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# Great Communication Means Connecting

Matthew Renz

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## Great Communication Means Connecting

By Matthew Renz

Connecting with people isn't just a social nicety; it is a powerful component in increasing your influence in any situation. Influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something. **According to Harvard Business Review, "The number one criteria for advancement and promotion for professionals is an ability to communicate effectively."** This means CONNECTING. To wield this effectively, understanding the human element—the ability to connect—is paramount.

The cost of inaction in connecting with others can lead to missed business opportunities, a lack of support networks, decreased empathy, limited perspectives, and the potential for loneliness and isolation, all of which can hinder one's ability to influence, lead, and create meaningful change in both their own life and the lives of others.

The art of connection goes beyond mere interaction; it's an intentional approach to building relationships that are both meaningful and beneficial. It's about establishing trust and rapport. People are more likely to be influenced by someone they trust and respect, and these are qualities that can only be developed over time through genuine connections.

### The Foundation of Trust

At the heart of all influence is trust. When people trust you, they are more open to what you have to say; they value your opinions and seek your guidance. Building trust starts with showing genuine interest in others, understanding their needs, and demonstrating integrity. When you connect with individuals on a personal level—by remembering their names, acknowledging their feelings, or sharing personal experiences—you lay the foundation for a trusting relationship.

### The Role of Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It is a critical component of effective connection. When you empathize with people, you see things from their perspective, which is invaluable for influence. It allows you to address concerns, tailor your communication, and offer solutions that truly resonate. An empathetic approach demonstrates that you value others, fostering a bond that can translate into increased influence.

### Effective Communication

Connection and influence also hinge on your ability to communicate effectively. This means not only conveying your message clearly but also listening actively. Good communicators are also good listeners—they pay attention to what others are saying, ask insightful questions, and provide feedback that shows they understand. By honing your communication skills, you can ensure that your interactions with others are productive and that your influence grows.

### Adaptability and Flexibility

People are different, and a one-size-fits-all approach to connection will not work. Being adaptable in your interaction style is essential to connect with a variety of personalities. Sometimes you may need to be more assertive, while at other times a gentler approach is called for. Being flexible and adjusting your style to the situation or individual can help you connect more deeply, thereby enhancing your influence.

### **Consistency in Actions and Values**

Influence is not just about what you do in a given situation; it's about who you are consistently over time. Your actions and your values need to align. People are more inclined to be influenced by those who walk their talk. This consistency builds your reputation, which in turn increases your influence. When people know what you stand for and see you acting in alignment with those values consistently, they are more likely to trust you and be influenced by you.

### **Providing Value**

When you connect with others, strive to provide value. This could be through offering support, sharing knowledge, or providing opportunities. When people feel you are adding value to their lives, your influence naturally increases. They will seek you out, listen to you, and respect your opinions.

### **The Power of Positivity**

A positive attitude is contagious, and it can play a significant role in increasing your influence. Positivity can break down barriers and open lines of communication. When you approach situations with a positive outlook, it can inspire others to do the same. A positive person often has a wider sphere of influence because people gravitate towards their energy and attitude.

### **Nurturing the Connection**

Lastly, connections need to be nurtured to maintain influence. This means consistent engagement, follow-ups, and being there for people even when you don't need anything from them. Regularly check in with your connections, offer help without being asked, and continue to foster the relationship. This long-term approach guarantees that when you do need to exert influence, the groundwork has already been laid.

In summary, connecting with people isn't simply about expanding your social or professional network; it's about deepening the quality of your relationships. The effort you put into genuinely connecting with others can dramatically increase your influence in every situation. It requires trust, empathy, effective communication, adaptability, consistency, providing value, positivity, and continuous nurturing. Mastering the art of connection is both an art and a strategic endeavor that can enhance your influence and effectiveness in all walks of life.

**Matthew Renz** | With a three-decade background in corporate insurance sales and leadership with UnitedHealthcare, Matthew brings a passion and energy for personal and professional growth and leadership development. He is a speaker, trainer, and author who packs everything he touches with thought-provoking ideas meant to grow and build relationships. Reach him by email: [matthew@matthew-renz.com](mailto:matthew@matthew-renz.com).

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