

THE CONNECTOR'S WAY

Seven Rules for Building Business One Relationship at a Time

ONE

Nurture body and mind to create positive energy and enthusiasm that attracts others.

TWO

Seek out individuals who expose you to new ways of thinking.

THREE

Ask your connections how you can be of service to them.

FOUR

Serve others without consideration for how you will benefit.

FIVE

Exceed expectations.

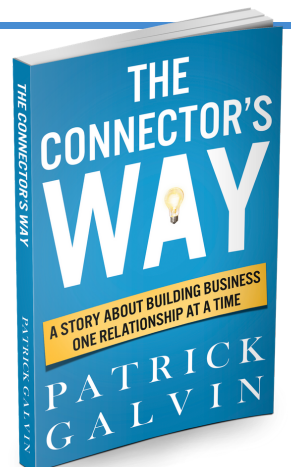
SIX

Let people know how they can help you succeed.

SEVEN

Be grateful.

From *The Connector's Way* by Patrick Galvin
Joseph Rudolph Publishers, 2016
All Rights Reserved



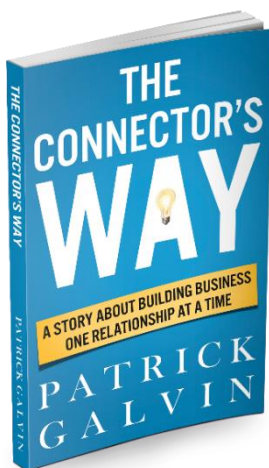
THE CONNECTOR'S WAY: A DISCUSSION GUIDE

Seven Rules for Building Business One Relationship at a Time

Great relationships are the difference between success and failure in business. That's the lesson that Robert Hanson, owner of a struggling business, learns in *The Connector's Way: A Story About Building Business One Relationship at a Time* (Joseph Rudolph Publishers). By following the advice of two surprising mentors and the natural connectors he meets through them, Robert uncovers powerful relationship-building secrets that have long eluded him—even though they were always in plain sight.

Written by Patrick Galvin, the book uncovers **seven simple yet powerful rules** for building business one relationship at a time. Whether you're looking to move ahead in your career or grow a company, the seven rules of *The Connector's Way* will galvanize you into action and provide a clear path to success.

On the following pages you will find a discussion guide developed by author Patrick Galvin to provide readers with ideas for putting the seven rules of *The Connector's Way* into practice. Whether you've purchased a copy for yourself or are reading it as part of a book club or group exercise, this discussion guide will get you thinking—and talking—about what it means to cultivate a Connector's Mindset.



The Connector's Way: A Story About Building Business One Relationship at a Time by Patrick Galvin (Joseph Rudolph Publishers) is available in paperback, Kindle, and audio formats on Amazon.

For volume quantity discounts of autographed books for your group or organization, please contact info@galvanizinggroup.com.

RULE ONE

Nurture body and mind to create positive energy and enthusiasm that attracts others.

In 1978, American journalist, writer and editor Jane Howard wrote: *"Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one."*

Her quote is as relevant today as it was when she wrote it. The only thing worth adding is the word "connections." Without connections, we cannot thrive personally or professionally.

Now contrast the word "connecting" with "networking." For many people, the mere idea of networking makes them cringe with horror, bringing up visions of awkward meet-and-mingle events and social mixers. Moreover, networking is often perceived as manipulative and transactional, something to do for one's own personal gain or business benefit.

In contrast, connecting is about developing and cultivating long-term, meaningful relationships—and making introductions that help other people do the same.

The Secret Starts with You

Great connectors understand that their most important relationship is the one that they have with themselves. It's simply not possible to go forth into the world and build a community of positive, like-minded people if you don't feel good about yourself.

Think about the best connectors you know. What do they have in common? Whether they are introverted or extroverted, it's likely that they share common traits such as optimism, gratitude, integrity, focus, curiosity, and persistence. It's also likely that they take diligent care of themselves which includes eating healthy, exercising, getting plenty of sleep, and cultivating a positive attitude.

Great connectors understand that when they nurture their bodies and minds, they create positive energy and enthusiasm which attracts others.

Take Back Your Time

Whether it's establishing a new workout routine, planning a healthy meal, or taking a few minutes each day to turn off your mind and simply focus on nothing, you'll find that by making yourself a priority you become a priority for other people, too.

Does making a commitment to your own well-being take time? It does but consider this: the average Facebook user spends 50 minutes a day on the social media platform. Except for watching television (2.8 hours per day), that's more time than any other non-work activity tracked by the Bureau of

Labor Statistics. It's almost as much time as people spend eating and drinking (1 hour), and more time than people spend reading (19 minutes), exercising, or playing sports (17 minutes), or socializing (4 minutes).

This is not to say that everyone needs to sign off on social media and head to the nearest yoga studio. Rather, the point is that with only 24 hours in a day, up to one-third of which are spent sleeping, we can (and should) find ways to take better care of ourselves.

DISCUSSION:

*How do you take care of yourself, so you have the energy and enthusiasm
you need to connect better with others?*

RULE TWO

Seek out individuals who expose you to new ways of thinking.

Writing for the *Wall Street Journal*, Elizabeth Bernstein describes going on a series of "friend dates" to expand her circle of connections. She explains how looking with intention is key to making new friends as an adult.

The Difficulty of Making Friends as an Adult

Research shows that cultivating friendships helps us stay happier and healthier. When we have strong connections, we significantly reduce the risks of depression, high blood pressure and elevated stress levels. Unfortunately, making friends can seem harder as we grow older.

Unlike children, we are more inhibited and less willing to appear vulnerable. We also have less time to pursue new friendships and are prone to stay with the same people and situations since we've developed a comfort level.

To make new friends, we need to broaden our horizons. We need to stop spending all our time with people who are just like us.

The same goes for our business relationships.

Have you ever gone to a networking event and spent the entire time talking with your coworkers or friends? Attended a business luncheon where every table was filled with people who already knew one other?

It's human nature to stick close to the people you know. But to thrive (rather than simply survive), you need to take a deep breath and put yourself out into the world.

In *The Connector's Way*, Robert Hanson is a middle-aged insurance agency owner who is struggling to keep his business afloat. With the help of his mentor Albert Cheevers, Robert meets people from different occupations and from outside his normal social circles. One of the people he meets is Janice, a server who takes the time to get to know her regular customers. She has much to teach Robert—and others like him—about genuine customer service.

Albert and Janice are just two of the characters who help Robert Hanson look at things from a distinct perspective. Below are a few simple yet powerful ways you can meet new people and discover innovative ways of thinking.

Make a commitment.

Commit to having a conversation with three to five new people at every networking or business event. By the end of the year, you'll have met dozens of people you would not have known if you had just socialized with your coworkers and friends.

Pursue a passion.

Join a group or volunteer for an organization for fun. Pursuing a personal passion that has absolutely nothing to do with business (whether its bird watching or hang gliding) doesn't just invigorate the mind and spirit—it also introduces you to a diverse group of people. It's also likely that some of the people you meet will want to do business with you or refer to others. Most people prefer to do business with people they know, like, and trust.

Be a leader.

Consider the groups, associations, and community service organizations that you belong to or would consider joining. Do they interest you enough to see yourself in a leadership position? If not, concentrate your efforts on those that are most important to you. Taking on a leadership position and serving it well is the single best way to develop the bonds that lead to business opportunities and referrals.

DISCUSSION:

What groups or organizations are effective places for you to network?
How do you make a professional group or a networking event worthwhile?

RULE THREE

Ask Your Connections How You Can Be of Service to Them.

Helping others leads to personal happiness and professional success. Yet finding meaningful ways to be of service is not as simple as it sounds – it takes time, effort, and commitment. Don't let this dissuade you, however. By taking a few simple actions consistently, you'll be able to offer people the assistance they need, when they need it. Along the way you'll cultivate strong connections and develop a solid support network.

Follow through.

Only offer your assistance if you are prepared to follow up. I (Patrick Galvin) have heard several relationship building “experts” recommend asking people “How can I help you right now?” to stand out at networking events. When I ran into a professional acquaintance who asked me this question, I responded by telling him what I needed for my latest project. His response was: “Sorry, I don't have time in my schedule right now.” Before offering to help someone, ask yourself whether you're able to deliver—or risk damaging your credibility.

Ask targeted questions.

Be specific when asking people what they need. Instead of “How can I help you?” ask “Who is your ideal client?” or “What is your greatest business challenge?” What's important to your bottom line may not be as important to someone else's. You may not be able to offer an immediate solution, but it's only by understanding what your connections really need that you'll be able to identify appropriate opportunities to help.

Talk less, listen more.

Most of us want to be understood better. One of the most valuable gifts you can give someone is your undivided attention. Unlike hearing, which doesn't require extra effort, listening involves paying close attention to what someone says and how they say it. The problem is that too many people have forgotten how to listen. They cut each other off, hijack each other's sentences, or think about the next clever thing to say. You can't be of service to others if you don't listen to their words and pay attention to their body language. Talk less and listen more to gain the knowledge you need to make a difference.

Of course, some people may not be looking for anything. Others may not know what they are looking for. But knowing that there is someone who is genuinely interested in helping them succeed

is what forms the basis of a solid, long-lasting relationship. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

DISCUSSION:

What questions can you ask colleagues, clients, or partners to ensure that you're meeting their needs? Have you ever been surprised by someone's answer?

RULE FOUR

Serve others without consideration for how you will benefit.

When I (Patrick Galvin) was 23 years old, I was incredibly fortunate to receive a full scholarship for a year of graduate studies in Latin American History at the University of São Paulo, Brazil from Rotary International. That year changed my life in many positive ways both personally and professionally.

Before applying for the scholarship, I knew little about Rotary International, an international service organization of 1.2 million business leaders from 200 countries providing humanitarian services, encouraging high ethical standards for all professions, and advancing goodwill and peace around the world. Rotarians committed to “*Service Above Self*,” the organization’s guiding principal and official motto, have improved millions of lives around the world since 1905.

While Rotarians serve others unselfishly, they understand that the time, energy, and money that they give to others will make their own lives better. Being a member of the Rotary Club of Portland, Oregon, the 15th oldest Rotary Club in the world founded in 1910, has taught me many important lessons about helping others succeed without expectation of benefit. These include:

Share your knowledge.

Give people the information and tools that will help them prosper. Instead of promoting your services, take time to educate, encourage and support your connections by sharing what you’ve learned in your own business or profession. When people see that you’re committed to their advancement, they naturally want to reciprocate and help you achieve your goals.

Give your full attention.

Technology has made it easy to communicate with large audiences at once, yet people still want to be recognized and appreciated as individuals. Meet people for coffee, take them to lunch, or sit down for a heartfelt conversation—and really listen. Philosopher Simone Weil said it best: “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” In today’s age of the “selfie,” you’ll be noticed and appreciated for focusing on others.

Volunteer your time.

We’ve all met people who can’t say “no” to a volunteer request. The key to avoiding burnout and making the most of your time is to support causes that you are genuinely enthusiastic about. Collaborating with people who share your commitment and your enthusiasm will put you in the best position to build relationships and strengthen connections—while contributing to something greater than yourself.

Keep your commitments.

There is a popular adage that says, “Eighty percent of success in life is showing up.” Whether it’s attending an open house for a friend’s business, cheering at a Little League game sponsored by your local insurance agent, or watching a colleague cross the finish line at an athletic event, your presence is appreciated. Demonstrating support for the people you know will make them—and you—feel great. It also increases the likelihood that they’ll want to do business with you.

Connect your connections.

As someone who sees everyone as a potential friend instead of a business contact, a connector naturally has a wide network of friends. “Superconnectors” take it one step further. They help facilitate new and authentic connections by introducing people who can help one another. Consider this: Identify two people in your LinkedIn network who don’t know each other but might benefit from a meeting. Then, invite them both out to lunch. Whether they hit it off or not, they’ll be grateful to you for making the effort.

The most successful people are usually those who surround themselves with a network of colleagues, coaches, mentors, and friends. When you make connections to make connections, and not to further your own interests, good things happen.

DISCUSSION:

What do you do to make your colleagues, clients, and partners successful?

What do you receive in return?

RULE FIVE

Exceed Expectations.

We live in a technology-driven world. At the same time, it seems that the more we try to digitize and automate things, the more apparent it becomes: *All business is personal.*

Like any relationship, a business relationship needs ongoing care and attention to thrive. Yet very few people make concerted efforts to cultivate their connections. The reasons are as varied as people themselves, but one thing holds true: Exceed people's expectations and they will remember you forever.

Everything begins with a positive attitude, or a "Connector's Mindset." The people that consistently exceed expectations share a set of common beliefs, including:

1. You only have one chance to make a strong first impression.
2. Every person wants to be treated as an individual.
3. Every point of contact is a chance to exceed expectations.
4. Making a connection is more important than making a sale.
5. People are more alike than they are different.
6. Everyone wants to feel like they are making a difference.
7. A friendly smile and good energy help establish confidence and trust.
8. Positiveness—and a touch of humor—go a long way toward minimizing differences.
9. A team working together can accomplish more than any one person can alone.
10. It is more important to listen than to talk.
11. Everyone's time is valuable.
12. Everyone's opinion matters.
13. Honesty is *always* the best policy.
14. A promise made is a promise kept.
15. Technology should support, not replace, real-world relationships.
16. Mistakes happen; it's how you manage them that matters.
17. Accomplishments should be acknowledged and celebrated.
18. Showing up and following through will set you up for success.
19. Conversations (face-to-face or virtual) should always end on a positive note.
20. What people remember most is how you make them feel.

DISCUSSION:

What do you do to exceed people's expectations and build stronger connections?

RULE SIX

Let people know how they can help you succeed.

Ask any successful person how he or she got where they are, and they'll probably admit that they couldn't have done it on their own. It's also likely that they weren't afraid to ask for help along the way.

In the same way that you can't serve others if you don't know what they need and want (see Rule Three), your connections need to know how they can best help you succeed. So, don't be shy. Here are a few ways to get comfortable about asking for what you really need.

Be confident.

Many people have a tough time asking for assistance. They may find it difficult to disassociate who they are from what they do, thinking (falsely) that a request for help makes them appear vulnerable. They may be afraid of alienating their connections. But we all need help sometimes and there are many people who are confident in our abilities and are happy to provide their support when asked.

Be specific.

As close as you are to your connections, they aren't mind readers. They may have no idea that you are looking to grow your business, find a new career, expand your network, or more. This is not the time to drop hints or to speak in generalities out of fear of being turned down. Instead, articulate exactly what you need to achieve your goals and when you need it.

Be sincere.

Be upfront about what you hope to achieve and the steps you'll take to follow through. Then work hard to make things happen. It's important to show people who offer you their time and support that they are helping you achieve your objectives and to provide them with regular updates on your progress.

When you are clear about what you want and need, and have the confidence to ask for it, you create a direct path to success.

DISCUSSION:

How do you get people to review, recommend, and refer you and/or your company?

RULE SEVEN

Be Grateful.

With thousands of daily distractions competing for our attention, it's important to our health and happiness to take a deep breath and take stock of everything we should be grateful for. Our gratitude should extend not only to our family and friends, but also to the people who fuel our professional success allowing us to thrive.

Being grateful is just the first step. The writer Gertrude Stein said, "Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone." Gratitude in action is called appreciation—and everyone wants to be appreciated.

Finding meaningful ways to acknowledge others is one of the most powerful ways to build connections that last a lifetime.

Here are a few ideas for putting gratitude into action:

Make the first move.

Don't assume that people have already been acknowledged for a job well done. (Even if they have, it never hurts for them to hear it again.) Likewise, don't assume that it isn't your job or place to say, "thank you." Expressing your gratitude for the work of others helps build their confidence and gains their trust.

Make it about them.

Gratitude isn't a one-size-fits-all proposition. Some people bask in the glow of public acknowledgement while others are more private. Tailor your thanks according to individual personalities and tell people exactly why you are thanking them. People will appreciate your specificity—and be more likely to continue the behavior for which you are grateful.

Make it routine.

It's tempting to put gratitude on the back burner ("I'll write a card or make a phone call when I have a free moment") or to wait for designated days like birthdays, holidays, or performance reviews to demonstrate appreciation. Yet we would all be better off by scheduling time in our calendars for sharing our expressions of gratitude—even if it is just with ourselves, for keeping our hearts and minds positive and focusing on what we have instead of what we don't have.

The most wonderful thing about cultivating an “attitude of gratitude” is that it is contagious. Gratitude has a way of breaking down barriers and making everyone feel good.

DISCUSSION:

What is your most effective way to show gratitude with colleagues, clients, or partners?

FINAL DISCUSSION QUESTION:

What is ONE THING you can do immediately to build better relationships in the real world or online?