

connect

**Resolve conflict,
improve communication,
strengthen relationships**

GUY LUBITSH AND TAMI LUBITSH-WHITE

Connect is your guide through the maze of complex working relationships, whether they are crucial business meetings, conversations with co-workers, motivation of diverse teams or discussions with your boss. Whatever the situation and no matter the stakes, Lubitsh and Lubitsh-White present techniques to help you resolve conflict, improve communication, strengthen relationships and get what you really want.

'Improving our relationships is the best investment we can make in ourselves. If you want an easy-to-use development guide that details what small and consistent steps to take, this is a book you need to buy! You can read it front to back or simply choose the sections that you need most.'

Karin Wierinck, Global HR Business Partner; Vice President, Takeda

'This book is an indispensable guide for every leader which connects prevailing approaches with new practical models, that you can use right now, right here!'

Peter Weidig, Head of Holding Services, Franz Haniel & Cie. GmbH

Praise for *Connect*

‘Guy and Tami’s new book arrives at a time when our fundamental connectivity has rarely felt more tested nor more vital. Whatever your business challenges and goals, big or small, this book deciphers the most important ingredient of all – personal connection. RESOLVE to get your copy now!’

John Belgrove, Senior Partner, AON

‘As the world in the 21st century rapidly changes around us, one thing remains constant – our work and happiness is determined by the quality of relationships that we build. This book provides an excellent, simple-to-use tool kit for helping us to connect for success.’

***Dr Malte Gerhold, Chief Integrated
Care Officer, Birdie Care***

‘In a time when true human connection is so challenged, yet so necessary, the purpose of *Connect* has never been more important or relevant. At its heart this book supports us, the readers, to understand and know ourselves better, so that we may know and understand others. It is a practical resource for businesses and leaders but, equally, a guide for all of us to rediscover and harness the power of human relationships.’

***Kate Croxton, Head of Community Health
Programmes, British Heart Foundation***

‘*Connect* deals with a simple, but often overlooked, idea – that workplaces are above all social constructs. Successful leaders don’t necessarily need to have the biggest ideas or take the boldest risks, but they do need to connect meaningfully with those around them. While academically grounded, this book is easy to engage with, and full of case studies and exercises to help you strengthen your own connections and grow as a leader. I found it interesting and enjoyable from start to finish, and will continue to dip back into it. As we deal with the challenges of broken connections – socially and in the workplace – in these unprecedented times, this book could hardly be more timely or relevant.’

***Richard Bowyer, Director of Marketing and Public
Fundraising, Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity***

- Hard working and continuously work towards group decisions.
- Sense of fun, enjoyment, collaboration and encouragement.
- Sense of optimism.
- Maintain harmony and avoid unnecessary conflict.
- Enable others to reach higher goals.
- Interested in values, justice and social meaning.
- 'Social glue' not just the task, but also value the connections with team members.
- Networking with others.

What facilitators expect and need from their team in order to help maintain harmony. In relation to this, aim to:

- be involved and engage with them early on
- be open and honest with their views and feelings
- be positive
- help them address conflict, when appropriate
- help them with their tendency to please others and take on too much
- support with not getting over-emotional, and saying no/putting boundaries on others' requests
- coach them on how to be less sensitive/dependent on feedback from others.

Sheila was a facilitator type with a director connector boss. She felt that her boss wanted her to focus less on people/relationships and more on results. At times, her boss interrupted her in meetings and her contribution was being ignored. Having understood the gaps between the boss (director) and her (facilitator) types, Sheila began to pay more attention to how to connect to the boss's director type. She improved her conciseness in meetings, raised her energy and became more focused on outcomes. Sheila learnt to become less sensitive to her boss's critical comments. Over time, both her performance and the relationship with her boss improved.

EXERCISE

Try this today. Observe/shadow a facilitator type for a meeting and analyse them using the following questions:

- *What did you notice about their body language, tone and presence?*
- *How did they participate in the meeting?*
- *What do they like or dislike? What do they find engaging? Are they blocking progress?*
- *Can you find your own facilitator voice?*
- *How can you best work/relate with facilitators?*

What innovators want:

- To renew the group with new ideas.

Suggestions for connecting with innovators:

Before meeting:

- Show patience with their tendency to move from one thing to another.
- Have belief in their good intentions.
- Come ready to keep things open ended, and do not employ too much structure.
- Be prepared to be open/non-judgemental, and supportive of their ideas.
- Give them time to express their ideas.

During meeting (main goal is to ensure that there is space for discussing new ideas):

- Use expressive gestures.
- Be optimistic about what's possible.
- Show respect and listen to their ideas.
- Do not push for details and a great deal of planning.
- Excite them by offering new ideas/space for innovation.

Words/sentences to connect with innovators:

- 'I have an idea/concept.'
- 'Can you please tell me more about your idea/concept?'

- 'What can we do together?'
- 'It's exciting/inspirational.'

How innovators operate in a team:

- provide ideas outside the box and new information
- ensure that the group does not close too quickly on a course of action
- bring in the big picture, provide fresh thinking and energy.

What innovators expect and need from team members to help the generation of new ideas. In relation to this, aim to:

- provide innovation/new ideas
- add fresh/new perspectives/energy to the status quo
- create shortcuts and improve ways of working
- support and follow up with the details on their ideas
- respect and give space to their innovative and curious mind.

Ralph was an innovator type. He tended to jump from one project to another and struggled to follow up on actions. This gave an impression to other team members that he was not interested in collaborative working. Over time, he learnt to delegate some of the more mundane aspects of his work to junior members of the team. It helped him continue to innovate and perform without frustrating others.

EXERCISE

Try this today. Observe/shadow an innovator type for a meeting and analyse them using the following questions:

- *What did you notice about their body language, tone and presence?*
- *How did they participate in the meeting?*
- *What do they like or dislike? What do they find engaging? Are they blocking progress?*
- *Can you find your own innovator voice?*
- *How can you best work/relate with innovators?*

What specialists want:

- To support the group process with data and expertise, to improve quality.

Suggestions for connecting with specialists:*Before the meeting:*

- Be prepared to be quiet and listen.
- Aim to be slightly more reserved and unassuming.
- Come to the meeting with your facts/data/evidence.
- Offer an agenda and an easy structure to follow.

During the meeting (main goal is to ensure that data/facts/knowledge are discussed in support of quality):

- Stay focused on the task and key points.
- Avoid personal and social chit chat.
- Explain things quietly and clearly.
- Emphasise quality and data.
- Show respect to specialists' professionalism/expertise.
- Use contained gestures.

Words/sentences to connect with specialists:

- 'I have worked in this area for X years and therefore believe.'
- 'In my professional view . . .'
- 'This paper/research/evidence suggests . . .'
- 'What's your expert view on this?'
- 'How about we look for more data/evidence?'
- 'How does this work impact quality?'

How specialists operate in a team:

- provide data and expertise to the decision-making process
- support with facts and evidence
- pay strong attention to detail
- ensure reliable and consistent delivery of projects.

What specialists expect and need team members to make sure that data/facts/knowledge are discussed, to improve quality. In relation to this, aim to:

- provide data/evidence/expertise to the task
- not be too loud
- avoid conflict
- be on point/concise/relevant and not take too much airtime
- be highly dependable
- ask them about their views and expertise
- challenge them to network with others
- involve them in strategic thinking
- help them deal with emotions and reading the room.

Richard was a specialist connector type. He wanted a promotion but, at the same time, found it difficult to network and navigate the organisational politics. His argument was that networking was a 'political/non-work activity' and he preferred people to judge his performance by expertise and bottom-line results. Over time, Richard realised the importance of nurturing strong relationships across the organisation to help him deliver complex projects. He learned how to get involved in a manner that suited his personality/energy and style.

EXERCISE

Try this today. Observe/shadow a specialist type for a meeting and analyse them using the following questions:

- *What did you notice about their body language, tone and presence?*
- *How did they participate in the meeting?*
- *What do they like or dislike? What do they find engaging? Are they blocking progress?*
- *Can you find your own specialist voice?*
- *How can you best work/relate with specialists?*

HOW DO DIFFERENT STYLES CLASH?

Owen (2018) argued that conflict between people with different connector types is healthy and part of any organisational life. Although we experience conflict as a threat to our core beliefs and self-worth, it should not necessarily be the case. If we handle conflict as an opportunity for learning and growth, we can learn more about ourselves and open up new opportunities for collaboration. Margaret Heffernan (2012) in her outstanding TED talk, ‘Dare to disagree’, argued that healthy conflict is the fuel for innovation and progress. She suggested that we need to give people tools to challenge authority appropriately and a set of principles on how to disagree well with each other.

We believe that the first step in handling conflict effectively is understanding some of the triggers for defensive behaviour and flexing your style accordingly. There are other useful things you can do when you are in conflict.

See the following tables for further elaboration/information on each type of conflict. There are no ‘hard rules’ in this area and we encourage you to experiment with these tips and learn from your experience.

Directors: conflicts and tensions with other styles (directors want to get the job done and view slowness negatively)

Triggers	Challenges	How to connect
Slow pace and reflection	Directors may find time to reflect both frustrating and challenging while other connector types may require space to articulate their thinking and consider options	Explain that you want to ensure we (team) get a quality result and want some time to consider all options. Give the director a deadline when you will be ready with answers and OK to proceed
Lack of decision making	Directors prefer quick decision making sometimes at the expense of taking risks. This preference goes against others who may want to engage more people and/ or require relevant data/ information before making a decision	Reassure directors that you are on their side and want progress that will satisfy all requirements. Show flexibility in areas where you can decide and move forward. Use a direct tone and fill in the silences