

Chapter 17 - Teaser

Instinctive Relationships

Follow your instincts and you will encounter people from a wide spectrum of professional and personal endeavors. Typically, we call this networking. And if you think about it, nets are woven from strings going in different directions, tied together at points of connectivity. Human nets must work the same way!

If you only network with people who do what you do and have what you have, then there's no intersection of variations. You might make a nice mop or wig, but you won't have a net that benefits the world! Networks are built on strands that cross lines and make connections in spite of facing different directions or diverse perspectives.

Nets can capture, contain, and convey more than any single string from which it's woven. Fishing with a single line may be fun, but it is always a slow process. More times than not, Jesus used people who used a net and not a line. There's a benefit in working with a net that a single line can never touch: the potential to increase effectiveness by diverse associations.

Our instincts continually remind us that we are social creatures, made to be in relationship to others. You aren't meant to dwell alone. You're made to be in relationship for your own fulfillment and the enhancement of your ever-expanding community.

However, instead of maximizing the strength of our social bonds, we often allow social constructs and expectations to limit us. Whether these are imposed on us by society, our culture, our families, or our own perceptions and misperceptions, we frequently miss the mark of maximum impact and muddle through mediocrity! Too often, we limit ourselves and create barriers, visible and invisible, to opportunities around us.

But this is not how we were made. Like the lions of the field and the eagles of the air, we were born without the inhibition of constructs. Most animals dwell in groups, whether packs, prides, herds, flocks or convocations. Yet the lions don't try to fly nor the eagles try to run through the jungle.

We must stay true to our instincts. Our ultimate instinct is always freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of passion, and freedom of purpose. Too often we try to be what we are not! Soaring without limits is one thing, but we are the only species that has built fences and barriers, restrictions and walls. Man was the inventor of prisons both literal and figurative. You'll never fulfill your destiny until you breakout of the constructs and move beyond the socially induced systems that define and thereby limit what is instinctively within you!

Four Principles for Instinctive Relationships

On this journey of forging new partnerships and wrangling new relationships, I want to share with you the tools you need to maximize your instinctive relationships. These four basic principles will help you manage the opportunities that exceed the boundaries that you or others have placed on you.

First, you must consider your **INSPIRATION**. If you have something on the inside that instinctively inspires you beyond those around you, this will help you understand why you don't fit. People who are meant to lead have trouble being satisfied with the herd of those who seek the normal and are satisfied with the status quo. Their inspirations instinctively take them beyond barriers and lead them to color outside the lines.

Inspiration springs from an instinct, an internal compass, that points across familiar lines toward the unknown. Like a spark kindling tinder into a flame, inspiration ignites you to act on what you envision in your imagination. Others may encounter the same external stimuli but fail to have it inspire them with new ideas or innovative approaches. Those who balance their intellects with instinct know that inspiration is often their offspring.

Inspiration alone, of course, is not enough. Whenever you seek to forge relationships that will increase your impact and influence, it begins by surveying the possibilities and then acknowledging your deficiencies. Don't be afraid to acknowledge when something is too big for you. But by the same token, just because you can't do it alone doesn't mean that you can't facilitate it if you can find the stakeholders willing to share the risk.

This artful arrangement of alliances forms our second major tool, which I call **INTERSECTION**. Finding the intersection points among diverse associations provides the key to maximizing the opportunities God has given you. Like a driver who wants to reach a certain destination, you can't arrive there without making some turns at crucial intersections. On the highway, we find an intersection when an east-to-west bound road crosses a north-to-south bound road. Two routes running in different directions briefly meet and cross at this point of mutual contact. Neither road changes directions but travelers benefit from their connections because they enable them to reach new destinations.

When you follow your instincts, you will find yourself at the intersection of needing to build alliances with people who complete you rather than people who compete with you. Completion occurs when you join forces with others who may not be going your way, but their vision and yours find an intersection and the relationship is built on what connects you rather than alienates or divides you.

Find the touchpoints of what you have in common with people and not be so inclined to focus on what divides you. Again, you can't make a turn until you find the corner. This place of connection is what I'm calling the intersection of ideas and inspiration. If we build on what unites us rather than focusing on what divides us—whether in a family, a church, or business—we can achieve amazing goals with unlikely people because we understand the power of an intersection.

And once we've found the intersection of common needs, we must look for the proverbial win-win, a convergent strategy encompassing the desired outcomes of all stakeholders, which I call **INTEGRATION**. Whether in business, marriage, or other areas of life, alliances only work when both parties' needs are met and respected in a cross-section of opportunity. An integration of expectations is the goal we want to pursue.

In this pursuit, the art of negotiation becomes an essential tool. You don't have to be Warren Buffet to need to understand the power of negotiation. Those who negotiate from a selfish perspective of getting what they want at any cost, without integrating a plan that includes and respects others' needs, will always fail. An integrated strategy inherently addresses each individual parties' motives, agendas, and goals in the midst of

the larger, shared goal with other partners. This integration-based strategy includes the fulfillment of those needs in such a way that all differences are respected without losing sight of the ultimate objective.

Finally, the fourth and perhaps most vital step is **EXECUTION**. A net only works if that net is thrown. No fisherman would make a net for fishing and leave it on the boat. You must know how to leverage your alliances by turning your integration strategy into action points. Execution is critical for accomplishment. It doesn't matter how inspired you may be. It doesn't matter how meticulously you look for the common touch points of integration. It doesn't even mean much if you integrate my needs into your plans, if you don't execute the plans you have in place. Inspiration without execution will always lead to frustration.

Whenever I look across the field and see beyond my line of achievement, it always means that relationship will be the bridge that takes me there. If I build the relationship on proposals and promises but fail to execute what I predicted, it won't be long before I've lost my opportunity to play on the wider field. If you can't learn to be a part of the team and transform ideas into actions, then ideas become worthless.

Your ability to transform inspiration into an intersection where integration takes place will only be as powerful as your execution. And eventually, your ability to execute will become a matter of integrity. An instinct without execution is only a regret. All of us have the ability to achieve more fulfilling relationships by developing and cultivating them instinctively. We need other people—more than just the usual suspects. Extend your net and make it work in new and instinctive ways—you might be surprised who you catch!