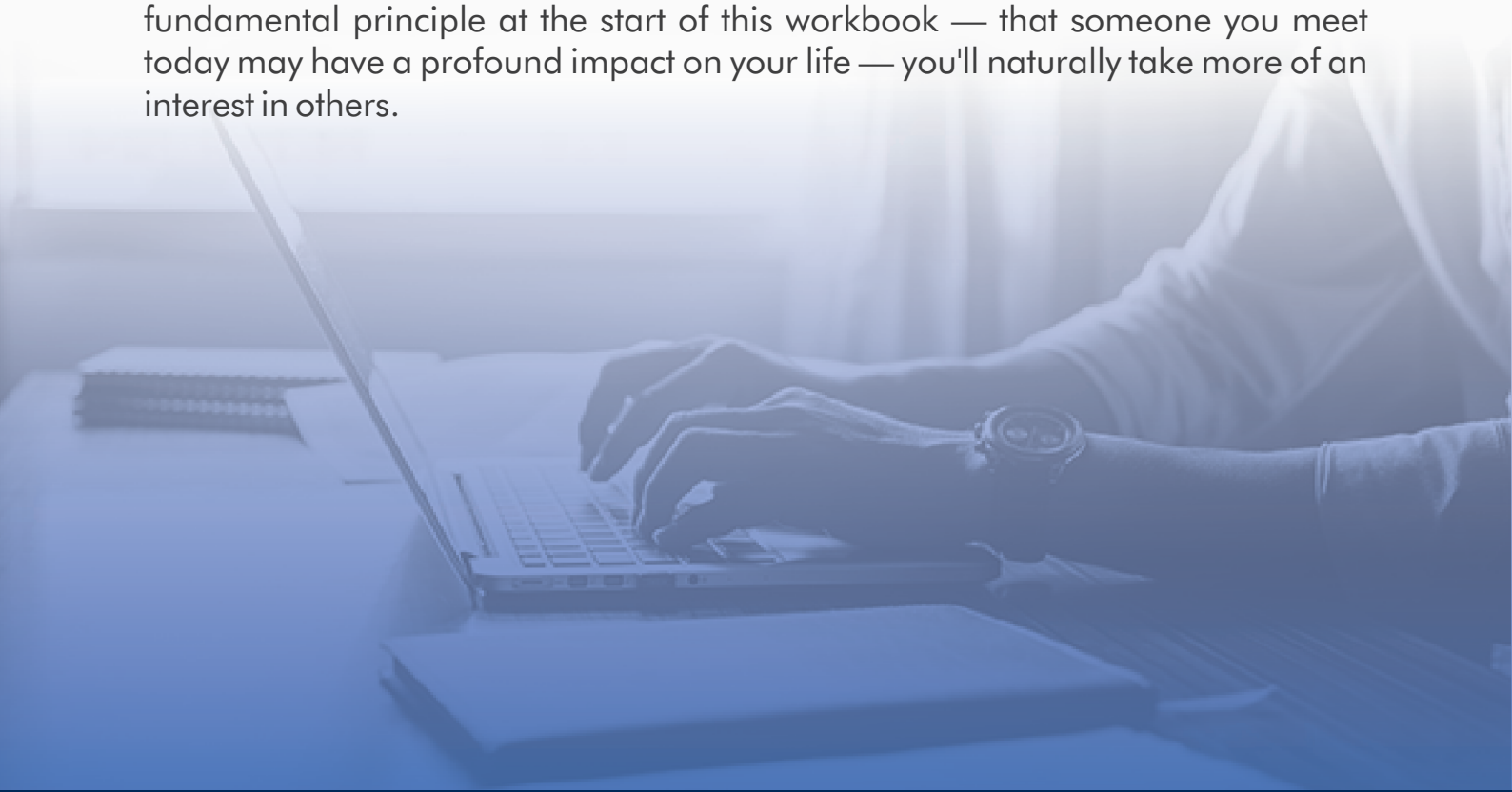


Do what it takes to remember people's names, so that you can greet them by name when you see them again. Remembering someone's name makes a strong impression and conveys a sense of sincere interest.

If you're someone who would say that you're not good with names, take note of my 2-step formula for remembering people's names:

Step #1 - Stop saying you're not good with names. The things we say to and about ourselves program our minds. Stop programming your mind negatively and instead reverse that or find a more constructive way of acknowledging your own shortcomings.

Step #2 - Actually give a sheesh. Or something like that. By keeping in mind the fundamental principle at the start of this workbook — that someone you meet today may have a profound impact on your life — you'll naturally take more of an interest in others.



5. PRAISE AND THANK OTHERS AROUND YOU.

Showing sincere appreciation is one of the greatest ways to establish rapport with people around you. Gratitude is also one of the truest ways to make yourself feel good.

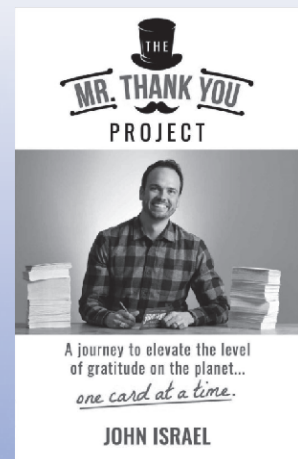
Our Declaration of Independence provides that we are “entitled” to 3 things only: Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. We are not entitled to a store cashier who greets us with a smile. We are not entitled to a waiter who psychically knows when we want more water or coffee and when we don’t. We are not entitled to agreement or courtesy or even respect from our fellow citizens. So, when you see these and other good things, express your gratitude.

One of my good friends, John Israel, embarked on what he calls the “Mr. Thank You Project.” This was the act of writing 5 thank-you cards per day for 365 straight days. A major insight he gained during this project was the realization of **how we treat that which we appreciate**. Gratitude creates entirely different relationships.

Say “thank you” a lot more. You’ll feel great, and people will feel great being around you.

**“When you practice
gratefulness, there is a sense
of respect towards others.”**

The Dalai Lama



6. MAINTAIN YOUR COMPOSURE IN ALL SITUATIONS.

People with truly great people skills are great at controlling their own emotions. By maintaining their composure in difficult situations, they maintain the respect of people around them and increase their own influence substantially.

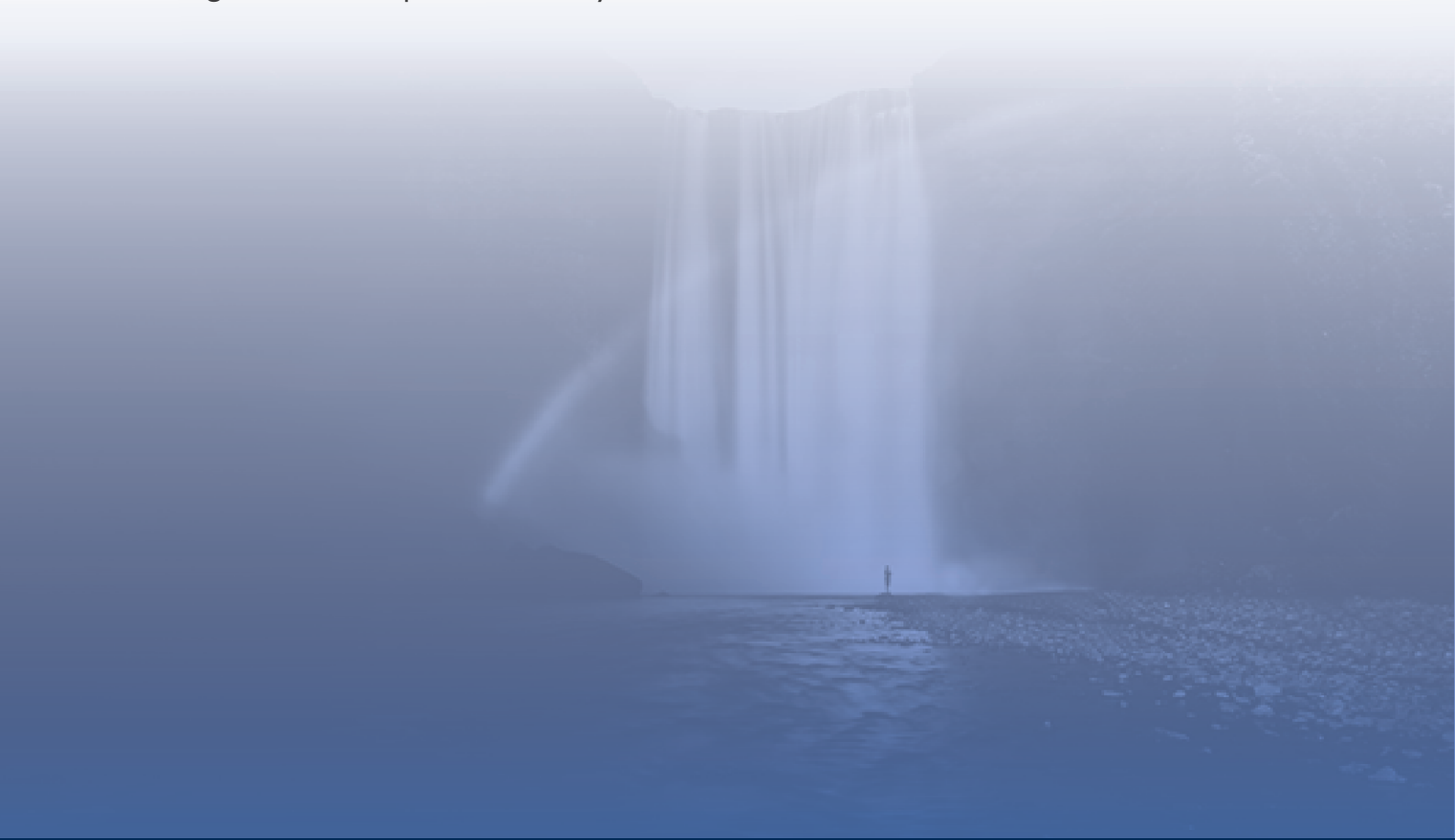
Strive to speak in a measured, friendly tone. Great influencers are very disciplined in their language and tone. They are seldom overly emotional when they talk. Instead, they communicate in a confident, positive tone that gives people a comfortable feeling listening to them.

Especially when debating others or presenting a contradictory point of view, be careful of your tone. When someone feels attacked, ego gets involved, and now “being right” becomes more important than “what’s right.”

“Have you thought about it this way...?” is a good question you can use to introduce an opposing point of view without getting overly emotional.

It's very important to learn to be responsive instead of reactive.

Not all your thoughts need to be expressed as they formulate. The truly sophisticated communicator is able to carefully consider their response in any situation. They are far less likely to put their foot in their mouth and compromise their own influence. Quick reactions seldom come out effectively. It's better to be thoughtful and respond carefully.



7. BE OPEN-MINDED TO ALL IDEAS. DON'T RUSH TO JUDGMENT.

Years ago, I was with a group of successful people, and this question was posed to the room:

What's the most important lesson you have ever learned in life?

The one answer that stood out to me and has stayed with me to this day was this one:

There are 2 sides to every story.

Before you rush to judgment in any situation, be sure you have gathered the full information, and considered the situation from all perspectives. Every one of us has biases that have grown within us, largely from our own environment. We tend to see evidence that supports our own biases.

Open your mind to the possibility that your perspective may be one-sided, and that the other side may be relevant. When you become truly open-minded and are willing to consider opposite perspectives without rushing to judgment, you will grow much more quickly as a person and will learn a lot more about the world around you. People will perceive you as more knowledgeable and more agreeable.

**Just because you are right does not mean I am wrong.
You just haven't seen life from my side.**



8. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN GIVE, NOT ON WHAT YOU CAN GET.

One of my mentors taught me this concept. Always strive to find out how you can add value to people around you. This is a high-level way of showing your sincere care and interest, and most people will reciprocate by adding value back into your life.

There are a variety of ways in which you can give value to others.

- Offer your time.

Time is the most precious resource that we have, and successful people value it more than money. When you see an opportunity to give a piece of your time to anyone important in your life, do it.

- Support people's causes.

Most people have charitable causes that they support. Contributing to these causes — whether with your dollars or through your physical presence in support — is an important way of adding value to others and showing them that they are important to you.

- Help others make connections.

When you make the effort to ask questions and get to know more about people, you'll quickly realize some amazing connections you can help them make with others. Offer these connections freely, without expecting anything in return. It's amazing how often the making of these connections will come back to benefit you later.



9. LOOK FOR WAYS TO ADD VALUE AROUND YOU IN ALL SETTINGS.

I've often described the world as being like a giant potluck banquet. If everyone brings their best to the "party", we improve the experience for every other person in attendance.

Simple things like keeping your environment clean, showing small courtesies to people in various everyday settings, and simply being nice to other people will improve your own internal mood. As you project your own positive feelings and value, others will naturally feel great about you and respond positively in your presence.

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE:

- 1. SMILE AT STRANGERS.**
- 2. GIVE MORE COMPLIMENTS.**
- 3. GIVE A LITTLE EXTRA WHEN YOU TIP.**
- 4. PICK UP THAT SCRAP OF LITTER WHILE YOU'RE HIKING.**
- 5. STAND THREE STEPS BACK FROM THE BAGGAGE CAROUSEL.**
- 6. HOLD THE DOOR OPEN FOR THE PERSON COMING BEHIND YOU.**
- 7. MOVE ONE LANE TO THE RIGHT IF THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM THERE.**
- 8. WIPE THE DROPS OF COFFEE OFF THE COUNTER OR BAR AT STARBUCKS.**
- 9. RESPECTFULLY PRESERVE A QUIET ATMOSPHERE FOR OTHERS IN PUBLIC PLACES.**
- 10. DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN.**

10. THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GOOD RELATIONSHIPS IS TRUST.

Trust is the major factor that holds relationships together and substantially increases one's influence.

Building trust begins with integrity to your word. When you do what you say you will do, people will feel more comfortable in both business and personal relationships with you.

Following through on your commitments is the next step in building trust. Be mindful about over-committing yourself and having to back out on those commitments. Excuses don't matter ... people don't tend to remember **why** you didn't follow through on a commitment; they just remember **whether or not** you followed through.

Last, of course, be very careful about ever compromising your integrity, even in small moments. The people around you are watching you, and developing their perceptions of you in every moment.

As you work hard to establish your identity in others' eyes, you can become the kind of person who others trust, respect, and love. This will give you the ultimate influence in your world.



I'll end with a confession: I have a hard time with all of this.

As an introvert, I get energy from being alone, not from being with others. It's difficult for me to always generate positive energy when I'm in group settings. Sometimes I just want to keep to myself.

My natural facial expression is very relaxed and pensive. Some might call it distant. I constantly have to be aware of this so that I don't give off the wrong impression. Sometimes I fail.

I'm also a very private person, relative to most others. I know that when I ask others questions to learn more about them, those same questions are about to be re-directed back towards me. Sometimes, I have to just force myself to be open and vulnerable, keeping myself motivated by the knowledge that authenticity is usually endearing.

Just like any of you reading this workbook, I sometimes lose my composure, and I beat myself up about it for quite some time afterwards.

We're all imperfect human beings. But we all have value. And when you focus on finding the good, you'll notice a lot more of it.

Ultimately, the most important thing in life is our relationships. Through conscious, deliberate effort, we can all build a substantial network of powerful personal connections!



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Who are some people in your life that you have under-utilized as resources for your own personal and professional development?

For each person you list, write out one strategy you can implement to build a stronger connection with that person.

A hand is shown holding a white sheet of paper with horizontal lines. The paper is positioned vertically and takes up most of the lower half of the page. The background is a gradient of blue and grey. The hand is visible on the right side, holding the bottom edge of the paper.

A sheet of lined paper with horizontal lines for writing, held by a hand on the right side.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Just for fun, brainstorm on this question

Who are some people in or near your community that you would like to meet personally in the coming year? For each person you list, write down some other people you know who might be able to help you make this connection.

(When I first did this exercise, I wrote “Elon Musk” on my list. I met him about 8 months later, shook his hand, and had a brief conversation).

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the page. At the bottom right corner, a person's index finger is visible, pointing upwards towards the lines. The background behind the paper is a light blue gradient.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Dan Casetta connects good ideas and great people. As a respected and trusted business leader, Dan has had a profound impact on thousands of entrepreneurs, leaders, and salespeople over the past 25 years.

Throughout his career with the Vector Marketing / Cutco sales organization, Dan has been a one-in-a-million achiever and transformational leader. He became the most successful and influential field manager in the nearly 70-year history of Cutco, and his programs for leading and developing teams were integral in sparking the company's rapid growth and expansion. Throughout various roles with the company, Dan has coached and mentored top sales reps, managers, and executives, teaching skills like selling, leadership, financial well-being, and personal development to the company's top talent.

Dan helps create champions both in and out of his Cutco business. His influence has extended nationwide through speaking, writing, and hosting gatherings of like-minded, success-oriented people. He's the co-author of "Success Starts Today" with Jack Canfield and "Cutting Edge Sales" with Jon Berghoff, Hal Elrod, and a Who's Who of powerful present-day influencers who started their careers with Cutco.

His passion is in adding value to the world and leaving positive ripples everywhere he goes.

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