

11 Simple Ways to Create Genuine Connections with the People Who Make Failure Impossible

Posted: 16 Oct 2012 06:45 AM PDT

'You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.' ~**Jim Rohn**

1. Know the impact you want to have. Connection starts long before the first interaction. Be the guy glowing with passion. Let the people around you feel your fire for the impact you want to have on the world. Prompt others to share what makes them come alive. Share in their excitement. There is no more empowering, genuine way to connect. If you don't know the impact you dream of making, how will you know who you want in your corner to make it happen?

2. Fire toxic friends. This one's painful, but an absolute requirement. Identify the people in your day-to-day life who you notice constantly put your ideas down. The ones who don't support you and leave you drained after an interaction. Make a list. You must start spending less time around them.

Leo is the poster-child of this and is actually one of the experts in our Connect with Anyone course just for that reason. He realized he had a job he hated, 70 pounds he wanted to lose, a smOking habit he wanted to kick and a lifestyle that was killing him. He ended up moving his whole family halfway across the world to San Francisco – all in search of a more empowering environment. I'm not saying you need to be that extreme, but you must recognize how badly the wrong people can infect your potential.

3. Find new surroundings. Leo constantly stresses that you need to replace old habits with new, more empowering ones. Same with people. If you leave your toxic friends but have no one else to hang out with, you'll likely go right back to them. This can start as simple as seeing one inspiring friend for an hour every week or so.

Take your passions and start to overlay them with the people in business and in life who see the world the same way. Take inspiration from everywhere: TED talks, movies, articles, local events, Google searches – anything goes.

4. Create a relationship road map. Write out the people you want in your corner. Be as specific as possible – ideally with actual names, but at least with industries and areas you want to spend more time with. Create a "Dream Connections" list of the industry leaders and game changers you'd love to meet and collaborate with. If you don't know who you want to meet, it's going to be pretty tough to meet them.

5. Discover who you already know. The odds are that you or the people close to you already know a handful of people who could change your world. Go through your existing networks including friends, colleagues, past employers, alumni groups, sports teams, friends of friends.

Who's already connected to you in some way that you'd like to get closer to? Make a list of at least five, but keep going as long as you can list names. Then start setting up lunches and meetings to reconnect.

6. Enlist the help of others. This action alone will cause your community to explode with new interesting people. Ask your existing network who they know who fits the criteria of whom you're hoping to meet. Ask every person you meet for a referral. Never leave a meeting without asking for one person they think would be good for you to meet and who would also benefit from meeting you. Always start with the other person's interests in mind.

Only ask for one, though. Be specific, so it's easy to think of someone. **Sample Script:** "Thanks Natalie, this has been a total blast. Also I'm curious, I'd love to chat with a few other people about long-distance trail running. Can you think of one person who comes to mind who would have some fun chatting through this stuff over a tea or a meal?"

7. Create unique value and learn to help anyone. All of us have things we can offer to others. Nothing feels better and nothing creates faster, more memorable genuine connections. What are your unique strengths, talents and passions? If you design logos, offer someone some free help with the branding for their new venture.

I once gave a copy of *The 4-Hour Body* to a new business friend who wanted to lose some weight. The next time I saw him, he'd lost 30 pounds. Is there any better gift to give? Before going to a meetup with a bestselling author and entrepreneur I admired, my wife and I created a list of our favorite vegan restaurants in San Francisco – because we knew he only ate plants and had just moved to town. We would have appreciated the same in his shoes. Your ability to help is only limited by your creativity.

8. Great genuine online connections. I see connecting online as maybe step one of twenty, but it is still an incredibly powerful, high-leverage step. Today there's a community for every passion imaginable. You just have to do some looking. Join a private club or a forum. Even if it costs \$20 or \$100 a month, it's worth checking out. You can always cancel later. I met my first group of online entrepreneur friends through Leo's A-List Blogging Club, and his Sea Change Program has turned into an incredibly community for habit change. We've created our own **members-only Connection Forum** as part of the Connect with Anyone Course for this same reason.

9. Build your in-person community. As soon as you can, take the virtual connections into the real world. No matter how big or small your town is, you have to find people in the flesh and blood with whom you can spend consistent time. Check out meetup.com, Craigslist, Facebook & LinkedIn groups or the classifieds of your hometown paper. Or better yet, walk into the hot local restaurant or cafe and ask the owner what's happening in your realm of passions. Start attending events and saying hello. Watch what happens.

10. Make people a part of your world. The more personal the better. Get out on double dates, have beers, go on workouts, travel together. Do anything you can to make these people a part of your life. But only if you genuinely care about having them in your life. People will see straight through anything less than honest intentions.

11. Show Up. Nothing happens if you don't show up. If you never press send on that email, dial that number, or walk through the door of your local event, you will never find the surroundings you need. And often times that leads to 99% of the results ... showing up. At the end of the day, that's the only thing that has lead to the connections that have changed my world. And it's the only thing that ever will.

If you aren't willing to show up, nothing else matters.

So, who's in your corner?

The most recent studies show that over 80% of people are not happy with their work. This is a tragedy. It also means that most the people around us encourage complacency. They endorse these lives of quiet desperation that so much of the world is living. They put down our ideas on how to be different, and think we're crazy (or even stupid) for thinking we can take the road less traveled.

They tell us it's impossible to actually build a life and career around work we're truly passionate about.

The more time we hang around them, the more we start to believe it and the less we actually try to make a meaningful impact in the world.

But we have a choice.

We can choose to continue to hang around the people who tell us we're stupid for thinking things could be different. Or we could surround ourselves with the people who inspire possibility.

The choice is 100% on us.

Either way, one thing is for sure. The people around us will change our world.

The question is, will they kill our dreams or make them come true?

That's on you to decide.

You have more control than you likely realize.

Do something with it.

After all, what could be possible with the right people in your corner?