

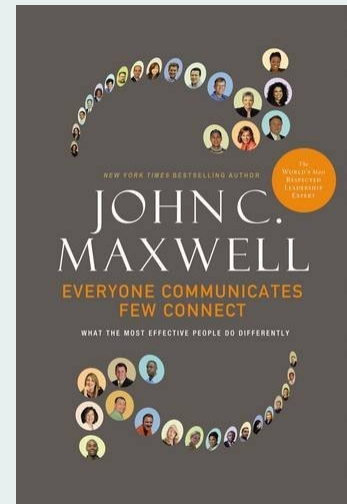
# Everyone Communicates Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone Communicates Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently is written by leadership expert John Maxwell. In this book, Maxwell argues and exemplifies the sheer importance of leaders displaying genuine interest in their audience and team members. According to Maxwell, meaningful connections between people are the foundation of effective leader-follower relationships to the extent that without connections, the efforts of leaders may be wasted. While the merits of strong relationships and connections may appear straight forward, Maxwell illustrates that the formation of connections requires planned and purposeful adherence to a select set of principles and practices. In this summary, Maxwell's five recommended principals and five recommended practices for establishing strong connections will be explored.

*"Connecting is the ability to identify with people and relate to them in a way that increases your influence with them. And the ability to communicate and connect with others is a major determining factor in reaching your potential. To be successful, you must work with others. To do that at your absolute best you must learn to connect."*

*- John Maxwell*



## IN THIS SUMMARY

### Principles:

- 1) Connecting Increases Your Influence in Every Situation.
- 2) Connecting is ALL About Others
- 3) Connecting Goes Beyond Words.
- 4) Connecting Always Requires Energy
- 5) Connecting is More Skill Than Natural Talent.

### Practices:

- 1) Connectors Connect on Common Ground.
- 2) Connectors do the Difficult Work of Keeping it Simple.
- 3) Connectors Create an Experience Everyone Enjoys.
- 4) Connectors Inspire People
- 5) Connectors Live What They Communicate



## CONNECTING INCREASES YOUR INFLUENCE IN EVERY SITUATION

Maxwell argues that nearly every leader has several traits in common that allow them the ability to sustain a followership. The traits of a leader are that they provide vision, build consensus, establish trust, and hold some measure of charisma. Maxwell explains that each of these traits and their ability

to influence others begins, with understanding the individual value of humans. Individuals who feel valued by their leader will be much more open to allowing the leader to provide influence.

*“It’s not enough just to work hard. It’s not enough to do a great job. To be successful, you need to learn how to really communicate with others.”*

### THE PERIL OF FOCUSING ON SELF

In the pursuit of self development, leaders can become susceptible to the critical error to consciously or subconsciously placing themselves at the center of each interaction. (Maxwell, 2010). To combat this obstacle, it is imperative that leaders make themselves truly accessible to those around them. This accessibility requires components both physical and in perception. Most importantly, leaders must grasp that connecting is not about them, rather about the people with whom they communicate (Maxwell, 2010).

## CONNECTING IS ALL ABOUT OTHERS

Maxwell explains that effective leaders not only have an accurate and significant appreciation for their own abilities, but also for the abilities of others. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of team members will better enable leaders to put each member into situations where their skills are being utilized and they are likely to be successful.

According to Maxwell, understanding others is also integral in effective communication. Before a leader can deliver their message, they must understand the perspectives, thoughts, and feelings of those receiving it.

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**“There is no I in TEAM. But there is an M and an E and that spells ME!”**

## CONNECTING GOES BEYOND WORDS

<b><u>High Achievers</u></b>	<b><u>Average Achievers</u></b>	<b><u>Low Achievers</u></b>
<b>Cared About People as Well as Profits</b>	<b>Concentrate on Production</b>	<b>Are Preoccupied with Their Own Security</b>
<b>View Subordinates Optimistically</b>	<b>Focus More on Their Own Status</b>	<b>Show a Basic Distrust of Subordinates</b>
<b>Seek Advice from Those Under Them</b>	<b>Are Reluctant to Seek Advice from Those Under Them</b>	<b>Don't Seek Advice</b>
<b>Listen Well to Everyone</b>	<b>Listen Only to Superiors</b>	<b>Avoid Communication or Rely on Policy Manuals</b>

*Descriptors of ones connecting ability (Maxwell, 2010, p. 17)*

Leaders must move beyond simply communicating their message in words. While articulation is important, followers are more likely to remember how a leader presents their words. Non verbal communication makes up a significant proportion of overall communication and so it is important for leaders to present their message in a confident and emotionally engaging manner.

*“People may hear your words, but they feel your attitude.”*



### ACTIONS ARE LOUDER THAN WORDS

It is often stated that communication occurs on many levels beyond words. However, the extent to which this is true should be appreciated. Maxwell cites this imperative though examining a study conducted with UCLA psychologist Albert Mehrabian. His findings state that the actual words we speak account for only 7% of the message we communicate. The other components of communication include 38% in how something is said and 55% in how others see the delivery of the message (Maxwell, 2010).

### SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

- ELIMINATE PERSONAL DISTRACTIONS
- EXPAND YOUR RANGE OF EXPRESSION
- MOVE WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE
- MAINTAIN AN OPEN POSTURE
- PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS

### TAKE AWAY

THE SIMPLEST NON-VERBAL MISTAKES CAN DESTROY EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. ENSURE THAT OBSTACLES WITHIN YOUR CONTROL ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.

## PROACTIVE WAYS TO USE ENERGY FOR CONNECTING

### 1. Connecting Requires Initiative... *Go First*

Take pride in establishing relationships, however large or small. Be the first to say hello, be the first to help others, be the first to volunteer time.

### 2. Connecting Requires Clarity... *Prepare*

Preemptively consider opportunities for connecting. Know your own purpose, learn the purpose of others, and offer value and substance.

### 3. Connecting Requires Patience... *Slow Down*

Sometimes leaders are faced with a choice, work at their pace or the pace of others. The problem with working at your own pace is that it may mean working alone.

### 4. Connecting Requires Selflessness... *Give*

Connections cannot occur without the expenditure of energy. While costly, great leaders understand that energy given to others is an investment not an expenditure.

### 5. Connecting Requires Stamina... *Recharge*

Great leaders manage their energy. This can mean strategically applying it and conserving it based upon the situation. Sustainability is the name of the energy game.

(Maxwell, 2010)

## CONNECTING ALWAYS REQUIRES ENERGY

Establishing connections with others does not merely happen. While effective communication and social aptitude will ease the formation of connections, leaders also must acknowledge that they must purposefully plan and initiate opportunities to connect with others. This process will be expensive in terms of time and energy.

However, effective leaders understand that the investment of their time and energy will yield great social returns.



## CONNECTING IS MORE SKILL THAN NATURAL TALENT

*“It’s not enough just to work hard. It’s not enough to do a great job. To be successful, you need to learn how to really communicate with others”*

We all can think of leaders whose presence transcends them. They are able to grab the attention of the room simply by occupying it. While the undeniable charisma of some leaders is undeniable, true connectors are not born with their ability to connect with people but rather develop it through a collection of experience and mindful reflection. Since we believe this to be true, then anyone can improve as a leader and as a connector.



## CONNECTORS CONNECT ON COMMON GROUND

Maxwell explains that in order to connect with others in a meaningful way, one must develop a deep interest and understanding of the individual perceptions and thought processes of each individual. As no two people can truly perceive interactions the same way, communicators should understand that they need to develop a bridge of mutual understanding between themselves and their audience.

Maxwell also examines attributes that can support and inhibit the establishment of common ground between people.

### Keys to Establishing Common Ground:

1. Be available.
2. Listen.
3. Ask Questions
4. Be thoughtful.
5. Be open.
6. Be likable
7. Show humility
8. Be adaptable

*“You can’t build a relationship with everybody in the room when you don’t care about anybody in the room.”*

### Barriers to Finding Common Ground

**Assumption:** “I already know what others know, feel, and want”

**Arrogance:** “I don’t need to know what others know, feel, or want”

**Indifference:** “I don’t care to know what others know, feel,

**Control:** “I don’t want others to know what I feel, know, or want”

### Attributes that Support the Formation of Common Ground

**Availability:** “I will choose to spend time with others”

**Listening:** “I will listen my way to common ground”

**Questions:** “I will be interested enough in others to ask ques-

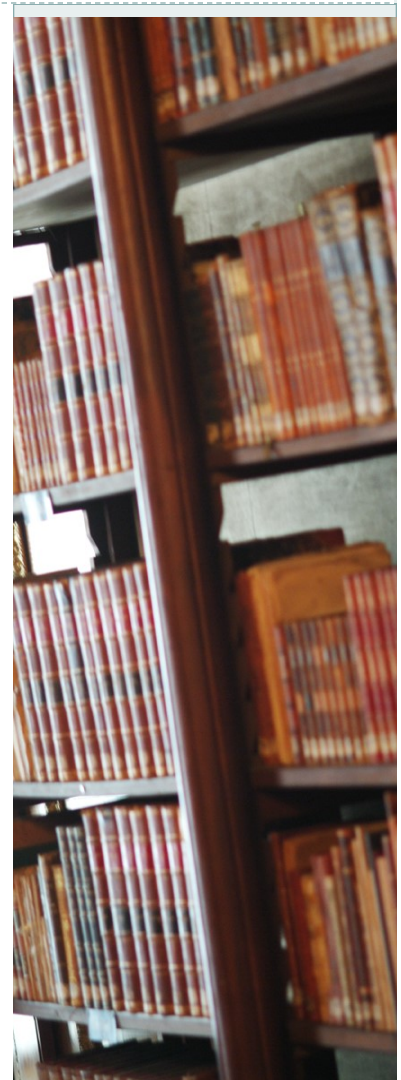
**Thoughtfulness:** “I will think of others and look for ways to thank them”

**Openness:** “I will let people into my life”

**Likability:** “I will care about people”

**Humility:** “I will think of myself less so I can think of others more”

**Adaptability:** “I will move from my world to theirs”



## CONNECTORS DO THE DIFFICULT WORK OF KEEPING IT SIMPLE



*Winston Churchill. Described by Maxwell as “perhaps the greatest communicator of the twentieth century.” (p. 168)*

Simple communication is better. Using a dense vocabulary and overly referring to complicated terms shows the audience what the speaker knows. However, the mark of an effective communicator is not what they know, but what the audience comes to know. Maxwell explains that simple and effective communication enhances a leader’s ability to connect.

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*“All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word... Broadly speaking, the short words are the best, and the old words best of all.”*

*-Winston Churchill  
(Maxwell, 2010, p. 168)*

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Maxwell cites Winston Churchill as one of the best speakers ever in regards to keeping his message simple and direct. He like all great speakers understood that the way to connect with a group is not through providing abundant information but rather meaningful and succinct information delivered in a manner that provides utility for those receiving it.

### LONGER IS NOT BETTER

Maxwell tells an interesting and relevant anecdote about his experience speaking at a charity golf tournament. As he recalls, the tournament and subsequent program had run well past schedule. While the crowd was polite, they were far from engaged by the time it was his turn to speak. As he got to the microphone, his simply stated a one sentence summary of his message then sat down. The crowd erupted in applause.

While this example is perhaps an over simplification, Maxwell explains that it is important to know when an audience is open to your message and when they are not. Rather than selfishly push forward, Maxwell decided to allow more time for the evening’s other activities. While this was obviously a risk, Maxwell believes it was well received.

KEEP IT  
SIMPLE

### Seven Steps to Being Interesting

1. Take responsibility for your listeners.
2. Communicate in their world.
3. Capture people's attention from the start.
4. Activate your audience.
5. Say something that sticks.
6. Use visuals.
7. Tell stories

## CONNECTORS CREATE AN EXPERIENCE EVERYONE ENJOYS

When effective leaders speak, others not only listen but want to listen. This is because connectors understand that they have the ability to make almost any message enjoyable to hear or to participate in. This persuasive and engaging presence goes

beyond public speaking skills and includes establishing a connecting with the audience as a whole in addition to each individual member. Above all, Maxwell urges leaders to be the speaker that they would enjoy listening to and be the person they would wish to connect with.

*“Management is about persuading people to do things they do not want to do, while leadership is about inspiring people to do things they never thought they could.”*

*-Steve Jobs*

*P. 206*

### GRATITUDE:

Maxwell explains that people need to believe that a leader appreciates them and recognizes their contributions and skills that benefit the organization. This display of gratitude is often easy to miss. As such, leaders need to make sure that their gratitude is conveyed in an obvious and meaningful manner.



## CONNECTORS INSPIRE PEOPLE

Leaders need to have an ability to inspire the people around them. Followers need to be inspired not only to achieve their personal best but also to meet the organizations goals. In order to instill inspiration, Maxwell recommends that leaders share their passion and energy with their team. Leaders need to have or at least display a deep conviction for their purpose and for the wellbeing of others. This can be done a persuasive obvious manner or can be achieved through a profound display of credibility and dedication to their cause.

### CONFIDENCE:

Leaders and speakers alike have to feel positively about themselves in order to make others feel positive about themselves (Maxwell, 2010). This confidence may not occur naturally in all leaders, but that is okay. Maxwell explains that effective leaders undertake measures to increase and maintain their own confidence. This might include ensuring proper preparation, dressing for success, or engaging in continuous personal development. Whatever the means required to achieve confidence, leaders find a way to believe in themselves as a way to inspire others to believe in themselves as well.



## CONNECTORS LIVE WHAT THEY COMMUNICATE

Persuasive leaders with effective persuasive skills may be able to have a positive impact on a group in the short term regardless of their personal convictions and contributions. However, in time leaders who are not truly and deeply invested in their message will be exposed and will have their message fall on deaf ears if it is not backed by sustainable commitment and positive results. Maxwell explains that

leaders themselves are their best form of marketing for their message. In order for leaders to positively market themselves over a period of time, they must have a connection and belief in themselves that will be relayed to others through their actions, accountability, vulnerability, and commitment to connecting with others.

*“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”*

### FIRST, CONNECT WITH YOURSELF

While selflessness is one of the key traits associated with connecting, spending critical time with oneself is an essential component of leadership development. Maxwell explains that leaders spend time and energy getting to know themselves as well as more importantly, getting to like themselves. Leaders who subject themselves to negative self talk will have a difficult time not revealing their inner doubts which will in turn be detrimental to their message. The required sense of pride is not only finding inner strength, but also acknowledging and amending weakness. Leaders who engage in the processes of reflection and improvement will have great efficacy and instill deeper efficacy in others.

## OVERARCHING THEME OF CONNECTING THROUGH GROUP COMMUNICATION

### Building Rapport with an Audience

“Start with a Comment About the Situation or Setting”

“Introduce Yourself”

“Relax”

“Begin with Humor”

“Create a Sense of Anticipation”

### Activating an Audience

“Ask Questions”

“Get People Moving”

“Use Humor”

“Use a Shocking Statement or Statistic”

“Say Things in an Interesting Way”



## THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- ◆ Recall a leader with whom you have felt a strong connection. What actions can you identify that supported the connection?
- ◆ What, if any, responsibilities do followers have to co-develop a connection with their leaders?
- ◆ Much although not all, of Maxwell's work discussed connecting through public speaking. Can a leader be equally effective without an aptitude speaking publically?
- ◆ Are there some people with whom a meaningful connection cannot be established? If yes, due to which obstacles? If no, thanks to what actions?
- ◆ How do leaders find the most effective balance between selfless investment in others and their own personal development?

### TAKE AWAYS/ACTION ITEMS

1. Prioritize finding common ground with everyone you encounter.
2. Keep communication simple and direct.
3. Be interesting and provide value.
4. Inspire people through your actions and through understanding theirs.
5. Be Authentic. Believe what you say and say what you mean.
6. Prioritize relationships.





## ABOUT JOHN MAXWELL

John C. Maxwell is a #1 New York Times bestselling author, coach, and speaker who has sold more than 26 million books in fifty languages. In 2014 he was identified as the #1 leader in business by the American Management Association® and the most influential leadership expert in the world by Business Insider and Inc. magazine.

As the founder of The John Maxwell Company, The John Maxwell Team, EQUIP, and the John Maxwell Leadership Foundation, he has trained more than 6 million leaders. In 2015, he reached the milestone of having trained leaders from every country of the world.

The recipient of the Mother Teresa Prize for Global Peace and Leadership from the Luminary Leadership Network, Dr. Maxwell speaks each year to Fortune 500 companies, presidents of nations, and many of the world's top business leaders.

*(Taken From: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/officialjohnmaxwell>)*

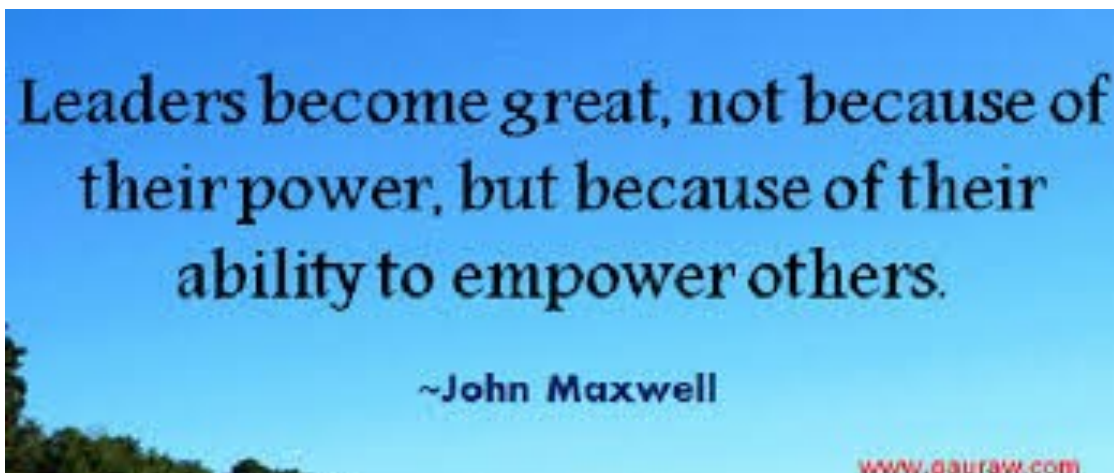
“Do you have an unstoppable desire to make a difference in the lives of people? Unsure of where to start? That's a snapshot of where I was 50 years ago. My journey began as a pastor of a small church in Ohio where I learned that leadership started with developing myself and connecting with others. It wasn't an easy road and I've worn a lot of hats since those simpler days.

I've always dreamed of impacting the world and changing lives one at a time. I've stayed a student of personal growth and development. Why? Because I believe it has the power to change us individually, connect communities, be a catalyst to corporations, and transform countries around the world.”

-John Maxwell

## CRITIQUE BY BRENDAN FARQUHARSON

John Maxwell's *Everyone Communicates Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently* is not groundbreaking, nor does it present an abundance of new ideas. The brilliance of Maxwell's work lies in his ability to adhere to his own principle of keeping communication simple. While nearly every leader would agree that connections and relational trust are essential in working relationship, less would spend the time to articulate concrete actions that can be taken to develop such connections. As such, Maxwell's work provides a valuable review of the foundation of good relationships. Leaders and professionals in all areas would benefit from spending the time to review their own priorities and examine their practices for prioritizing, developing, and maintaining connections with others. From a stylistic perspective, Maxwell's work reads smoothly and is conveniently formatted through the use of many sub headings and diagrams. Adding further credibility and interest to this book are the numerous anecdotes and examples that Maxwell provides both of his own leadership experience and through the experiences of world and business leaders from nearly every sector. For leaders and aspiring leaders alike, John Maxwell provides a valuable read and outlines the essential importance of building connections as the foundation for relational and communicative success.



### REFERENCES

Maxwell, J. C. (2010). *Everyone Communicates Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### Further Reading and Resources

[http://dentalwealthbuilder.com/dwb-wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/0DWB\\_Everyone\\_Communicates\\_Few\\_Connect.pdf](http://dentalwealthbuilder.com/dwb-wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/0DWB_Everyone_Communicates_Few_Connect.pdf)

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