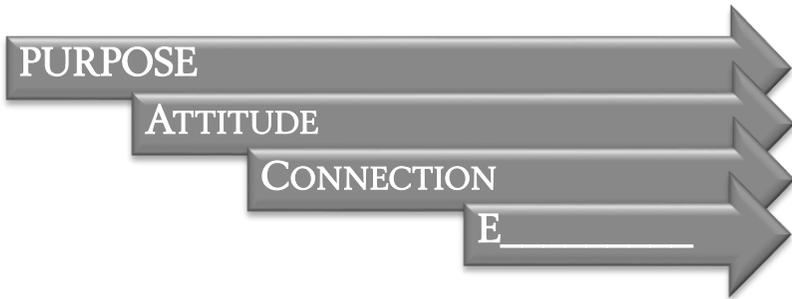


## CHAPTER 4: CONNECTION—TO FIND JOY

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### The Connection to Joy

**C**OMMUNICATION IS ALL ABOUT CONNECTION. And connection is all about relationship. And with connection we find joy. The gist of 50 years of happiness research is that the quality and quantity of a person's social connections—family relationships, friendships, closeness to coworkers, etc.—is so intertwined to a sense of joy and well-being that the two can practically be equated. People with close friendships and family are less likely to experience sadness, loneliness, low self-esteem, and problems with eating and sleeping.

The rationale tells us that connections create psychological security so that we can grow and learn. When we feel genuinely connected in relationships, we can focus on what's inherently important, such a making something or someone better, even if that

“someone” is you. That feeling of togetherness fuels the motivation for being a better person—for being a P.A.C.E.setter.

P.A.C.E.setters excel at connecting with people through exceptional communication abilities. Some call this charisma, but the skills for communicating with big impact can be practiced by anyone. Connection starts with developing trust. Many fail to connect because they fail to understand that their word—e.g. what they say—is the only expression that can bond one person to another. We can talk forever about who we are and what we are going to do, but if we fail to follow our words with action, we are considered untrustworthy. We must be consistent with our word by doing what we say we are going to do. Being faithful to our word is living with integrity. Integrity, like a river, must continually flow out of us if we are to gain the trust of others.

## **Transparency Causes Connection**

That “P.A.C.E.setter flow” of integrity that causes connection requires being transparent. Indeed, people respect those brave enough to fess-up, and it makes them feel more comfortable in partnering with us. P.A.C.E.setters are courageous enough to admit their own faults and mistakes, and as they do, they impart the same level of courage to others, which makes others feel like the P.A.C.E.setter can be trusted and also has their best interests at heart. Transparent confession is a sign of confidence and humility that is catchy to everyone around us.

This scares a lot of people—but the truth is that for any effective communication to take place, one has to be honest and transparent in all communications for the level of trust to keep flowing. Two things happen when we give voice to failings. It lessens the power over us by releasing those secrets that fester within the destructive privacy of our mind, and it resets our thinking to a beginning point of being honest again; thus, opening the pathway for change and growth.

That old saying that confession is good for the soul is true. It represents an adjustment to realign what we know to be right with what is right, so in a sense it is chiropractic for the soul. Having released the heavy burden of representing a false persona can mitigate any negative consequences that may result from a misrepresentation. Eventually, someone will accept you for who you are, and not for why you think others should accept you.

Should the “river of integrity” stop flowing, we become stagnant, and whatever is blocking its flow (e.g., insecurity, defensiveness, lies, etc.) must be confessed and eliminated to return its onward flow. Integrity, transparency and compassion in communication are critical...without them, relationships fall victim to hurtful manipulation. With them, true connectedness takes place.

True connectedness, when it happens, displays common outcomes:

- Mutual trust
- Genuine caring
- Security
- Self-confidence
- Joy

## **Prodigious Effect of Relationship**

One of the most confirmed findings to emerge from research into joyfulness is that we are social creatures. Relationships create psychological space and safety so that we can explore and learn. When we feel safe and supported, we don't have to limit ourselves to survival tasks like responding to danger or finding our means for staying alive. We are able to explore our world, which creates resources for periods of stress and adversity.

Connecting through effective communication gives us a sense of belonging, and helps us understand ourselves while feeling a part of

something greater than ourselves. Researchers have found that persons with strong social connections experience less stress, fewer mental and physical health problems, and faster recovery from illness. When communication leads to a type of harmonious connection, we feel more joyful and satisfied.

Social connections also can encourage and support us in healthy lifestyle habits, such as exercise, faith and moderation. Studies have surfaced that people are more joyful when they are with other people than when they are alone—and the “rise” is the same for introverts and extroverts. They also found that joyful people are more generous, pleasant, and sociable. So making strong connections makes us feel more joyful, and when we are joyful we are more enjoyable to be around, creating an “upward momentum” of joyfulness.

Psychologist James H. Fowler studied the data of 5,000 people over 20 years and found that happiness and satisfaction benefits other people through three degrees of connection, and that the effects last for a year. He says, “We found a statistical relationship not just between your happiness and your friends’ happiness, but between your happiness and your friends’ friends’ friends’ happiness.” The positive effects from connecting with others are lasting and prodigious.

Scientists have observed what they call “hedonic adaption”: Our tendency to quickly adapt to our changing circumstances based on the ability to build relationship regardless of the situation. This is why people who win contests, for example, eventually find themselves at the same level of happiness and satisfaction they experienced before winning based on their relationships. Strong relationships tend to stabilize emotions, just as weak relationships create instability, regardless of temporary peaks. So the key to happiness is more about connection and less about the situation in which we find ourselves.

## **The Difference between Joy and Happiness**

Indeed, situations tend to change, as do our emotions, but it is the condition of our core, or heart, that provides stability. In the purest sense, joy is not an emotion, as is happiness. Joy is not based just on something pleasant happening, but is an attitude of the heart created through relationships that center us. During periods of joyfulness, physiological and biochemical changes take place that infuse within us a sense of well-being, transforming negative outlooks on life. Joy, found primarily in connection, motivates people to work more efficiently.

According to a study by the University of Iowa researchers, a sense of attachment and belonging to a group of co-workers serves as a better motivator for many employees than money or any other incentive. If someone chooses money or status over sincere connection with people, chances are they will always strive for more. When we build a solid relational foundation, we are joyful doing what we do, we are in the moment. Joy centers us in the present with an abundant attitude toward work and life, which tends to attract more abundance in life. Numerous studies and life experiences have proven that people who enjoy what they do tend to be more productive. Learning to be content in whatever situation you find yourself calls for an indwelling joy that stems from close connection.

### **Ego-Free Joy**

Close connection, though, requires a productive form of communication that engages closeness, and P.A.C.E.setters in particular consistently practice certain skills that lead to the highest form of connection. These effective relaters view communication as the construction of a mutually beneficial relationship primarily focused on the other person. An ineffective communicator disconnects relationship through an exclusively self-serving agenda that disregards

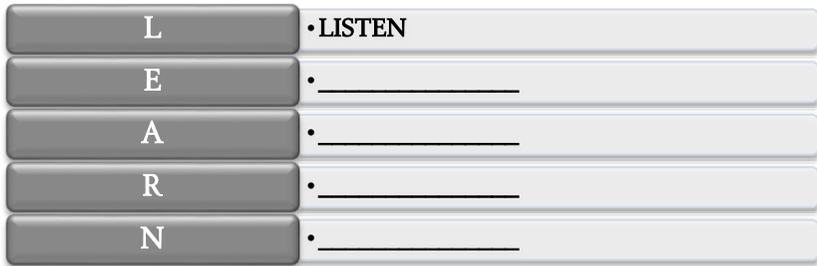
the interests of the other person. An egocentric approach to communication disconnects, whereas another's focus approach connects.

So does that mean we need to sacrifice our personal interests? Quite the contrary. By focusing our attention on another person's interests, we actually open the other person's receptivity to our wants. I once conducted a study of this effect by staging discussions between two groups of paired people. There were a total of 72 individuals. The first group of paired individuals was instructed to communicate their interests first, and then check-in for their partner's response. The second group was instructed to listen first, by asking questions of their partner to learn more about them and their wants. All individuals were given one specific objective to gain from their paired partner—a second conversation after the session at a Starbucks of their choosing. We then measured whether each person gained the specific objective—a second meeting on personal time.

The group that expressed their agenda first gained 26% of their objectives for a tea, coffee, or juice at Starbucks. The group that focused exclusively on their partner and the other person's agenda gained 94% of their objective for the same type of meeting. The only difference between the two groups was that one listened for over 90% of the ten minute discussion before expressing their want/objective, whereas members of the other less successful group focused on themselves (e.g., their agenda, their lives, their likes/dislikes) for 90% of the conversation before asking the other person for a personal meeting after the session. In other words, the successful groups listened with an others focus without sharing anything about themselves until the final minute of conversation. They simply learned about the other person.

Learning about someone else initiates progressive degrees of rapport, by subconsciously communicating to the other person that he or she is important enough to be understood. The L.E.A.R.N.

model of communication connects people toward a constructive dialog, beginning with what we call “Unselfish Listening” (Figure 4.1).



(Figure 4.1. The L.E.A.R.N. model of connection)

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## UNSELFISH LISTENING

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The L.E.A.R.N. model of connection for P.A.C.E.setters always begins with *Unselfish Listening*. Convincing someone is 90% listening to the other person’s wants, and 10% talking about personal wants. Great listeners tend to be great communicators because they connect with others and they understand how to respond appropriately, but few listen well. As Stephen Covey said, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” This explains why many people feel misunderstood.

Have you ever felt that when you were talking with someone that it was like talking into thin air—they just weren’t plugged in? People generally remember less than half of what they hear, according to researchers. We can improve our success using Unselfish Listening, which involves an attentive (focused) effort to understand the entire communication from the speaker, not just their words. It also tells the other person that they are being heard. P.A.C.E.setters excel at this.

Unselfish Listening is more than just asking questions. It’s the mental discipline of placing our needs on the shelf for the vast majority of any conversation so that we can be attentive and appropriately responsive to the other person. Sure, we will always remain aware of

our objective (our want or wants), but that objective doesn't surface to the other person until the other person senses that he or she is understood. Sometimes our objective will not surface at all during the first conversation, and that's OK if we can gain a commitment for a next discussion. Effective communication builds relationship. And if someone feels that the other person is treasuring that "someone's" wants, trust develops. When trust develops, our personal objectives can be met.

Trust-building listening is not just hearing and understanding information being expressed but also empathizing with the speakers' feelings about their subject. Strong eye contact and genuinely sympathetic acknowledgements (like nodding and smiling) make the speaker feel understood, and that establishes a strong connection between us. By saying something like, "I understand how that would make you feel," the speaker is made to feel as if we truly understand them, and gives him/her an opportunity to confirm or amend our interpretation. Even saying something like, "I heard what you said," makes the other person feel listened to.

## **The Power of Reflection**

Taken a step further, when we repeat what the other person said in our own words, that person feels even more understood. This is called a *reflective response*. Say, a person expresses in a frustrated tone: "I keep saying that people need to pick-up after themselves but no one ever listens!" A reflective response might be: "I get it. I heard you say that no one takes responsibility for picking up their own mess—and that frustrates you." Not only does that reflective response make the person feel understood, by essentially echoing (or rephrasing) what the person said in the hearer's own words (*not* just verbatim), it begins to deflate the speaker's anger from feeling unheard or unappreciated. The speaker thinks, "Oh, you really did get what I said." When people feel

listened to, they become more connected to the person who confirmed what they said.

## **Show That You're Listening**

As humans we connect with those we like. Dale Carnegie once said the best way to be likable is to be interested in the other person. People respond favorably to those who are humble, positive, and who express interest in them. That's why P.A.C.E.setters connect most effectively with people by making the other person feel that the P.A.C.E.setter *wants* to know about them.

When someone brings up a topic or situation, don't just move on to the next subject. Ask follow-up questions such as, "So how did that make you feel?" or "How did you react to that?" or "Tell me more."

The majority of us spend 75 percent of our waking time communicating, and only 40-50 percent of that time listening. Being likable is all about "being present" with the other person by understanding the "why" of what someone says. "Why is that important to you" or "Why did that affect you so?" are questions that lead to deeper understandings.

The human mind can understand almost three times faster than we can speak, according to research by the University of Missouri. So people are actually listening to only about 25 percent of what we are saying. The other 75 percent is focused on whatever else pops into their mind at any given moment. However, when we demonstrate a genuine desire to know more about the other person, we increase the other person's listening to more than 70 percent. So how do we appear interested in the other person?

Show that you're listening by using appropriate facial expressions and encouraging the other speaker with words like "uh huh" and "please continue." Never interrupt the other person with questions or a response, and try to keep an open mind without judging their

comments. Your general attitude should be respectful and sympathetic as you genuinely attempt to understand the other person's perspective. You should be honest and straightforward, but always in a manner in which you would like to be treated.

Maintain an open posture (arms uncrossed, open stance, sitting forward) to set the other person at ease and convey interest. An important way of demonstrating honesty is by matching your words and tone to your body language. For example, we shouldn't laugh if we are saying something serious. Standing tall with your shoulders back, good eye contact, and a firm but not hurtful handshake will convey confidence—an important quality during first meetings and interviews.

## Acknowledgment

If we communicate sincerity, openness and trust, we will be effective. The key skill in overcoming another's feeling disconnected is to use *acknowledgement*, which can be as simple as maintaining eye contact, nodding, saying "I hear what you're saying," or leaning forward with your body. Occasionally you should rephrase what the other person has just said, such as "So if I'm hearing you correctly you're saying \_\_\_\_\_," "It sounds like you're saying \_\_\_\_\_," or just summarizing their conversation.

*Reflecting* what the speaker says is a key listening skill that can be done through paraphrasing and asking questions to clarify important points. It's also good to convey empathy for *how* what they just said is *affecting* them, such as saying something like "I can understand how that must have made you feel." It's important to mentally set aside your own agenda while listening, and don't mentally prepare a response without first making sure you've heard the entirety of what the other person said both in words *and* in body language. As you practice these skills, others are more likely to respond to you in kind.

We have two ears and one mouth for a reason: So that we can hear more and talk less.

L	• LISTEN
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## EMPATHIZE

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Renowned educator Stephen Covey once said, “When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air.” Ask the majority of counselors and even psychologists to identify the most common reason for frustration between people and you will discover none bigger than the inability to feel empathy in a relationship. Empathy heals. It removes distance between people. Connection using empathy displaces a “Me-Attitude” with a “We-Attitude.”

Empathy is the ability to accurately place yourself in someone’s “skin”—to understand the other person’s feelings and perceptions from their point of view. It is unlike sympathy, which is only being affected by the other person’s feelings and perceptions. For example, if a leader shows sympathy toward their follower’s sadness, the leader would feel sad as well; whereas, the empathic leader would truly understand why that person feels sad.

### How to Develop Empathy

So how do you develop empathy? First, you need to imagine yourself in the other person’s place. Immerse yourself in their environment and feel their emotions, especially their pains. Ask them how they feel, and why to confirm your understanding. Put aside your personal agenda and just

listen to them without judging. Relate their feelings to similar situations in your own life that elicited the same type of emotions. You need to be careful not to become an enabler of the other person. In other words, you must use good emotional intelligence to clarify your own personhood to make sure you don't become overly entangled with the other person, which can cause you to take his or her feelings too personally.

You will need to be able to distinguish between different emotions from a somewhat objective point of view, so that you can deal with your own emotions and bias—get in touch with yourself before touching others. One of the biggest challenges in communicating empathy is when you don't feel it toward another person, because of some bad experience or anger toward them. It takes time and practice to remove these barriers by recognizing the other person's right to be heard. Some of the hardest people to love are the most damaged. Your responsibility in developing your empathy skills is to identify the why of someone's feelings without the need to determine whether their feelings or even their negative behaviors are justified.

### **Third Person Empathy**

One of the most innovative techniques (besides unselfish listening) for developing empathy requires a forced third person perspective, which is the discipline of imagining how the other person feels and thinks. Try this by putting yourself in an actual third person. Practice (internally) taking whatever view point the other person holds. Don't go with your default reaction immediately. Start with the other's perspective on a situation or problem, and work your way back.

Good debaters use this technique when debating a case that opposes their own view. You can practice this "shift in viewpoint" by taking one of your firmly held beliefs, find someone with a similar point of view, and start debating the opposite of that point of view. It's an exercise that

forces you onto both sides of a debate to help open your mind to the realities of how people with different points of views see their world.

I hope you will give it a try, even for a short while, and I hope it improves your life and the lives of those around you even if just a little. The trick is to identify with the other person's experiences. When someone begins to share, focus on their feelings and situations that you've experienced in the past that are similar. This will deepen your emotional insight into the other person's plight.

For those with opposing views, begin to practice emotionally detaching—not allowing the other person's negative behavior to determine your mood or choices. In time, you will gain a greater sense of identity and separateness that will offer you the advantage of perspective. If that's too difficult, imagine the person as an innocent victim. Put him or her in a vulnerable position where they've experienced rejection, and use a situation where that person might or has suffered to help you visualize them through softer lenses—perhaps because of the behavior(s) that caused you to feel negatively toward that person.

Sometimes an “unlovable” person appears difficult because they are going through a rough time. My wife, Renee, has great empathic/non-judgmental skills. While working at a company her supervisor, Barb, turned into a grouch, making work miserable for everyone in the department. Instead of judging Barb as a “bad boss,” Renee took the high road of confronting Barb with empathy. She walked into her boss's office and said, “Barb, I've noticed that you haven't been particularly happy recently, and I just want you to know that I'm here to help if you need a listening ear.” Immediately, Barb responded by sharing with Renee that Barb caught her husband having an affair. After that meeting, Barb's attitude turned more positive—because she finally felt understood, believing that she had a friend.

Often when we consider the person in the vulnerable light, our defenses tend to lessen, and we begin developing the ability to connect.

L	• LISTEN
E	• EMPATHIZE
A	• ADAPT
R	• _____
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## ADAPT

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Failure typically occurs as a result of the failure to adapt, and success is mostly the result of successful adaptation. The popular line of thought is to be different. While that holds true for many advances like innovation, sometimes it's best to be like others. In Harvey Mackay's blockbuster selling book, *Swim with the Sharks without Being Eaten Alive*, the key to surviving with the sharks is to become like one of them. If a shark recognizes a fish or some other food source, it will eat it. But, sharks do not eat other sharks.

Being willing to adapt your behavior increases your ability to build connection with other people, and it allows you to conform to situations when appropriate. Few actually practice adaptability, though. Perhaps that's because, as research shows, people view themselves as more versatile than they truly are. In order to develop the skill of adaptability, you must first practice empathy, tolerance and respect for the other person. Empathy is the most important contributor to adaptability, which is essentially feeling how the other person feels, or "walking in their shoes."

Strong empathy for another person usually leads to greater respect for them, and a higher tolerance for their faults. If we feel the need to compete with someone else, or if we will only accept our way, then be prepared to be attacked by the sharks. If you are attacked or rejected, don't give-up. Being adaptable requires that you bounce back from rejection to suggest alternative ways in which to work together. If a situation calls for you to be outgoing when you are an introvert, fake it until you make it.

Remember that people will positively respond to those who maintain a positive attitude in finding ways to accommodate their style and agenda. People respond favorably to those who can offer a collaborative approach in attending to *their* needs. Telltale signs are always given off by people to alert us to their mood as to whether they are receptive, bored or irritated, like foot tapping or checking the time. So the adaptable person must be perceptive in reading these signals, and to adjust their response accordingly.

The ability to self-correct behavior is a key need to develop adaptability. If something isn't working, change course. "It's not all about me," says the adaptable person, "it's about *us*." Understand the other person's behavioral style, and their mind-body style in order to reflect your behaviors to match their preferred style. For example, when dealing with an authoritative person, you'll want to show respect and speak concisely in support of their efforts—and *this will open you to stronger connectedness*.

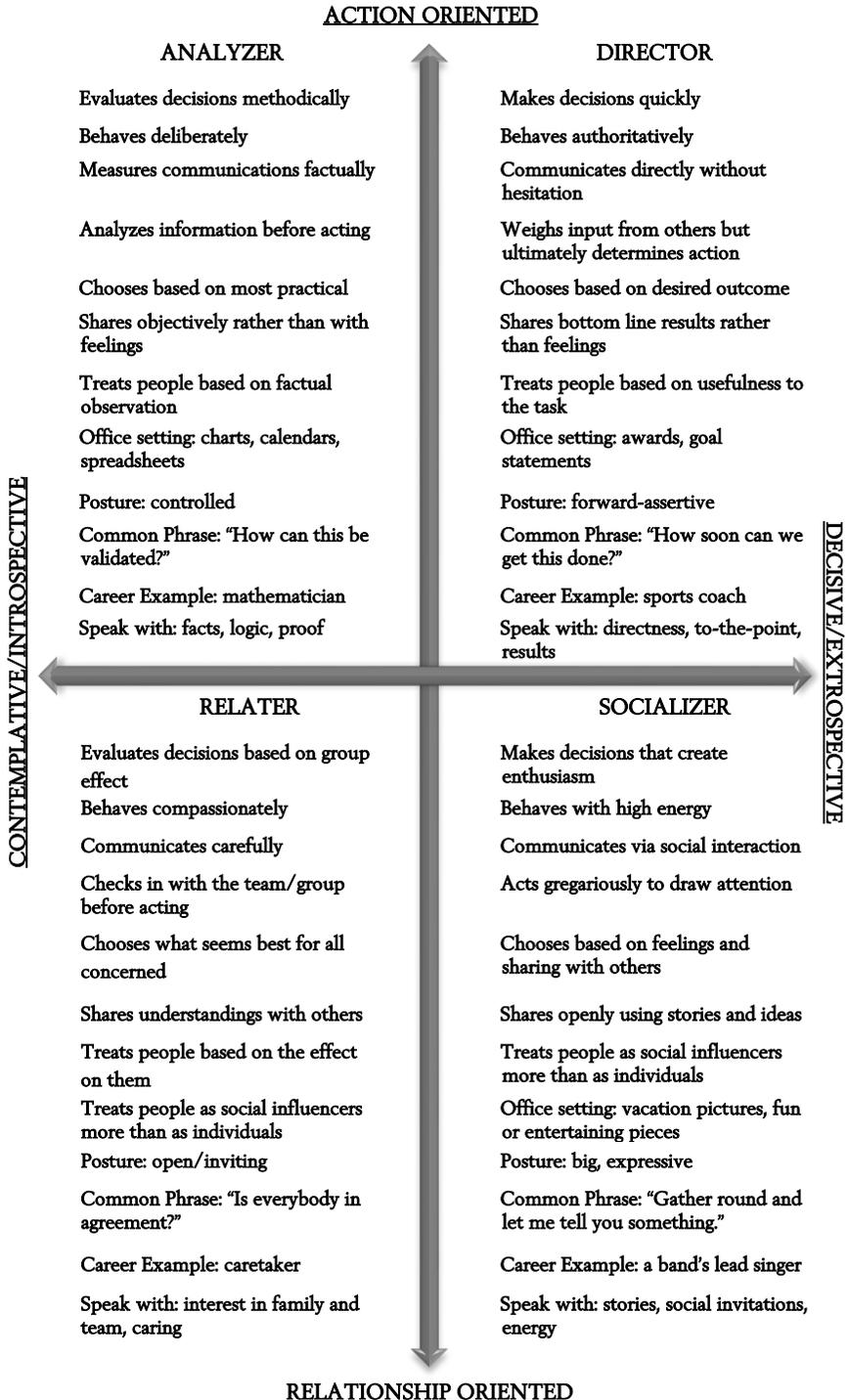
## Here's How to Adapt to a Person's Behavioral Style

Most know the Golden Rule from Matthew 7:12 of the Bible: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The *Social Interaction Rule (SIR)* states: *Treat people in the manner with which they feel most receptive*. People respond differently depending on their behavioral style. Essentially two categories describe the vast majority of people: 1) They are either *action-oriented or relationship-oriented*, and 2) They are either *introspective (contemplative)* or *extrospective (decisive)*. The combinations of each type generally determine a person's behavioral style. An Extrospective/Relationship-oriented person is called a *Socializer*. An Extrospective/Action-oriented person is called a *Director*. An Introspective/Relationship-oriented person is called a *Relater*. An Introspective/Action-oriented person is called an *Analyzer*.

*Socializers* enjoy being the life of the party and are motivated by social interaction, so the SIR is to involve them in social activities and conversation, often telling stories. *Directors* want action and tend to believe their way is the only way, so the SIR is to be forthright with them with little or no banter (cut to the point). *Relaters* want everyone to get along and they tend to be the caretakers, so the SIR is to avoid conflict with them and to ask them questions about family, friends, their team, etc. *Analyzers* enjoy solving problems and tend to be numbers oriented, so the SIR is to present them with statistics, information, proof—they thrive on reasoning and calculations.

You can determine a person's type by their mannerisms, social interactions, and accouterments. Relaters tend to include family and team pictures in their office. Their primary tendency leads to consensus, often checking-in with others to make sure they feel included. Directors are proud to display their awards and achievements. Their primary tendency leads to action, often interrupting others to make sure their point is heard to get things done. Socializers appreciate meetings, group activities, and drawing attention to themselves. Their primary tendency leads to enthusiasm, often telling stories and entertaining others in order to engage them. Analyzers thrive through processes, such as figuring out a problem or validating theories. Their primary tendency leads to correctness, often challenging assumptions to make sure they are accurate and validated.

When interacting with each type, the key to engaging them is to reflect those behaviors that fit within their comfort zone. Adaptability requires the ability to adjust our own behaviors to accommodate the various behavioral styles. Don't assume your likes are their likes—one size does not fit all. When with a Socializer, be gregarious and attentive; with a Director be straightforward and decisive; be considerate and caring with a Relater; and speak or act logically and factually with an Analyzer. Each style responds to interactions differently. The key to adaptability is to mirror others' common behaviors, and to respond accordingly. Figure 4.1 details these behaviors for each style.



(Figure 4.1. Model for the Social Interaction Rule)

## After You Identify a Person's Behavioral Style, Use Versatility

Versatility is the most important discipline of adaptability. Versatility allows us to adjust our behavioral style to that of someone with a different style, such as a Relater dispensing with “small talk” when speaking with a *Director*, and instead communicating crisply and forthrightly in short order. Or a *Socializer* taming down her enthusiasm with an *Analyzer* to convey the facts and figures that Analyzer needs to make a decision. A versatile *Director* will take time to listen and ask about a *Relater's* family, setting the Relater at ease, and an *Analyzer* will defer his need for confirmation to simply engage a *Socializer* with equal enthusiasm for what the Socializer is sharing, by mirroring the Socializer's open gestures. Whatever behaviors are preferred by a particular behavioral style, even if they seem unnatural, the versatile communicator uses those types of behaviors in order to connect.

To align our style with a different style or a differing agenda requires versatility acquired through the *four connecting expressions* of *self-confidence, empathy, optimism, respect* and *humility*. Humility defers our egocentric wants in order to accept differing opinions and practices. In turn, humility gains the respect and attention of diverse people.

Versatility attracts people to your point of view through the four connecting expressions, and if any are lacking, connectedness suffers. For example, we know that optimism attracts people and feeds their enthusiasm. The same happens when we can defer any bias or prejudice against someone to show them the respect that should be afforded to any human being we encounter. Attempting to understand someone, and to learn about their wants and needs builds respect.

The four *disconnecting expressions* that thwart versatility are all egocentric: *inflexibility* (not budging), *negativism, arrogance* and *impatience*. Usually those who practice these disconnectors fall into the trap of mental laziness.

Versatility practitioners, P.A.C.E.setters, are some of the most attentive people on earth. As a practiced discipline they notice the environment as well as the subtle movements, words and posture of others. This enables them to identify problems and solve them most effectively—they are like the detectives on TV that you see who are able to solve every crime. Coupled with a can-do attitude, these students of people and life demonstrate the tenacity to get things done. They can readily correct themselves through an openness to feedback, and because of their humility, they are not restricted by the need to be right all of the time. Instead, the versatile person can say, “I think this isn’t working, so let’s try something different.”

L	• LISTEN
E	• EMPATHIZE
A	• ADAPT
R	• RELATE
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## RELATE

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### Being Vulnerable & Genuine

Esteem is the confidence of connection. Shame is the fear of disconnection. Shame says, “I’m not good enough.” Confidence says, “I can share my flaws with you.” For connection to occur we need to be vulnerable. When people are vulnerable with each other they express to each other that they are worthy of love and belonging. They exhibit a sense of courage in common, because they demonstrate the courage to be imperfect by expressing compassion for each other. Connection is the result of authenticity, which conveys humility—traits of a P.A.C.E.setter.

One of the greatest teachers of success, Dale Carnegie, wrote an overnight success considered even today as one of the all-time best for its teachings on dealing with people—it's entitled, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He wrote about how to make people like you, and ways to win people over to your thinking. But, his pervasive theme is that none of the lessons will work if the intent is manipulation. The word “genuine” appears throughout his writings as the foundation for winning over people.

The takeaway is that only with honesty and authenticity will we be able to influence people over the long haul. Most people are pretty adept at detecting if someone is genuine or if they are “fake”—meaning that they are behaving unnaturally. Unfortunately most phony people don't realize that others can recognize their fake behavior. *So the key is to get real*. When someone asks you for your opinion on a subject, be honest about the way you feel, and avoid telling her something that you think she wants to hear. Be willing to share your faults, your flaws and your mistakes.

Just imagine that the person will know whether you're telling the truth or not—so why not be transparent? We all need to accept who we are—so know yourself and be as authentic and as vulnerable with others as possible. Insecurity causes us to be fake, so learn to accept yourself and people will accept you—and if they don't, so what? So-called friends gained through deceit are not really true friends at all.

“To err is human,” the saying goes, but in addition to forgiveness being “divine,” admitting our mistakes and flaws, even laughing at them, is absolutely *supernatural!* Fitting in with people should never be the goal. P.A.C.E.setters often need to stand alone. Instead, we should just accept people as who they are and do the same in return for ourselves. Mean what you say, and say what you mean. Trying to guess what somebody wants to hear is a winless game. Compliments and smiles given in sincerity are great, but flattery only will turn off people. Better than compliments is trying to help the other person.

Genuine people are caring, and when we make people happy, the favor is always returned with a feel-good response. Don't try to appease

others by accepting invitations or projects that you will later regret. It's OK to politely turn down an invitation to the opera if that's not your thing. It's OK to admit you're not perfect. Just be yourself. Everyone else is taken.

## Using Connecting Emotions

Emotional connection builds relationship. Relating to another person starts by connecting to the other person's feelings, and recognizing their emotional response. There are six connecting emotions that open a person's receptivity, and they are:

- Love
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Composure
- Graciousness

People who feel these emotions from you are more apt to listen and understand your message in a way in that they can relate to you. Conversely, the disconnecting emotions are:

- Antipathy
- Meanness
- Indifference
- Harshness
- Apathy
- Agitation

Use the connecting emotions when speaking to another and avoid the disconnecting emotions. Relationship is built on emotional

connection. Remember that emotional moments can be opportunities for teaching so don't respond to an upsetting emotional reaction with a disconnecting emotion—keep your connection going. Then listen to the other person. Keep your eyes focused on theirs, lean forward, let them know that you've heard what they have said by acknowledging their sentiment, not just their words.

Avoid judging the person's emotions. If you maintain emotional connectedness, you will have the opportunity to relate to a disagreeable person only after their emotions have calmed, and they have acknowledged back to you that they are receptive to what you are saying. Only after the other person is feeling understood should you proceed to the solutions part of your conversation.

Too often when others relate their brokenness to us we immediately jump into the fix-it mode. That opportunity will arise when the other person is ready to receive it, and not just when we are ready to suggest it. Encourage emotional expression, but set limits on what behavior is appropriate; and, don't expect instant openness. Our ability to relate happens as we demonstrate a genuine interest in the other person using sincere emotional connection.

## Smile

Those smiles can spread sunshine on a rainy day, yet most people do not freely give them, unless they are P.A.C.E.setters. Recent research reveals that small gestures like a smile can make people feel more connected. That simple gesture of kindness can make even a stranger feel more connected to the one who is smiling immediately after those face cheeks spread, according to a study reported at the annual meeting of the *Society for the Study of Motivation*. Highly charismatic people do this routinely—it's been documented that they even use more muscles in their face. Genuine smiles cause wrinkles around the eyes. Forced ones center primarily around the mouth.

A sincere smile is always the best strategy to build and establish rapport. The smile maintains attention, helps bolster trust, and reassures the other person of your sincerity. *The key is being the first to smile, not waiting for others.* A smile establishes the person who gives it as being well-mannered, immediately. A smile can brighten the mood, improve the outlook of a relationship, and leads others to make positive choices using sound and good judgment. That's the power of a smile.

When we encounter someone, we intuitively ask ourselves whether that person is a “friend or foe,” and the answer to that question determines whether we want to cooperate with that person or not. Arguably, smiling leads others to think that we are “friends” and they should therefore cooperate with us.

## Why People Don't Smile

Lack of smiling explains why some dominant individuals, such as Vladimir Putin, James Cagney, Winston Churchill, and Eminem always seem to look aggressive because they do not want to appear in anyway submissive. A handful of studies suggest that not smiling conveys power and confidence.

Researchers reviewed four studies that examined the power of facial expression. All of the studies asked people to look at images of various faces, from models to sports players, who were either smiling or not smiling, and then to rate their expressions. One study asked people to look at headshots of football players and from those limited views guess the man's size and personality. The players who didn't smile were consistently rated as being bigger physically, less social, and more hostile. In contrast, the smiling players were viewed as being less dominant and more social.

## Nice People Get Ahead

But being viewed as dominant can only get you so far. According to research by Amir Erez, who earned his Ph.D. at Cornell University, a leader's positive mood and expressions do have a positive impact on his/her followers. Leaders who were rated most charismatic tended to smile and laugh more.

Consequently, the researcher found that leaders who were rated as more charismatic (they smiled and laughed more) had followers who were happier as well compared to followers with lower "charisma." Erez hypothesized that people follow leaders like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Regan because "they make us feel happy and happiness is like a drug." Consequently, they want more of it and continue following the leader as long as the charisma keeps working.

So does a smile and friendliness correlate with success? Well, for the P.A.C.E.setter the answer appears to be yes, because they expect others to perform at high levels and they set high standards, and their friendliness fosters an environment where people are treated with respect, and have more fun while getting work done. Furthermore, P.A.C.E.setters more frequently recognize people, making those people feel more motivated and energized by how well appreciated they are by the P.A.C.E.setter—who, frequently smiles, laughs and engages them.

Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, which comprises more than 400 companies, related in an interview that his success was largely determined by his ability to practice the attributes of being pleasant. "Actually," he said, "it is counterproductive to be ruthless. People tend to come back and do more business if they feel they have done well with you. That attitude has helped me over the years to attract and keep good partners and staff. My ability to listen to other people and accept it when their suggestions are better than mine has been useful during my 40 years in business."

Speaking of Virgin's success, Branson continued: "As I've mentioned... back in the '60s, our friendly approach helped us to sign the Rolling Stones to Virgin Records. We often joked around as we worked together, and so Mick Jagger and the rest of the band saw us as being like themselves, rather than just stuffy coin counters in suits and ties."

He goes on to say about the Virgin culture: "At Virgin, we all know that our smiles make a difference. When you get onto a Virgin plane, it's the smiles from our staff that make you feel good—that touch of heartfelt service that says 'We give a damn.'"

The benefits of friendliness were confirmed by a study co-authored by Timothy Ketelaar, associate professor of psychology at New Mexico State University, with a caveat. Ketelaar explained his findings in a statement: "Smiles can put you in a positive light by signaling that you're friendly and trustworthy, and that you aren't a threat to others. But higher-status individuals often want to appear in charge and as a threat, and they lose some of that power by smiling." The researchers argue that less dominant human beings have relied on smiles to appease stronger, more hostile individuals for as long as we have been able to cause those little wrinkles around the eyes.

But strength in the form of dominance runs counter to the P.A.C.E.setter model. For the P.A.C.E.setter, strength is shared and utilized for the collective benefit of all concerned, such that strength in character supersedes strength in position in terms of importance. So "getting ahead" refers to *the team* getting ahead, and not any one individual. That's analogous to the Navy SEAL Creed: "My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach," which is summed-up in one overriding principle: We either succeed together or we fail together—there are no individual heroes and no one gets left behind. This dedication to team accounts for the Seal's unparalleled success in accomplishing their extraordinarily challenging missions.

One probably would not acquaint Navy Seal soldiers with smiling, but smiling is actually one of the most effective ways for disarming

hostilities in any situation, and soldiers use their smiles to make the innocent natives in battle zones feel more at ease. The amazing thing about a smile is that when you give it to someone, it causes him or her to reciprocate with a return smile, even when you're both faking it.

Professor Ulf Dimb at Uppsala University, Sweden, conducted a study that proved how our unconscious mind exerts direct control of our facial muscles. In an experiment of 120 volunteers, Dimb used equipment to measure electrical signals from muscle fibers. When coached to try controlling their facial expressions, the twitching of the volunteers' facial muscles mirrored the expressions they were seeing in pictures, even when they were trying not to. Apparently "mirror neurons" in the brain cause us to mirror the facial expressions of others, and smiling positively influences other people's attitudes and how they respond to us. And this produces an environment conducive for success by opening constructive possibilities.

## **Being Nice Causes Connection**

Studies overall prove that most encounters will be more positive, relationships will last longer, outcomes will be more successful, and connectedness will significantly increase when people make an effort to be both nice and giving. Countries with the highest levels of giving per capita, with cultures that support one another (like the Okinawans), have the strongest social connections as well as higher rates of happiness and greater life expectancy.

Evidence has also been mounting that both smiles and laughter enhance the immune system, open customers to salespeople's offerings, attracts people to each other, and smiles even extend longevity! If you take notice of P.A.C.E.setters over a long period, you'll notice they smile a lot.

Another study, reported by Lindsay Abrams at *the Atlantic*, supports that smiling and just being nice is good regardless of the

situation. Researchers found that smiling—even when it’s forced—can ease stress and lower heart rates, even in the midst of multitasking. The conclusion? “When a situation has you feeling stressed or flustered, even the most forced of smiles can genuinely decrease your stress and make you happier.”

This equates to simply showing that you are nice, because nothing can turn someone around like an act of charity and kindness. Being nice to someone you dislike doesn’t mean you’re disingenuous. It means you are confident enough to tolerate your dislike towards them.

The proposal that we need to smile even when we don’t feel like isn’t so much about others. It’s about smiling for you and how it changes your physical state. It’s about turning around the pressures in life to realize that your perspective can override circumstances with something as simple as some humor and a smile. Then as we lighten the mood for ourselves, we invariably lighten it for others as well. P.A.C.E.setters smile a lot because it provides multiple benefits—it usually elicits a return smile, sets a positive tone, establishes instant trust, disarms otherwise antagonistic persons, relieves stress, and fosters instant rapport. Besides all that, who wouldn’t rather be around nice people?

## **Using Body Language and Verbal Signals to Relate**

We know that facial expressions, words, and emotions can serve to either disconnect or connect with others, but several studies have now confirmed that the “hidden” communication of body language serves as one of the most powerful connectors of all. About 55% of how people perceive you is through body language, 38% by your voice, and only 7% by your words. Research suggests that between 60-70% of meaning in human communication is derived from nonverbal behavior.

A simple smile or a hug can actually speak more effectively than any words if conveyed sincerely. Mirroring someone's movement is known as "the chameleon effect" used in persuasion. Sincerity is the key, and so to understand the differences between appearing honest and insincere are important.

Police and forensic psychologists are trained in how to identify deception techniques that can be useful for anyone using body language and verbal cues. People who lie typically use expressions that are stiff and contained, with few hand movements except to scratch behind the ear or touching the nose. Insincere persons keep their movements tight to their body.

An important way of demonstrating honesty is by matching your words and tone to your body language. For example, don't chuckle if you are saying something serious. The honest and well-received person relaxes her face and opens her posture to directly face the person with whom she is connecting. She maintains good eye contact, unlike the insincere or deceptive person.

Honest gestures and emotions are usually consistent for healthy relaters, whereas disconnecting relaters use delayed emotional responses that stop abruptly. For example, the person who causes mistrust may say, "That's funny" after hearing a joke, and then laugh well after hearing it. The dishonest person's expressions and movements will not match their verbal utterances, like smiling after saying "It's a gloomy day outside."

When someone is faking it, their expressions are confined to the mouth as opposed to using full-face movements (i.e., eyes, jaw and forehead do not move). The person who connects using honesty smiles such that crow's-feet (wrinkles around the eyes) appear. Persons who are confident are overt; those who feel guilty become defensive, and may turn their body or head away from the other person as a form of avoidance. Facing your torso toward the other person's torso connects you with the other person. Dishonest or disconnecting people may place themselves behind tables, or move cups or other objects

between the other person as a subconscious obstacle—they try to hide. Honest connectors tend to remove obstacles between themselves and the person with whom they are relating.

In conversation, *disconnectors* often will repeat your own words back verbatim, such as when you say, “Did you have a satisfying lunch across the street?” They will respond, “Yes, I had a satisfying lunch across the street.” These are indicators that someone may not be telling the truth. Statements using contractions, like “I don’t think so,” are perceived as being more truthful than “I do not think so.” Disconnectors avoid direct statements but might also over-speak, adding unnecessary details. They do not like pauses. They may leave out pronouns and speak with a monotone, talking softly and mumbling at times using improper grammar in a jumbled manner. Changing the subject connotes dishonesty to the other person, by oftentimes confusing the honest (connecting) person who wants to keep on topic.

P.A.C.E.setters possess an exceptional ability to connect emotionally by using mirroring to reflect the behaviors of the other person. Relaxed posture is met with relaxed posture, and so forth. They match the other person’s gestures and mannerisms to establish rapport, allowing them to lead that person through a subconscious reaction. As a connector to other people, a P.A.C.E.setter, for example, after mirroring the other person’s behavior, might lead that person by initiating a handshake of equal hand-pressure (no “bone-crusher” or “dead fish” grips), sitting or standing up tall, leaning forward, smiling, widening their stance, maintaining eye contact, and lowering his or her voice. These gestures demonstrate confidence.

Certain affirming body gestures connect people, like nodding, a softened gaze, and wearing your emotions on your face. Connectors may provide a solid touch to the other person’s forearm or face their palms up, both gestures indicating a sign of rapport. Before using any touching gestures, however, it’s best to assess the behavioral and cultural styles of the other person. Those gestures that build rapport

probably would work well with the Relater. In some cultures touching is not acceptable.

According to research at Harvard and Columbia Business schools, holding those palms apart so that they face each other, such as with holding a basketball, forming the hands as a steeple, or standing with legs and arms stretched wide open, stimulate testosterone, the hormone linked to power and dominance, which evokes passion and authority, and that may connect well with a Driver. The Driver may in turn face her palms down to exhibit power.

There are some universally perceived negative gestures that tend to disconnect, like wrinkling the nose (a sign of disgust) or pulling one's lip corner in and back on one side of the face (a sign of contempt). One or two index fingers pointing outward can act as a disconnecting gesture by telling the other person that you don't like what he or she is doing or saying.

Establishing an effective connection with someone should always be demonstrated with respect. According to research, at least 50% of our joy comes from doing something for others—in other words, caring. When we genuinely care for someone, our body language will usually follow with the same attitude.

## **Practicing the 7 Cs of Connection**

Consider all of the ways in which you communicate with others. You talk on the phone, send emails, text, participate in meetings, make presentations, type reports ... each day communication represents you and your intentions. Our lives are full of communicating with people.

So, how can you make each communication an effective one? You can follow the well-established Cs of communicating with impact.

P.A.C.E.setters follow the 7 Cs of connection when speaking or writing:

1. **Completeness**—They provide the what, where, how, and when of what they express, including answering any questions that might arise from their message. In written communication, being correct means proper use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Correctness in oral communication means the right use of words, expressions, and pauses.
2. **Correctness**—P.A.C.E.setters use the right form of expression, such as professional language in the workplace, as well as using the appropriate mode of communication (e.g., visual aids, email). Correctness in business writing includes proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and format. For spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you should use the *spelling and grammar* check under your *Tools* bar. For important documents, ask someone to proof read your work.
3. **Conciseness**—By ensuring that their message is clearly understood by avoiding wordy expressions, staying on purpose, and not repeating yourself, P.A.C.E.setters convey confidence. Anyone who wants their communications to be taken seriously by busy people, makes them brief. They say what they need to say, and say no more (while maintaining goodwill, of course).
4. **Courtesy**—P.A.C.E.setters respect the feelings, expectations, and customs of the other person or group, while also expressing appreciation. For example, instead of a store manager at closing time abruptly telling a customer that “The store is closed,” the P.A.C.E.setter might say, “Thank you for shopping with us and I simply wish to let you know we are closing now, but we’ll be open tomorrow.” Their message is positive-building goodwill and focused upon the listener or reader. They’re careful

about customs for different cultures, knowing the person's name, gender specific language, and proper use of titles.

5. **Clarity**—Emphasize the specific topic or goal, rather than saying too much at one time. Check your communication to see if you are using any unnecessary sentences or (filler) words such as “for instance,” “sort of,” and “basically.” Use familiar words and avoid technical terms or business jargon.
6. **Consideration**—Being considerate implies a level of understanding or empathy for others by displacing a “Me-Attitude” with a “We-Attitude.” P.A.C.E.setters put the other person first. Remaining sensitive to the audience's background, expectations, and views is key in order to avoid offending them. They keep the spotlight on the other person's interests, and speak in the language and customs of the person with whom they are communicating.
7. **Concreteness**—P.A.C.E.setters give their audience a solid picture of what they are communicating, by providing an appropriate level of detail (but not too much) with pinpoint focus using vivid facts. A bad example of using concreteness would be saying, “I am going to make you effective today.” There's no imagery or detail in this sentence. A good example might be: “How much time do you spend duplicating your efforts? Today we're going to change that! By doing the job right the first time, you'll save time and enjoy your work much more.” Note how the passion and details work.

L	• LISTEN
E	• EMPATHIZE
A	• ADAPT
R	• RELATE
N	• NEGOTIATE

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## NEGOTIATE

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Some may view negotiation as a form of manipulation—it is not. In its purest sense negotiation is about getting to a point of transparent connection, where the needs of each other are interdependently served through collaboration, and where together each person is stronger than either would be apart.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow created a well-known hierarchy of needs, which he displayed as a pyramid. Our basest needs to maintain life (e.g., food, water, etc.), according to Maslow, needed to be met first before moving up the pyramid to higher needs. The next need, for safety (e.g., security, family support, health), would be sought only after meeting the basic needs for existence. Third, the need for belonging and being loved served as the driving force once these others were established. And, then second from the pinnacle or top was the need for self-esteem, confidence, achievement, and the respect for and from others. The top need in the pyramid was for morality, creativity and spontaneity. At the height of healthy relationships, and at the top of Maslow's pyramid, people are elevated to the point of making principled decisions, they tend to think more innovatively, and they feel free to openly express themselves.

Connectedness reflects a similar pattern of needs to those determined by Maslow. In relationships, we must first feel safe and secure with the other person. After that is established, our need is to feel supported by the other person, so that we feel that our interests

are being protected. Next up the pyramid is to produce an outcome that can best be achieved together, rather than apart using collaboration. And, finally at the top, our need is met through a fully merged or integrated nature of wants so that the “you and me” of a relationship become simply, “us.” Negotiating to this pinnacle of relationship is a little like a dating relationship, which start with feeling safe, then moves to an awareness of being protected, then becomes collaborative (e.g., working together), and is finally consummated with a sense of union, or harmony (see Figure 4.2).



(Figure 4.2. The Connection Pyramid of Negotiation)

Negotiation by definition is a discussion aimed at reaching agreement, but the highest level of human interaction leads not to just agreement but to a singleness of purpose and power. When two or more disparate chords of interaction join together, the power of each melds into a harmonic power than no one note can achieve as separate.

## Safety



Similar to Maslow's Pyramid, the Connection Pyramid starts with creating a safe environment. When people feel like they can trust the other person, they feel safe. Trust can be established through transparency, boundaries, patience, friendliness, and reliability. Here's how to develop these five characteristics in a relationship:

1. *Build **transparency** through vulnerability.* People appreciate when we show our humanity. Saying "I'm not really sure" or "I goofed up" opens the other person to trust. Confessions give us a fresh start, a new beginning. And then asking something like "Would you be able to help me with this?" opens the door to the next step of mutual supportiveness.
2. *Establish **boundaries** or non-negotiables for moving forward.* Right from the start boundaries must be established in order to create rules for the relationship. Saying something like, "I need time after 6 p.m. for family and social time," lessens hidden resentment in the future. Asking the other person about their boundaries is imperative as well.
3. *Practice **patience** by stepping away from a heated conversation or practicing the skills of reflection and acknowledge in order to diffuse conflict.* Once hostility occurs in an emerging relationship, trust is damaged. If this happens, apologize and use your empathy skills to show that you want to understand the other person.
4. *Demonstrate **friendliness** with a smile and caring directness.* Something as simple as a smile relaxes the other person and usually elicits a similarly positive response. People tend to process messages better if spoken with kindness and directness. They know exactly what you mean, and can clarify their processing with you based on

the facts, not conjecture, as long as the message is conveyed with genuine caring for the other person's success.

5. *Practice **reliability**. This means that once a responsibility has been accepted, the accountable person must remain committed to its satisfactory completion—no ifs, ands, or buts about it—you're obligated at that point.* So be careful in what you say "Yes" to—it's better to decline something than to not do it well. Once a responsibility is accepted, you'll need to define the requirements to be met. Ill-defined expectations and tasks that cannot be objectively measured can lead to an unfair evaluation of the work completed by the person who is expecting it. You might think you've done a wonderful job, but if it isn't what the other person expected, from their perspective you didn't satisfactorily complete the work.

## Mutual Support through Equal Power



Research shows that equal power helps create relationship success. Though people often express a commitment to equality in a relationship, cultural models of mutual support demonstrate a tendency for those in a relationship to seek personal control. Power imbalances are destructive to most relationships, primarily because of a person's perceived need to be right all of the time. Here are the three steps to ensuring mutual support through equal power sharing:

1. **Interdependent Responsibility.** Each person in the relationship fails or succeeds together. Their success as well

as their positions toward any endeavor becomes interdependent. Failure shared decreases failure. Success shared multiplies success. Always view the other person's success as your own.

2. **Mutual Vulnerability.** Only one person sharing his or her vulnerability will not suffice. Being vulnerable together is the single most important aspect of building connectedness. Without mutual vulnerability, the relationship regresses back to the need for safety.
3. **Mutual respect and unselfishness.** Mutual respect and unselfishness are the two biggest reasons for lasting connectedness. Partners can't get too mired in their own selfish wants. This insight into lasting connectedness was borne from a study of 120 couples with marriages in excess of 30 years. Those who wanted a 50/50 split in getting their way didn't succeed as well as those who would settle for 40/60, with each agreeing to offer the most to the other. This only works if both sides agree to do more for the other.

In my research of 20 leaders within a San Diego-based company, each felt they shared their power equally with their work partners. However, in meetings several of these people demonstrated otherwise. For example, some showed up to meetings late. Showing up on time indicated compliance, not power. Those who showed up consistently late for meetings actually had the power, because they dictated when the meetings started. Some opted not to participate in meetings all together, sending out a non-verbal message that the other participants were not worth their time. They were not a priority. But no one wanted to admit that is the message they were sending. These kinds of power plays made others feel unsupported, which result in an unhealthy company culture.

Power is dynamic, changing from situation to situation. P.A.C.E.setters in leadership positions ensure that no one on the team holds all of the power, and they often do this by rotating responsibilities so that no one person holds the power all of the time. For most, this has been found to be challenging, since shared responsibility runs contrary to many high achievers. They can perceive accommodation as a loss of power. Showing any kind of weakness was disagreeable to most in the leadership group studied, such as accepting a project that appeared demeaning, or allowing the other person to choose an alternate path. This type of “power leading” proved ineffective over the long term by demotivating teams.

On the flip side, P.A.C.E.setter leaders are a complicated and effective mix of intense professional will and exceptional personal humility. They create superb results but shun adulation, and are never boastful. Most would describe them as modest. An example of such a leader who epitomized humility is Mark Lortz, who founded a hugely successful company called Therasense (which was eventually sold to Abbott Laboratories). Therasense topped the Deloitte Technology Fast 500, a ranking of the fastest growing technologies in North America, by demonstrating a 296,080% growth rate over five years. Lortz defined himself as a team player first and a CEO second. As a P.A.C.E.setter leader, he was a man of the people, practicing management by inclusion. Shunning all manner of praise, Lortz is quoted as saying, “You shouldn’t boast about anything you’ve done; you ought to give credit to others when credit is due.”

Clearly these accomplished P.A.C.E.setter leaders don’t espouse the meaning of humility as “meek.” Quite the opposite, it is a source of their strength. Practicing humility improves relationships across all levels, it prevents power struggles, it encourages more openness and paradoxically, it empowers teams more than any single person can do. But the notion of being self-effacing is one that we struggle with in our competitive culture, causing many to brag of their achievements or to play office politics. The outcome is a drain in the team’s power,

or energy. Just saying these eight empowering words could save expensive team building retreats: “I would like us to consider *your* idea.” Ahh...shared power feels good.

## Distributing Power through Negotiation

Another key to overcoming power struggles was found in eliminating the tendency toward gaining the upper hand, or position, through a negotiated resolution. In the book *Getting to Yes*, which was based on the work of the Harvard Negotiation Project, authors Roger Fisher and William Ury suggested that to effectively negotiate, we need to separate the people from the problem by focusing on *interests*, not positions. Once position becomes secondary, or even tertiary to mutual interests, the influence of power diminishes.

They wrote that we need to define objective standards as the criteria for making decisions. When someone wants you to take on another project when you're already maxed, you need to remain assertive by saying “no” through effective negotiation, but leave the door open to the other person's wants. Perhaps, for example, you could negotiate a lighter workload—which would get you to “yes,” or redefine your role and responsibilities as an opportunity to move forward. You have plenty of options, but just saying “no” creates an imbalance of power. So the key is to say “no” to the task, but “yes” to the person at the same time.

Begin by explaining your reason for saying “no” so that you are clear as to whether just the timing is wrong, or whether there are other prohibitive factors. If someone understands your justification, they're more likely to agree with it, or at least they are less apt to become confrontational. Shared power begins through a negotiated settlement for satisfying mutual wants. Whether a response is yes or no, the negotiation process focuses on how to get the task or project done versus the positions needed to do so.

Next, think through different ways for the other person's wants to be met. Consider other resources and areas of flexibility by searching for common interests to achieve the primary end-goal. Gaining the other person's trust is central to any negotiation process. You do that through genuinely trying to understand their needs, and assuring them that you respect them enough to want to work through a solution that will get them to where they want to be. You could say something like, "I'm sorry, I know you need to get this done and I want to help you, while at the same time I'm committed to a project this week and don't have the time to do a good job for you right now, but I have a couple of other ideas. Jane is anxious to develop her skills in this area—would you like me to show the project scope to her so that she can take this on?" Or say, "I can do this in about two weeks if you like."

Looking for that proverbial win-win establishes equal power sharing. Just saying no, or ignoring the wants of someone else shifts the power to your side, but distances the other person sense of mutual support. Jockeying for position, or even regarding positions more important to the task than what it will take to achieve the desired outcome, creates an imbalance of power. To achieve true collaboration, power must be equally shared through an outcome based on working equally with each other.

## Collaboration



Once power and responsibility are equally shared, communication can be elevated to the next level of interaction on the Connection Pyramid. The highest form of empowerment is collaboration, which is working

together to create something larger than any individual contributor could ever devise on their own. The needs of the team or relationship always come first. Collaboration is working together to achieve a larger collective goal. It is a repetitive process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize common goals. Good collaborators don't look at a piece of pie and try to distribute the pieces evenly—they try to create a bigger pie so that their group can consume more of it.

Collaboration goes beyond just cooperation...it is more than the sharing of common objectives but a unified determination to reach an identical goal by sharing resources, knowledge, learning and building consensus. Collaboration moves persons from a “you and me” perspective to an “us” perspective. The key is to make it an intentional way of interaction.

## **Collaboration across Boundaries**

Collaboration across boundaries is the most important element in establishing effective communications, although only 7% of the senior executives surveyed in a poll considered that they do it effectively. Boundaries exist everywhere in life, and similar statistics apply for people in teams, in one-on-one situations, across different countries, integrated businesses (mergers) and even within different communities.

Navigating across boundaries requires that we venture beyond our own confines, and that we adapt to new environments by identifying common connections and mutual interests between different people and groups. Showing respect for people is the most foundational principle for navigating across boundaries, and the second is a willingness to compromise and cooperate with each other.

To do so, we need to discontinue our bias and expectations, place our agenda aside, and just listen to the other person or group. Sharing

with an open mind is the key success factor in collaboration, learning from others, and valuing others' opinions and ideas. Self-focused communication will undermine any attempt to traverse across boundaries, so an open, honest and consistent dialog between members must happen through a commitment by each person to own the communication process. Moving forward together means progress; jockeying for position means regression—there's no standing still.

Here's how:

## **Build a Team**

- Share your vision and intentions with the person or group.
- Respect each person for his or her individual talents, experience and abilities.
- Share information freely (no hoarding of knowledge)—keep people informed and in-the-loop so they are able to contribute.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Define success as when each member involved can benefit in some way.
- Celebrate successes and generously give credit and recognition.
- Address negativity in private if possible, but always with empathy to preserve personal dignity.

## **Keep the Discussions Solutions Focused**

- Establish as a ground rule that for each problem surfaced at least one solution must be proposed.
- Make sure communications lead to desired outcomes—limit tangential topics and random talk.

- Accept conflict as a normal way of achieving resolution, but avoid emotional fights that do not lead forward to consensus.
- Mitigate failures with a forward-looking approach—what was learned, what can we do better?
- Identify solutions but don't become overly attached to them; instead, challenge preconceived notions.
- Embrace change—initiate change rather than react to it, and help the other person(s) understand how the change will improve the situation, what's in it for them, and why it is necessary.
- Usually a blended approach to decisions is best—consensus drives compliance and collaboration.

Collaborative communication leads to a harmonious relationship whether corporately or individually. Disney-Pixar represents a good example of a corporate merger where the two groups navigated through their own operating channels to emerge as a collaboration made in cartoon heaven. Conversely, the merger of Daimler/Chrysler (\$37B) failed because of a corporate culture clash—many thought the high-end Daimler group swaggered in and attempted to tell the Chrysler group what to do. This created an imbalance of power, which prevented collaboration. Had these two automobile groups humbly asked more questions of each other in trying to balance the parts in the relationship to the whole, they may have succeeded. Instead, they lost the main idea and could not keep focus on the big picture.

There are many examples of successful pairs who have effectively collaborated with each other. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak used collaboration to create Apple, Inc.; Herbert Fisher and Zelma Fisher, born in 1905 and 1907, respectively, were married in 1924 in North Carolina. The marriage ended only after Herbert died in 2011, after 86 years, nine months, and 16 days—because they functioned collaboratively with each other to overcome many trials, through the

proven process of expecting to give more in the relationship than each one expected of the other.

My favorite story involves an employee I supervised (I'll call her Lisa), who was in a constant power struggle with another employee in my company, Craig. Give Lisa a glass half-full and she would have said it was in fact three-quarters empty. However, I believed that Lisa had great potential, so I treated her as the person she ought to be, and gave her a big project with one caveat: She needed to work collaboratively with Craig. After much coaching, the two produced something much bigger than either would have created on his or her own. That is the secret of collaboration.

## Harmony



Collaborative communication typically creates something better than any of the affected individuals would have accomplished on their own. Once collaboration occurs, there is an even more powerful level of interaction that can happen: Harmony. A harmonious relationship involves two or more people who neither harbor nor express any negativity toward each other. Both sides look out for one another and remain optimistic despite any obstacles.

So how does one reach this pinnacle of connectedness? Of course being empowering, supportive, encouraging (e.g., praises outnumber criticisms by at least four to one), non-judgmental, accepting, sincere, honest, loving, forgiving, respectful, grateful and understanding—but there's one very essential quality that allows collaborative people to cross over the threshold into harmony. People who develop harmony

*expect* the other person(s) to ultimately do the right thing. They have *faith* in each other. Positive expectations produce harmony, and to believe in someone's ultimate goodness and abilities without qualification produces a harmonious level of communication that will prevail against even the most disappointing of circumstances.

Optimistically trusting in the essential goodness and success of others synchronizes our personal expectations with another. After all, who do we trust more than ourselves? God? Yes, but humanly speaking, despite occasional bouts of self-doubt, most of us live believing in our ability to prevail. When you first learned to drive, did you expect to be able to drive someday? You probably didn't give up despite some self-doubts and maybe even a test failure or two...or three. You succeeded in gaining your driver's license because you were confident in your ability to get your license, in part because you witnessed others—even some with lesser abilities—getting their driver's license. You could not fail because failure was simply irrelevant. Seeing another person in a similar light, as having no chance to ultimately fail us, creates a boundless ability to connect at all times, by maintaining a belief in that person's rightness, which frees us to believe in them.

When ultimate success is believed, we invariably achieve success. Sometimes our paradigm of success may change, but success is in the future—regardless. Seeing someone else in a similar light produces the same outcome. In fact, when we believe in others, they believe in us. Ultimately, they cannot fail us. In the end, they will do what's best. Try visualizing a harmonious relationship, seeing the other as invincible just as you are destined toward success, both blessed in abilities, protected as the same, and continually improving. Then as a habit start affirming one another, which builds mutual confidence in each other so that in a sense, the prophetic belief in someone's abilities works out in reality.

Music, of course, is all about harmony. Without it, disparate vibrations simply become noise. The same principle applies to

people—harmonious relationships sing while contentious ones clang. Great musicians play until their fingers or breath moves instinctively, and then they keep on playing until the melody and they become as one. Until they're lost in the music. Until they become the notes and rhythm, the chords and harmony. It takes hours of practice, but some have explained that it is all worth it in the end because they "become the music"—they lose themselves in the music. And the music takes away all worry, all the heartache, the pain, the desperation and the doubts. Harmony results from getting lost in something that started outside and somehow blended itself on our fabric.

Harmony in relationships, whether as two people or as a hundred people, results when the music of conversation—affirming words—connecting words—blends with others so that you start talking the same talk, start believing the same outcomes, start thinking of your destinies as immutably intertwined. So much so that you are virtually one—a heartfelt harmony.