

Ten Simple Tips and Tricks to Help You Connect (and close more sales in the process!)

Excerpted from *The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life*

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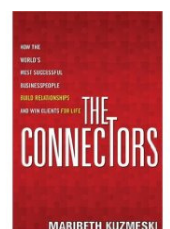
- 1. Seek out a common interest.** People want others to be like them. Establishing that you and a client root for the same baseball team or volunteer at the same charity will go a long way in making you relevant in his eyes!
- 2. Don't work from a script.** Try to scrap the memorized pitch in favor of a more natural conversation. You'll seem more at ease and authentic—and your prospect will be less tempted to think that you're fluffing up the facts.
- 3. Pretend that every single person you meet has a sign around his or her neck that reads, "Make me feel important."** This was the life philosophy of Mary Kay Ash, the well-known cosmetics mogul. Her genuine concern for others catapulted her out of poverty and was the secret to her success.
- 4. Remember the remarkable.** Entrepreneur Susan Bates makes a point to identify and write down the things that stand out to her in every conversation. She then references those statements in future interactions—and has been amazed by the reactions she's gotten when others realize that she has paid attention to and valued what they've said!
- 5. Cultivate curiosity.** According to Lee Iacocca, former Chrysler CEO, "A leader has to show curiosity. He has to listen to people outside of the 'Yes, sir' crowd in his inner circle. Businesspeople need to listen at least as much as they need to talk. Too many people fail to realize that real communication goes in both directions."
- 6. Act like a good listener. (Don't let your body image betray you!)** We're constantly bombarded with information, so it's almost instinctive to tune it out. When you're interacting with someone, you need to consciously change your body language to reflect that you *want* to receive information; otherwise, it may appear that you're trying to get away from it. Remember, your face says it all.
- 7. Ask effective questions.** When you're communicating, remember: garbage in, garbage out. If you ask the wrong questions, you'll get the wrong answers—or at least different answers from the ones you were hoping for. Think about what you're hoping to learn, and remember that an open-ended question is almost always more effective than one that elicits a simple "Yes" or "No" answer.

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8. **Play dumb.** Socrates used this technique more than 2,300 years ago by feigning ignorance in order to encourage others to express their views fully. Today, many of the world's most successful businesspeople do the same.
9. **Know your audience.** Whether you're dealing with a colleague, boss, client, or recent acquaintance, it pays to do a little research. Once you know what a person wants, is interested in, and responds to, you'll be better equipped to deliver just that.
10. **Remember, "When she cries, she buys."** This is the motto of Wisconsin-based financial advisor Dale Froehlich, who closes over 90 percent of his sales. What he means by this is simple: Ask questions about something that's close to the heart of the prospect (e.g., her children). Once she opens up to you, she trusts you. Then, she won't want to go anywhere else.

BONUS: Let your passion shine through. If you're truly energetic and passionate about what you do, other people will notice. They may buy from you, they may talk about you, or they may follow your career—and they'll definitely feel connected to you!

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