

THE LAW OF CONNECTION

Leaders Touch a Heart Before They Ask for a Hand

When it comes to working with people, the heart comes before the head. That's true whether you are communicating to a stadium full of people, leading a team meeting, or trying to relate to your spouse. If you've been on any kind of winning team in business, sports, or service, you know that the leader didn't simply give instructions and then send you on your way. No, he or she connected with you on an emotional level. For leaders to be effective, they need to connect with people. Why? Because you first have to touch people's hearts before you ask them for a hand. That is the Law of Connection. All great leaders and communicators recognize this truth and act on it almost instinctively. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion.

How do you connect? Whether you're speaking in front of a large audience or chatting in the hallway with an individual, the guidelines are the same:

CONNECT WITH YOURSELF – You must know who you are and have confidence in yourself if you desire to connect with others.

COMMUNICATE WITH OPENESS AND SINCERITY – Nothing is more effective than sincere, accurate praise, and nothing is more lame than a cookie-cutter compliment. Authentic leaders connect.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE – When you work with individuals, knowing your audience means learning people's names, finding out about their histories, asking about their dreams. You want to speak about what *they* care about, not just what you care about.

LIVE YOUR MESSAGE – Perhaps the most important thing you can do as a leader and communicator is to practice what you preach. That's where credibility comes from.

GO TO WHERE THEY ARE – I dislike any kind of barrier to communication. I try to be attuned to others' culture, background, education, and so on. I adapt to others; I don't expect them to adapt to me.

FOCUS ON THEM, NOT YOURSELF – If you got on an elevator with me and asked me to tell you the secret to good communication before I got off at the next floor, I'd tell you to focus on others, not yourself. You will always connect faster when your focus is not on yourself.

BELIEVE IN THEM – It's one thing to communicate to people because you believe you have something of value to say. It's another to communicate with people because you believe they have value.

OFFER DIRECTION AND HOPE – People expect leaders to help them get where they want to go. But good leaders do that and more. When you give people hope, you give them a future.

Learn to walk slowly through the crowd. When you are out among your employees or coworkers, make relationship building and connecting a priority. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion...The heart comes before the head.

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

Harriet Tubman

"Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them."

John C. Maxwell

"The purpose of life is a life of purpose."

Robert Byrne