

# Your Invisible Network

How to create, maintain and leverage the relationships that will transform your career

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People invest a lot to prepare for their careers, but once underway, its less clear how they should manage and shape things.

Relationships are the single most important factor in your career success and professional growth.

In relationships, you start with nothing, but once you create it, no one can take it away.

Your network has two dimensions of invisibility, the first is horizontal, you don't know many because they are beyond your reach right now and the second is vertical where many of the relationships are underdeveloped.

There is a gap between who you are and who you could be. This gap emerges without you realizing it.

Relationships validate who you are, keep you strong and boost your happiness.

Relationships help you navigate workplace politics

Relationships allow you to help others

Relationships help support your ability to be a leader

Relationships generate other relationships.



You need a strategy for relationships:

to create them

to maintain them

to leverage them

Relationships are based on reciprocity, an exchange between two people, and that exchange is based on needs – your needs and the other persons needs.

Leveraging relationships is a Goldilocks conundrum. You need to make the ask that is not too heavy, not too light , but just right.

You are not the only person who will ask others for things. Other people will also ask you. The more senior you get, the more the asks.

Relationships are bridges that connect you to knowledge, people and opportunities. A bridge is something, it must have real substance.

Relationships deepen through curiosity and transparency.

Curiosity is authentic curiosity about the other person and transparency means you share more of who you are including your skills, goals, ambitions etc.

One reason why work relationships can feel so unsatisfying is that they lack curiosity and transparency.

# 6 truths of how networks function

1. Merit is necessary but not sufficient
2. The business world is more meritocratic than you think
3. How you say things matters
4. Networks become more valuable over time
5. You must harness the strength of weak ties
6. Make social contagion work for you.



Networks will grow since you meet more people as you get older

Networks become more successful as you grow older and

People become successful in groups.

Develop your weak ties since they will have more information than you. Your strong ties group will have similar information as you.

Like a stock market portfolio, you need a portfolio of relationships. They will be:

Weak ties

Sponsors and mentors

Colleagues at work and

Bosses and senior stakeholders

Building relationships means reaching out.  
Reaching out is inviting the world to join you.

Reaching out can be sorted into two broad categories – the first is for a specific need and the second is an ongoing practice.

Some of the people you reach out to will respond, some of them will agree to speak with you and some will be excited you reached out.

Your conversations will not be predictable, all conversations will not be amazing.

Typically 3 out of 10 conversations will be useful, 5 will be ok but unexciting and 2 will be a waste of time.

At some point in a conversation, ask **WHAT ELSE?**

Ask this when you think you're all done. It might open new opportunities



Ending conversations is important too.

Stay aware of the time

Summarize what you got from the conversation

Clarify next steps and

Send a thank you note.

To achieve your potential, you need to talk about yourself. You need to do it well. Not perfectly, but competently.

There are many people in your life who will want to help you, put in a good word etc. They cannot help you if you don't equip them with the right information.

When you talk about yourself, there are two types of failures , the first being too strong and the second being too weak.

In my experience the ratio would be 30-70.

To be a good presenter, you need to tell stories. Concepts are straight forward, it's the stories that bring things to life.

Showing vulnerability is not humble bragging and its not false modesty to be socially acceptable. It is all the things that make us less perfect but more human.

Life is complicated, at any point of time we are experiencing some combination of confidence and thinking WTF?

# Relationships relate to three zones:

Zone of comfort

Zone of danger

Zone of learning



A habit is something you do regularly without asking whether you should do it.

You might think people tire of hearing praise.  
That's not true, everyone wants to hear praise  
for accomplishments.

Most people are shy of asking. There are 3 rules of asking:

you are allowed to ask for things  
you get things by asking for them and  
you can negotiate

Any back and forth between two people is a negotiation. In any negotiation, the start point is irrelevant, what is important is the end point.

Negotiation is not haggling, it allows you to be more precise about needs and value.

A sponsor is someone who acts on your behalf, makes a case for you and persuades others in support of you.

A mentor is someone who shares wisdom, gives you guidance, and helps you develop. A mentor does not intervene to promote you.

Bosses are human beings. They have insecurities, areas of confidence and ambitions. They have families, hopes and losses. They have needs and that's true of all in the hierarchy above you.



Power is not coercion, but rather the ability to get your way in the face of opposition.

# Power comes from 5 sources

1. Political skills
2. Strong networks
3. Visibility and brand
4. Executive presence and communication skills
5. Control of hard resources like money and people

Only No 5 requires official power.

The best way to engage with a boss is to follow the my needs his/her needs analysis/matrix.

Your choices and priorities will have an effect on other people just like theirs have on you. This means invariably you will disappoint people.

Disappointing people is not a great feeling but it is better than not living your own life and honoring the commitments that are important to you.

Helping others has two elements – capacity, whether you can help them and willingness, whether you want to.