



The Great Leader's Guide to Connecting Emotionally with Others

By John Maxwell | October 13, 2015 | 0

No matter what your goals are, communicating with others in a meaningful way can help you. On the other hand, if you can't communicate, it will cost you. For the person who aims to make a difference by partnering with others? Communication is paramount.

After spending forty years as a leader and communicator, I am convinced more than ever that good communication is all about connecting. If you can connect with others at every level—one-on-one, in groups, and with an audience—your relationships are stronger, your sense of community improves, and your ability to create teamwork increases. In addition, your influence grows, and your productivity skyrockets.

Want proof? Consider the great leaders that history celebrates and try to find one who didn't excel at connecting with others.

What Connection Means

What do I mean when I say “connect?” I define connecting as the ability to identify with people and relate to them in such a way that it increases our influence with them. Why is it so important? Because the ability to connect with others is a major determining factor in reaching your potential. To achieve anything of lasting value, you must partner with others. And to do that at your absolute best, you must learn to connect.

How much healthier would your relationships be if you excelled at connecting? What would your marriage be like? How much happier would your family life be? How much better would you be at getting along with your neighbors if you were able to connect with them?

How would being a better connector impact your career? What would happen if you were fantastic at connecting with your co-workers or employees?

How Great Leaders Connect at Every Level

Connecting One-on-One

Being able to connect with people one-on-one is the most important skill – more important than connecting in a group or with an audience. Why? Because 80 to 90 percent of all connecting occurs on this level, and this is where you connect with the people in your life who are most important to you.

Think about how you tend to connect with friends, family, colleagues, and coworkers. Do you hold yourself to a high standard of connection and positive impact? Or do you simply aim to win every argument or steer every conversation?

To Increase Your Connection One-on-One...



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- Talk more about the other person and less about yourself. Before a meeting or social gathering, prepare two or three questions you can ask others about themselves.
- Bring something of value — such as a helpful quote, story, book, or CD — to give to someone when you get together.
- At the close of a conversation, ask if there is anything you can do to help them, and then follow through. Acts of servanthood have a resounding impact that lives longer than words.

Connecting with a Group

To connect with a group, it's important to take initiative with the people in the group. To do that, do the following:

- Look for ways to compliment the people in the group for their ideas and actions.
- Look for ways to add value to people in the group and what they're doing.
- Don't take credit when the group succeeds, and don't cast blame when it fails.
- Find ways to help the group celebrate successes together.

Connecting with an Audience

One of the best ways to learn about connecting with an audience is to observe great leaders who are known for their great connection and communication skills. Learn from them, and adopt what you can into your own style.

In addition, here are four things you can do to connect with an audience the next time you speak:

- Let your listeners know that you are excited to be with them.
- Communicate that you desire to add value to them.
- Let them know how they or their organization are adding value to you.
- Tell them that your time with them is your highest priority that day.

A Final Creative Way to Connect with Others

What if the above tips feel difficult for you? Or when you try them, they fall flat? Remember, nobody starts out knowing how to do a new thing perfectly. Getting good at connecting takes practice.

One way to improve your ability to connect, as well as learn how to add value to others in lots of other ways, is to read my new book, *Intentional Living*. It's available now.

When you learn to connect and be a positive influence, you will be able to make a great impact on the people in your world – both those closest to you and those you've never met.