Relational Intelligence

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HOW LEADERS CAN EXPAND THEIR **Influence** THROUGH **a New Way of Being Smart**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Chapter 1

The Human Economy

Relationships define what it means to be human.

Point of Origin

Social networking, media, and technology have changed the ways we interact with one another. What do you think the positive and negative affects have been when it comes to how we relate to one another? What limitations of love do you think social networking and technology have when it comes to our relational world?

The Connection: We're constantly reminded of the size of our relational networks. There have never been so many ways to network. When you log onto Facebook and see four friend requests, or when you get that wonderful email that says you have a new follower on Twitter, the sun seems to shine just a little bit brighter. Ironically the time and energy we spend in "expanding" our "influence" through our relational networks is more and more taking place behind a computer screen and in 140 characters or less. But what does it mean to truly influence the life of someone else? In a world where we check our friend count or hits to our blog page like an investment banker checks a stock ticker, could we have missed a vital step in the process? In the Scriptures, Jesus provides the foundational insight to living a life of influence, and how ultimately this is driven by the quality of our relationships.

Exploring the Scriptures

When Jesus talked about love, it was alive and real, and it had a transforming effect on people's lives…. He did not command us to force our opinion of truth on others, but to live out His truth with love in our lives.

Read John 13: 34-35

What makes love the most fierce and powerful force in the universe?

The Human Economy

Author Steve Saccone states, “Relationships are the human economy.” What do you think he means by this? And, what does it mean for you to be “wealthy” in the “human economy?”

Increasing Your RI

Read the section toward the latter part of this chapter sub-titled, “What is Relational Intelligence?” Based on what Saccone says, what is your understanding of relational intelligence?

How do you see relational intelligence affecting “the human economy?”

Increasing our relational intelligence is a discovery process that requires our attention, focus and intentionality if we desire to grow in it. If you have this desire, where do you see it playing out in your life?

The Quality of Influence

In his world of relationships, Jesus always emphasized quality before quantity. In other words, he strived to build healthy, quality relationships with the people who he interacted with throughout his life instead of overemphasizing his time influencing the masses. What are ways that we can increase the depth and quality of the relationships that we have?

How do you see love transforming the lives of the people around you? If you find it difficult to see how it is happening, what can you do to pay closer attention or to act differently to change this reality?

How does relational intelligence factor into a person’s capacity to influence another person’s life? In other words, what makes relational intelligence important to gaining the right kind of influence?

Optional Group Activity

Give everyone in the group a piece of paper and a pen.

Spend five minutes in silent reflection writing down the names of people who have invested in your life, and the names of people whose lives you could impact in a similar way.

Name someone from your list who has had a profound impact on the person you've become.

What about them influenced your life and how?

Who in your life can you love more deeply and enhance the quality of your relationship?

Self-Reflection

1. Without question our own spiritual health will spread to those who follow us. Take an honest assessment of your personal relationship with God. How has its health and/or dysfunction affected those around you?
2. How do you see love transforming the lives of the people around you? If you find it difficult to see how it is happening, what can you do to pay closer attention or to act differently to change this reality?

"It never ceases to amaze me how a meaningful relationship can open a person's heart to new spiritual realities never thought possible."

Chapter 2

The Michael Scott Syndrome

When we engage the quest for self-awareness, we're reminded of our humanity — in both our beauty and our brokenness.

Point of Origin

Watch the episode called "Diversity Day" from the TV show, The Office (Season 1, time of scene: 15:21 – 17:19). Have the group play the same kind of game. You can use a different scenario if you'd like. For example, you could put names of people in the group, and someone has to describe a certain facet about that person as someone else guesses.

Exploring the Scriptures

Jesus understands our tendency to be critical of others before honestly looking at ourselves. He pays close attention to the inconsistencies in our character that cause the most harm in our relationships and the inconsistencies that we often remain unaware of.

Read Matthew 7:3-5

Why do you think Jesus uses the word: "hypocrite?"
Why do you think that Jesus connects the concepts of "seeing clearly" and "removing the speck from your brother's eye?"
Why do you think it is usually easier to see the "speck" in someone else than the "log" in our own? In other words, why does it tend to be easier to identify the flaws and deficits in others without being able to identify our own?

Self-Awareness

(Choose a 2 or 3 questions below to discuss)

- How would you define self-awareness, and how do you think it intersects relational intelligence?
- What role do you think introspection and reflection play in improving your relational intelligence?
- Why do you think people neglect paying closer attention to identifying their blind spots and overcoming the affects of them?
- Why is it often difficult to be honest with ourselves about our weaknesses, deficits, or flaws?
- What are some unhealthy tendencies that you have when it comes to comparing yourself to others or pointing out someone's flaws and weaknesses? In other words, what do you tend to be over critical of in your view of others?

Relationships of Honesty

Watch the episode called "The Job" from the TV show, The Office. (Season 3, time of scene: 23:43 – 24.29). Have you ever been asked this question about your strengths and weaknesses in a job interview? If so, what was awkward about it, what did you say, what went well and what did not?

Seeking to gain a view of ourselves that is more accurate doesn't mean that everyone else's view is always correct; nor does it mean that our view is always incorrect. But it does mean that others play an important role when it comes to increasing self-awareness. To become more relationally intelligence, we must learn to foster and receive feedback from people who can extract insight from some of our best moments, as well as from some of our worst. This sparks new dimensions of self-discovery.

- Describe a moment when you invited someone to be honest with you about your strengths and weaknesses, whether it be at work, in your relational world, or in some other arena? What did you learn from that experience? How did it help you improve in the way you relate to others?

- What characteristics do you look for when inviting someone to be honest with you about your strengths and weaknesses in the way you relate to others?

Take Action

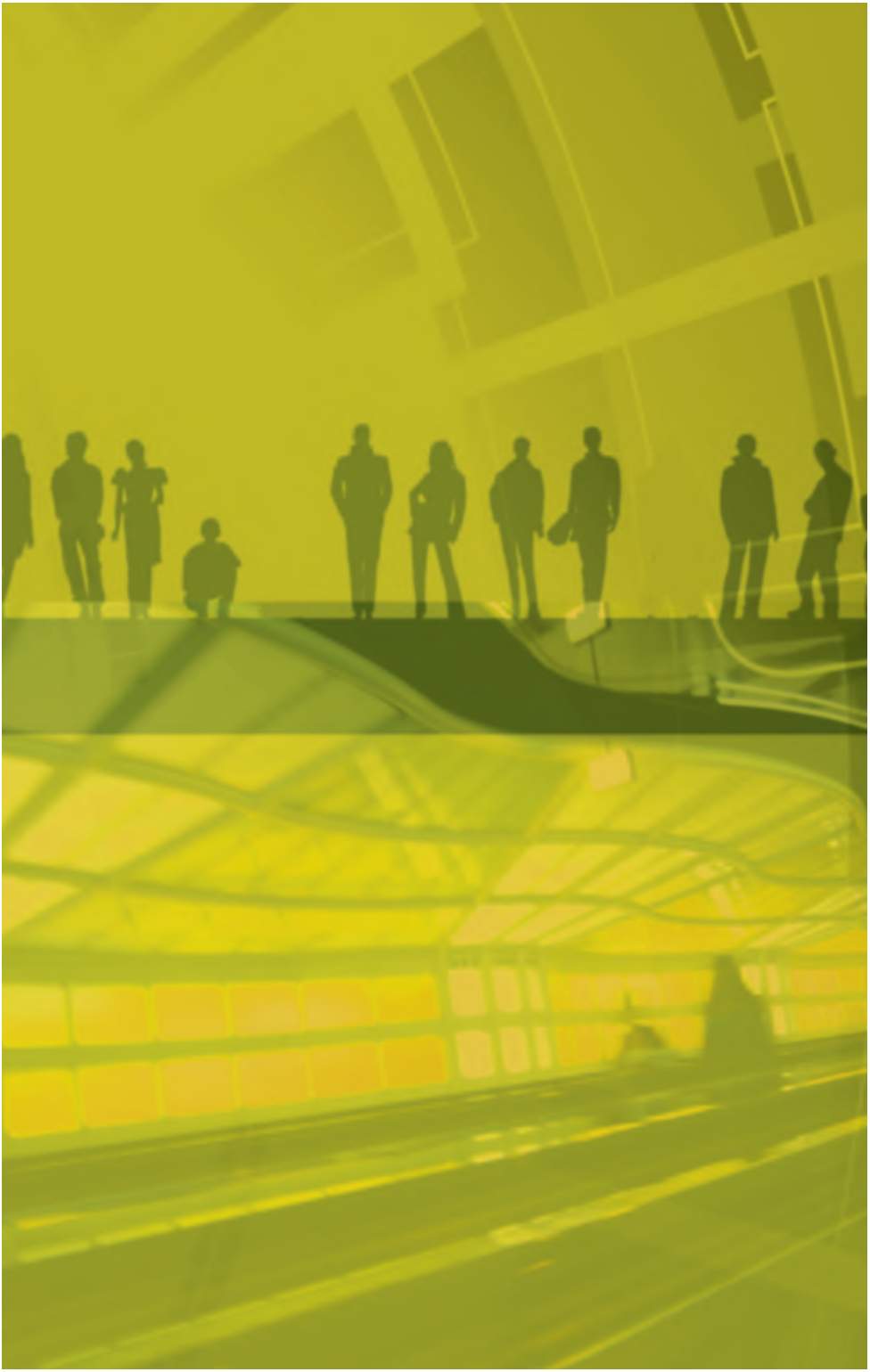
1. Sit down with a trusted friend or mentor. Ask them the following questions: “What am I doing well?” and “Where do I need to grow?” Create an action plan focusing on maximizing your strengths and growing where you need to.
2. It’s always easier to point out the speck in someone else’s eye than to be a proactive part of the solution. Think of one developmental conversation you need to have to help someone grow this week. Have it.

Self-Reflection

Reread the section called, “The Cost of Reflection.” Take time to “risk in reflection.” Ask yourself, Where am I healthy/unhealthy in my relationships? What risks do I need to take in conversations? Where do I feel like God is telling me to grow in the way I interact with others?

Knowing our limitations ought not to discourage us. Instead, it can remind us that we are all works in progress that God is working faithfully in our lives to complete the work that He started.

Refer to Philippians 1:6



Chapter 3
The Story Collector

One sign of success in a given relationship is when a person feels known. People feel most known when the story their life is telling gets heard and understood.

Point of Origin

Play "The Question Game." Get two volunteers who stand or sit in front of everyone in the group. Ask them to have a conversation that only uses questions to dialogue (Only say one question at a time). The first person to fail to ask a question in response to the other person's question loses (whether it's saying nothing at all, making a statement, or if it's an incoherent comment). For example, one person begins with something like, "Why are you wearing a pink shirt?" The next person has 3 seconds to ask a question in response. It could be something like, "Why do you care so much about what I'm wearing?" The idea is that it would not be a series of random questions, but that each consecutive question would be in response to the previous one...like a true conversation. If you'd like, you can create teams, or a competition.

The Connection: The anxiety we feel while playing the question game can often be how we feel in asking questions in day to day conversations. What if I come to a place in conversation where I do not know what to ask next? Or, how do I continue this conversation with a person I just met? These are common questions we ask ourselves.

What would our relationships look like if we focused on being intentional with the questions we ask people and learn to listen more intently to the story of other people's lives, remembering that every person has a story to tell?

Exploring the Scriptures

In the following passage, Paul gives us insight on how to connect with the depths of an individual's story.

Read Philippians 2:3-4

Becoming a story collector begins by being interested in others more than self.

How does a selfish-focus inhibit us from becoming story collectors? How does looking to the interests of others play out in day-to-day conversation? How does humility enhance our ability to be great story collectors?

The Power of Questions

Story collectors know how to use the power of questions to steer conversation to a more interesting place and draw out distinct facets of people's story.

What are some examples of questions that we can ask at the beginning of a conversation to find a more interesting part of a person's story?
(Refer to the correlating chapter to find the difference between "open-ended, thoughtful questions" and "generic questions.")

Do's and Don'ts

Saccone lays out some helpful advice of things to do and not do in conversation. Refer to corresponding chapter.

(a) What are some things that you've seen that helped cultivate someone's willingness and openness to share part of their story with you?

(b) What are some things that you have you seen that stifled the process of getting to know someone?

Collecting the Story of Others

People feel known when we strongly identify with a distinct part of who they are.

Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

Optional Small Group Activity

Have each team member find a scene from a film that captures a core element of their story, one that has shaped who they are.

Author, Steve Saccone, mentions 3 facets of a person's story that are critical: Dreams, Life History, and Personhood. Which of these facets did your film clip most represent about your own story?

Story collectors focus on drawing out the dreams, life history, and personhood of the people in their lives. Why do you think focusing on drawing out the dreams, life history, and personhood in others is integral to helping people feel known?

Are these facets that you tend to know about people with whom you interact with regularly?
If so, what are ways that you foster getting to know people in this capacity?
If not, what can you do in effort to start getting to know one or more of these facets of someone's story?

Dreams

Knowing the dreams that reside in the heart of human beings is one of the most primal elements in understanding their essence and discovering their story. What are some good questions that you could use to draw out the dreams of others in conversation?

Life History

Once you understand certain aspects of a person's life history, it's as if you're opening up a book that is their life and reading through the chapters of what they've been through. What are some good questions that you could ask someone to help them open up to you about their life history?

Personhood

Personhood encompasses core identity, personality type, fundamental beliefs, convictions, and values. It is revealed most clearly through the actions and behaviors in someone's outer life, but in actuality it reflects more about the core of their inner life. What are some good questions that could allow you to discover what is at the core of an individual's personhood?

Sacred Influence

People who take time to get to know what is most sacred about people will also be invited to have the most sacred kind of influence in people's life. What things do you need to change in order to become the type of person who gains the most sacred kind of influence?

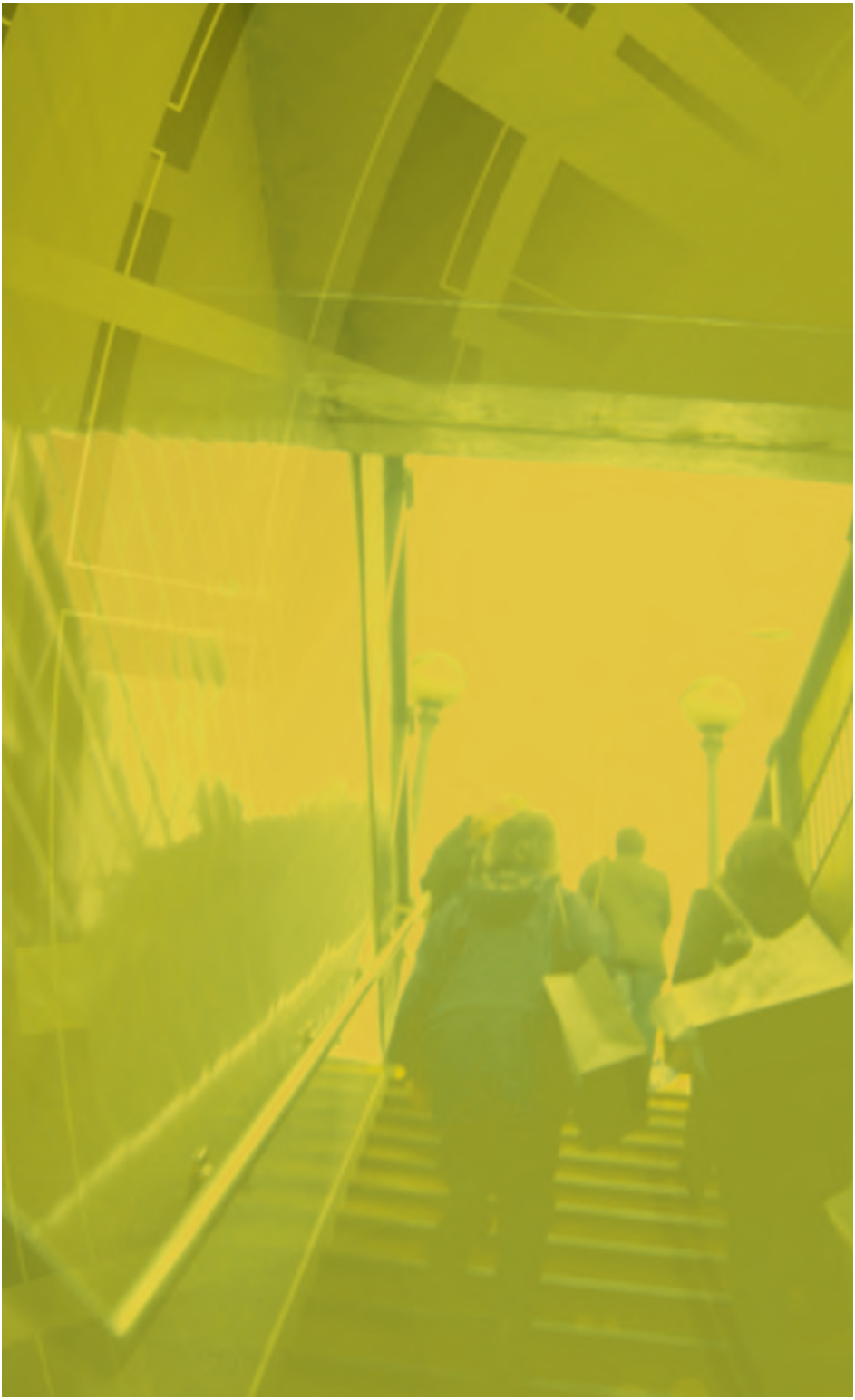
Take Action

1. Be intentional about asking open-ended questions, and listening more than you speak in your daily conversations.
2. Try to have three meaningful conversations this week in which you draw out one of the three facets that we have discussed: dreams, life history, and personhood.

Self-Reflection

1. Try to recall a conversation you had in which you shared your dreams with someone. What did that conversation look like? What are some principles that you can take from that conversation and apply to conversations you have with others about their dreams? What about personhood? Life history?
2. How well do you think you truly listen to those who are talking to you? What is your interest level in wanting to learn more about those you meet and interact with?

Story Collectors can be the light that reveals the internal, and sometimes unseen, beauty of another human being. They know how to identify specific facets of a person by peering into the prism of her core and finding what makes her shine.



Chapter 4
The Energy Carrier

To be able to shift the undercurrent of a given situation in a better direction, our leadership must have force and strength behind it.

Point of Origin

Have members of the group share their worst case scenario from a social situation. For example, having to ride alone with your boss (whom you're not fond of) to a conference that is hours away with a car stereo that doesn't work.

The Connection: How would you fix the situation you just described, or changed the energy of the experience?

Can you think of a recent situation in which you clearly perceived a specific tone among the people you interacted with? What was the tone? Did you respond as a "victim" or a "changer" of that setting?

Fewer things cause more arguments than the temperature of our house. My wife and I are in a constant struggle for control of the thermostat. She's always cold. I'm always hot. And one small wall-mounted device holds the solution to both of our problems. We're constantly inventing new reasons to "just walk by" the hallway where the thermostat is located, and we love using our influence to change our space into a tropical jungle or a frigid igloo. A room isn't the only thing that can be described this way. Meetings can be squalid and stagnant. Relationships can grow cold and rigid. So the real question is, can we become thermostats that change our environments instead of thermometers that simply gauge what everyone else is already experiencing?

Can you think of a recent situation in which you clearly perceived a specific "temperature in the room" (or tone) among the people you interacted with? Describe what caused it, and whether someone was able to change it? What could have been done to change the tone of the room?

Exploring the Scriptures

Jesus gives us a key insight that I believe shows us the essence of how to move from being a "temperature reader" to a "temperature setter." It begins by bringing the "all-ness" of who we are to everyday life.

Read Mark 12:30-31

Jesus uses the word “all” four times, bringing emphasis to his point. Why is it hard to give our all to someone or something? Why do you think this is important to relationships?

God’s desire for us is to love Him from the center of our being, bringing the all-ness of who we are, that is, every part of ourselves into that relationship. When we bring all of who we are, therein lies our greatest impact. Above all else, Jesus’ desire for each one of us is to embody the fullness of love with the entirety of who we are. When we don’t, we begin to compartmentalize who we are, thus allowing parts of our selves to remain disconnected, and thus distracted from who and what is right in front of us.

The Undercurrent of Energy

Read the first 2 paragraphs under sub-heading, “The Undercurrent of Energy.” What are some examples of verbal or non-verbal indicators that would shed light on an existing tone or temperature in a given context?

Energy Killers

Read first paragraph under sub-heading, “Energy Killer One: The Appearance of Alertness” Describe a time when you were caught red-handed not really listening, but pretending to do so?

Assuming we all have moments where we lack alertness, what are the differences between conversations that are easy to remain alert in and conversations that are easy to be out to lunch on?

Read first paragraph under sub-heading, “Energy Killer Two: Distraction” Optional Group Activity: Split the group into 2 teams. Have someone from each team attempt to count backwards from 99 by 3’s while everyone else from the other team shouts random numbers at them to try to distract them. The first one back to 0 wins.

- Why is it hard to mentally do two things at once?
- What distracts you from being fully engaged in what you’re doing or whom you are with?
- What causes you to mentally, conversationally, or relationally be in two places at once?

Think of a time when you were less than fully present in a conversation with another person. Why were you distracted? How could you have focused your energy on the situation at hand, and how could it have affected the situation differently?

Author Steve Saccone states, “Jesus understood that when we fail to integrate our complete self, we fragment the impact of our energy.” In your particular context (work, family, business, etc), what are the failures that you risk by demonstrating a disconnected energy?

ALL-NESS

Read section, “From Centeredness to All-ness.” Why do you think the integration of our full selves into conversation is so important to being an energy carrier?

Read section, “Be All There.” What is your biggest challenge when it comes to bringing your full self (your “all-ness”) to the everyday moments of your life?

Energy Catalysts

Energy carriers see the deficit in a given situation, and instead of falling into it, they carry people out of it. Do you believe this dimension of relational intelligence is a learned phenomenon? Or, is it dependent on your personality type or the way you are wired?

Group Learning Activity: Split into two different groups; group one, read the section called “Energy Catalyst One;” group two read the section called “Energy Catalyst Two.” Discuss a creative way to explain each concept—come back and present to the other group. For instance, group one reads and discusses their assigned section, then they come back to explain the idea of “Externalizing Your Internal Energy.”

Take Action

1. Ponder any energy deficits that your circle of relationships is currently experiencing. How can you begin to change these environments and carry certain people or moments out of those deficits?
2. Refer to section sub-titled “Be All There.” There are several reflection questions built around heart, soul, mind, and strength. Spend some time reflecting and journaling about them. Then, choose a couple to carry with you throughout the week to reflect on as you strive to be a person who lives in the present moments of life.

Self-Reflection

1. What distracts your internal alertness? Are you checking out in conversations, but appearing to be alert? What can you do personally to “wake up inside,” “bring clarity to your inner life” or live with “internal energy?”
2. Review the author’s five observations for externalizing your internal energy. Of these five, how many do you feel are consistently present in your current leadership? What can you do to incorporate the remaining ones?

Chapter 5

The Compelling Relator

The more interesting we are as people, the more compelling we'll become as leaders.

Point of Origin

It's persuasive speech time!

(a) Nominate two members of the group to give a 1 minute persuasive speech about an issue they're passionate about.

(b) Then have the speakers talk about the same issue, but pretend their audience is a room full of 8 year olds.

The Connection: In what ways did the speakers' communication style change between audiences? Why do you think that is important in the way we relate to others? What about their speeches did you find compelling, or what made them interesting?

No matter how hard we try, we cannot avoid the necessity of communication. Whether for work, leadership, relationships, XBOX Live, Twitter, or texting, communication directly influences our connection to other people. There are countless self-help books, websites, and seminars dedicated to helping us improve our communication skills, to help us be heard. But, what about hearing others? Could it be that compelling communication originates not from our choice of vocabulary or tone of voice, but from our ability to discern the needs of others, to truly hear them? And what about our actions? Does the way in which we choose to live our lives impact our right to be heard in the lives of others?

Exploring the Scriptures

In the Scriptures we find Jesus in constant conversation, relating to individuals on an intensely deep level. The following passage displays Jesus' ability to communicate and relate in a way so compelling, that it changed the trajectory of a person's life.

Read John 4:1-21

What do you notice about the way that Jesus interacts with this woman?
How does Jesus communicate that He is actually interested in her as a person?
Sometimes as people are talking to us, we are thinking about what we are going to say rather than actually hearing them. Jesus heard this woman and was able to hear her heart behind what she was saying.

What is significant about the questions that Jesus asks?
Compelling relators are able to engage in meaningful conversations. They can drive a conversation without coming across as overbearing or controlling. At the heart is a desire to gain genuine insight into the needs, passions, and desires of the person that they are communicating with and relating to.

How does Jesus build trust with the woman quickly?
Jesus masterfully navigates the conversation to a point of candid, but gentle honesty. And the woman responds. Compelling relators learn to garner relational capital. They do not shy away from the difficult conversations, but instead learn how to have these conversations at the right time and in the right place.

In what ways did Jesus communicate that He was approachable?
Often, even when we believe we are approachable, we give off the impression to others that we are busy or unavailable. Jesus was postured to actually notice and recognize those who others might just step over or pass by.

Reverse Boredom

Read the section sub-titled, “Reverse Boredom.”
How can we use skills of relating to others to reverse boredom and become more compelling (interesting)?

Dare To Be Controversial

When is it appropriate to be intentionally “controversial”?
When is it inappropriate?
How can “controversial statements” compel others and make an impact?

Refuse To Be Irrelevant

What does it mean to be “relationally relevant?”

What are barriers to increasing our relevance in our relational world?

What do you think the author means by, “refuse to be irrelevant?”

Change The Way You Communicate

When communicating, why do you think it is important to “begin with the listener in mind”?

How does this make someone more compelling in the way they interact?

Activate Your Passion

Describe someone who brings extraordinary passion to his or her work.

How does it affect the people around them?

Why does passion compel us to listen to what someone else has to say?

Take Action

What are you going to do this week to take responsibility to become the most interesting person you can be and to bring that part of you into your relationships?

Self Reflection

1. Think of a time when the moment called for you to be controversial. How did you handle the situation? What could you have done better?
2. In your daily interactions, pay attention to what compels people to listen to you and be interested in you during conversations. Write down your observations in a journal and develop action steps that will help you grow in this arena.

Chapter 6
The Conversational Futurist

Conversational futurists realize that every conversation is alive with potential, and they have the capacity to move people forward and create change.

Point of Origin

Think of a fun prompt for a story (an idea or scenario). Have everyone in the group sit in a circle and tell the story together, switching speakers every sentence. Do this a couple times if you'd like.

The Connection: When you were waiting for your turn, what went through your mind? Were you thinking about what to say or where you wanted to take the story? What did it feel like when someone changed the direction of the story when you had an idea of what to say next?

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools that we have to help people grow. But have you ever been in a conversation where you've gotten stuck, and you're not sure where to go—perhaps it was a moment that just felt awkward? Conversational futurists focus on intentionality and movement in dialogue. They help people grow by moving conversations forward with one ear listening to the heart.

Exploring the Scriptures

In the following passage, Jesus helps a man discover the questions he wasn't even aware that he was asking, thus changing the trajectory of his life.

Read John 3:1-15

Why do you think Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus?
Why did Jesus respond to Nicodemus' observation the way he did?
Jesus covers a lot of ground in a small amount of time. How does he do it?
How does Jesus pull Nicodemus forward in this conversation?
If you were in Nicodemus' shoes, how would you feel after hearing Jesus' response?

This is an example of Jesus outrunning the conversation, of getting ahead of where it is going. Instead of discussing something that is already known or understood, we too can introduce something that's not known by a person on a conscious level but that deeply resonates at a soul level. He introduced to him a new yet timeless truth that ultimately transformed his life and perspective.

The Evolution of a Conversation

Think of a recent conversation you had with someone who is searching to connect with God, perhaps for the first time. What could you have done better or different to help steer the conversation to a place that pulled them forward and served them well? Or, what did you do well in the conversation that helped them make progress in their spiritual journey?

What do you think it means that:
"…every conversation is alive with potential?"

Conversational futurists see the power of evolution as it relates to dialogue and lead their conversations toward new dimensions of life and growth. How do you think we can help a conversation evolve and grow? Or, how do you think we can be intentional to lead conversations toward life and growth?

Conversational Backtrackers

Here are a few characteristics about what author Steve Saccone calls, conversational backtrackers. They...
…fall behind in conversations and find themselves always trying to catch up.
…lose ground in bringing their conversations to their fullest potential.
…restate the same things that have already been covered in a conversation.
…find themselves drifting aimlessly when they are talking to others.

Where have you seen one or more of these characteristics in conversations that you've been in, and how have these dynamics affected the conversations?

Think Before You Speak

To become conversational futurists rather than conversational backtrackers, we must improve our ability to formulate our thoughts before we speak.
What contexts do you think are critical for you to formulate your thoughts more thoroughly before you speak?
How can formulating your thoughts before you speak help you move conversations forward rather than stalling them out?

The Effect of the Cause

If we want to get ahead of a conversation, we have to learn to make the connection between the effect of the cause.
Is there someone in your life whom you see that their trajectory is leading them toward negative consequences? It could be a destructive relationship they're in, bad choices they continue to make with their money, or perhaps they keep lying to their boss. What dots could you help them connect to help them see the potential consequences more clearly? What are the challenges you face in having that "hard conversation?"

Mistaken Assumptions

Underlying assumptions are often the cause of static dialogue. They foster predictable, mundane, and non-thought-provoking conversation, thus not allowing the person or conversation to evolve into its fullest potential. When we let the wrong assumptions drive a conversation, we put our mind in neutral and remain reactive rather than proactive. But if we address the wrong assumptions in a tactful and meaningful way, we can change the momentum of a conversation, and sometimes a person's life. Our mind can move out of neutral and shift from gear to gear as we drive it forward.

Is there someone you know who does this well? Explain.

The Art of Noticing

Our dilemma is that we often don't notice what people are really trying to say; or, we hear them and because we don't give careful thought to what they said, we take the easy path of just reaffirming their thoughts, feelings or perspective rather than driving the conversation forward with wise and loving intention.

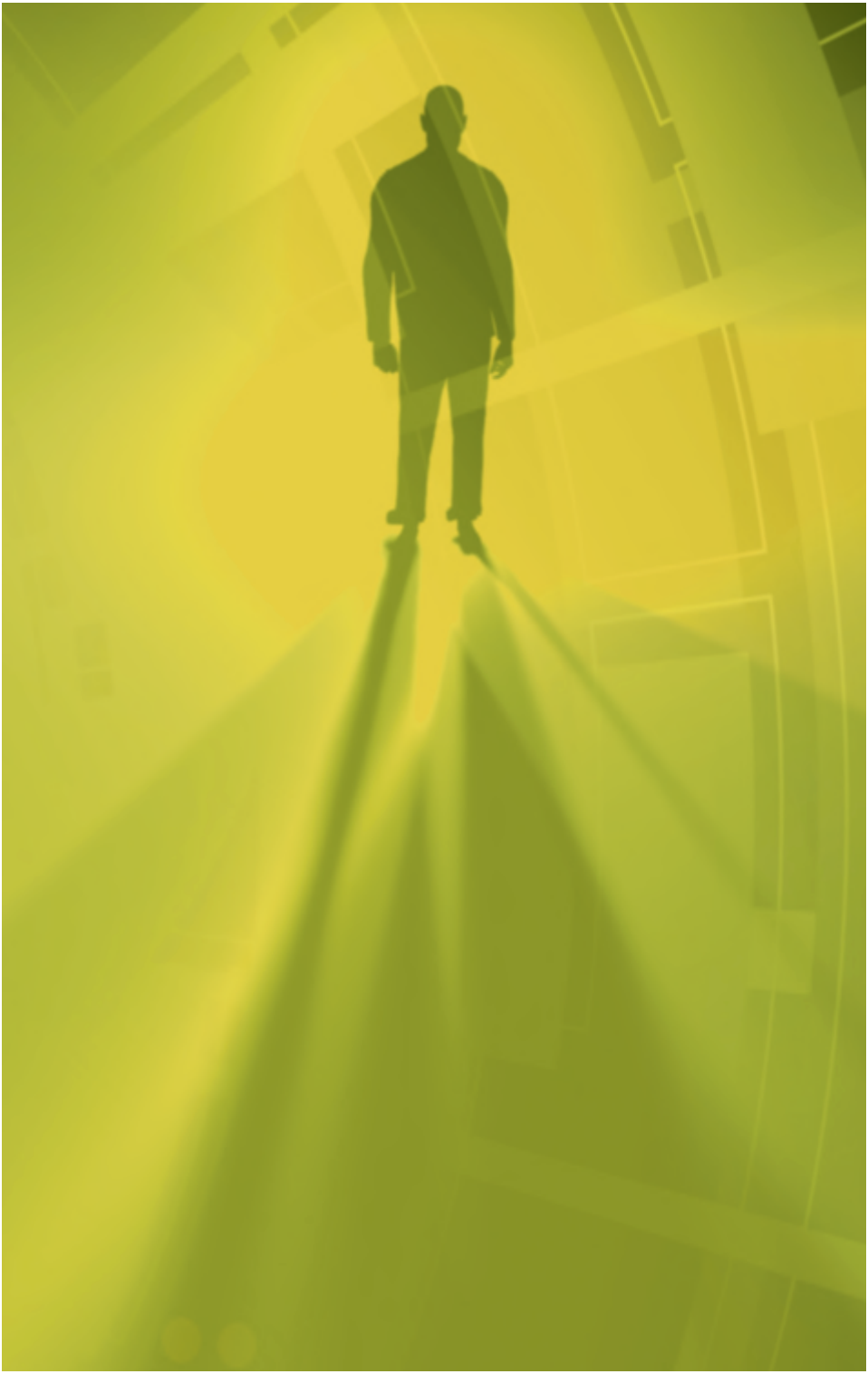
Describe a time when you did this and regretted it later.
What could you have done differently?
What next step can you take to become a conversational futurist?

Take Action

1. Think about a friend who's not connected to God but who is searching. Set up a time to get together. After praying for them, ask questions about their search for God, and as you listen closely, seek to share with them one "new and timeless truth" that could potentially connect to their soul's longing. Don't force it, but do your part in love as you pursue this conversation.
2. As you engage in conversations throughout the week, pay attention to what wrong or misguided assumptions people make. Look for moments to appropriately address them.

Self-Reflection

1. Do I listen to the undertones of what people are really saying, or do I usually remain unaware? Reflect on a few specific conversations. How can you improve?
2. How courageous have I been when I feel like God is prompting me to press into an issue or drive a conversation forward? Reflect on specifics.



Chapter 7

The Likeable Hero

What likeable people do best is establish authentic connections with people that make others feel valued and cared about.

Point of Origin

Who was your favorite super hero as a kid (or now)? Why?

Heroes are people who possess great power, and are capable of wielding this power in any way that they see fit. Really, heroes and villains are not that different. They are both powerful and capable of altering the lives of others with their power. Heroes choose to leverage their power to benefit others, looking out for what is best for them. Villains choose to leverage their power to serve themselves or their own selfish agenda.

Exploring the Scriptures

In this passage, Jesus shows us what it looks like to be a hero to someone who many thought to be a villain.

Read John 8:1-11

Who do the Pharisees see as the villain in this story, and why?
Why do you think they seem unconcerned about the woman as a person?
What do the Scriptures say motivated their actions?
How did Jesus use His influence in this passage? How is it different than how the Pharisees used theirs?
What principles can you extract from this passage about what makes someone likeable and what makes someone unlikeable?

Sometimes the opportunity to be a hero presents itself in everyday circumstances. However, the moments we have the most profound capacity to serve someone in their time of need comes from within the context of the relationships that we have and the amount of trust we have established. Sometimes it's not enough to want to be a hero. Instead, we need to live in a way that fosters trust and facilitates relationships in order to get those opportunities with others. In essence, the path to becoming a hero in your relational world begins by becoming more likeable—and that takes work.

The Intelligence of Likeability

Why do you think likeability is important to relational intelligence?
What are some pitfalls that can occur if we pursue likeability for the wrong reasons or with the wrong motives?
How can these be relationally unintelligent?
What is the line between being likeable and being a “people pleaser?”

Share Fest

Think of someone (not in the room) who is extremely likeable. Share that person with the group and explain what makes them likeable and why that is relationally intelligent.
How has their likeability increased their capacity to influence the lives of others?

Assess Your Likeability

Take a few minutes and allow each group member to assess themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 on each of the 5 signs of likeability.
This gives everyone a quick couple minutes to reflect on this in her or his life in preparation to discuss it.

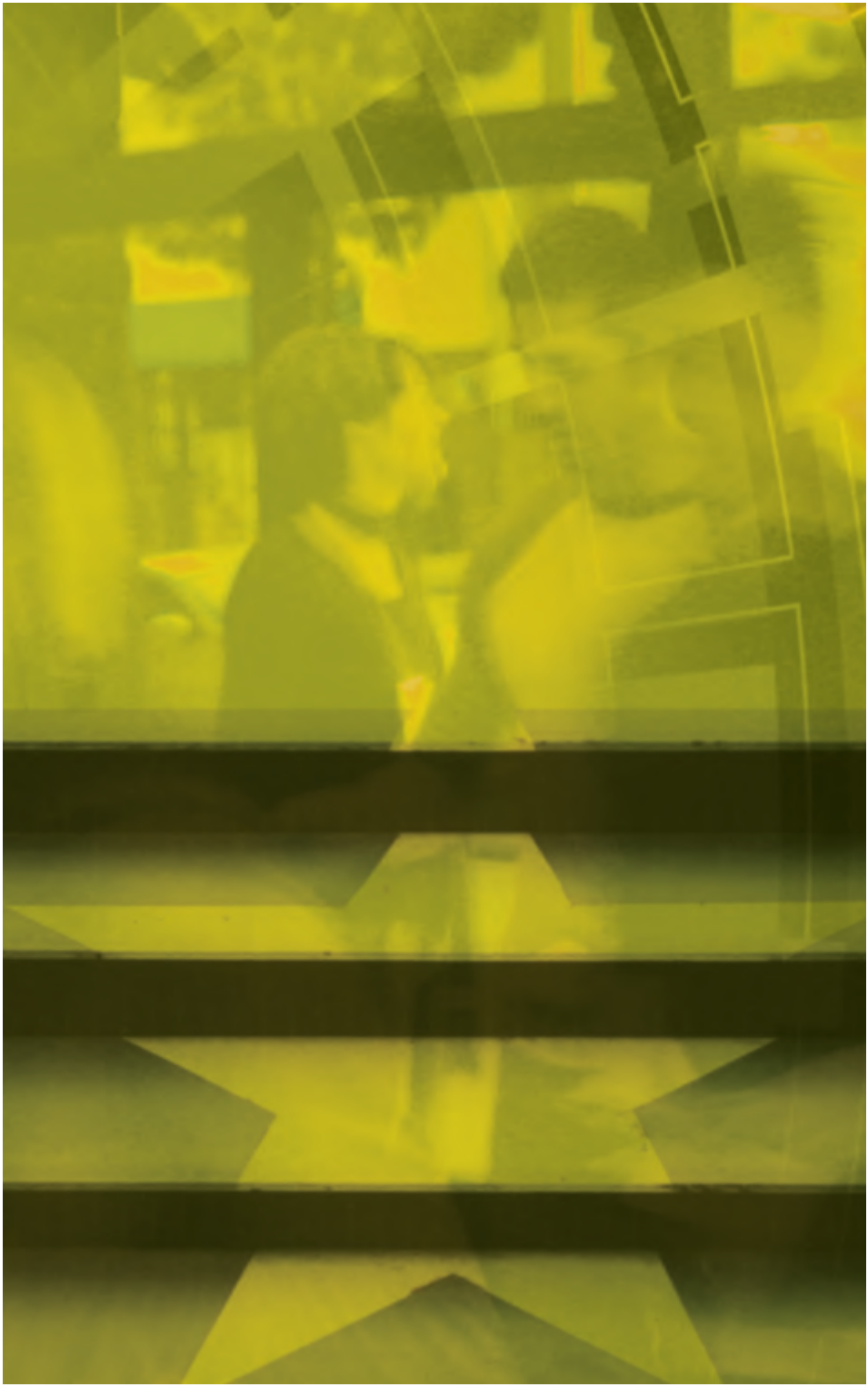
Read through the brief descriptions of the five signs of likeability in the book. Which of them describe you the best and which of them needs the most improvement?
Feel free to share what you rated yourself as you feel comfortable. Take some time on each of the 5 signs or choose certain ones to focus more time on as you wish.

Take Action

1. Use your influence to do something for someone else this week that serves his or her best interest, remembering how serving others can increase your likeability.
2. Sit down with someone you trust. Ask them to help you take an honest look at how you are doing in the five arenas of likeability. Identify at least one that you can begin to work on and ask the person you meet with to follow up in a week or two on how you're doing.

Self-Reflection

1. Reflect on your motivation level to increase your likeability? Do you give attention to the importance of likeability? Why or why not?
2. How accessible are you to others, especially those who have different views than you?



Chapter 8
The Disproportionate Invester

Disproportionate investors have disproportionate influence.

Point of Origin

Who is one person who has invested in your life?
Describe their impact on you.

Exploring the Scriptures

"Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." - Haggai 1:5-6

What is the core principle that Haggai is addressing?
Have you ever found yourself investing in people who have "holes in them?"
Describe this experience and your points of frustration.

Reverse Consumption

If we become absorbed with taking for ourselves, we'll never feel as though we have enough. What do you think are the reasons that people feel they don't have enough? Why do you think people tend to want more than what they already have?

Consumers always look for what they can take from others, while investors always look for what they can give to others. How would you describe the difference in someone with a "consumer" perspective versus someone with an "investor" perspective?

Investors realize that what they have to give to others is not dependent on what has been given to them.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

Maximum Investment

If we want to become more relationally intelligent, we must minimize our investment in consumers and maximize our investment in investors. How important do you think it is to be intentional about whom you invest your relational time with?

What action steps can you take to become more intentional in choosing whom you invest in? Who are the people who you need to begin investing more of your time and relational energy in?

The more we minimize our investment in takers, the freer we will be to maximize our investment in givers. Who are the people who you need to stop investing in because they are like people with "holes in them?" Discuss how you can begin to make new choices.

The Spirit of Investment

Read Luke 9:24.

The spirit of investment is revealed most in the spirit of sacrifice. What about investing in others requires sacrifice? What sacrifices will it take for you to become a better investor in others?

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

Why do you think the last servant in this passage is called "wicked and lazy"? In what ways have you neglected God's calling on your life to invest in other *investors*? What relationships has God entrusted to you that He's calling you to invest in with more intentionality and focus?

Disproportionate Influence

Throughout the Gospels, it becomes clear that Jesus chose to invest a large majority of his relational time and energy in his disciples (a small group of people). Because of his intentional investment in the right kind of people *(investors)*, his impact was far-reaching, even immeasurable. Although his investment in these twelve men was a relatively small amount of people, it's had a disproportionate affect on shaping the world as we know it. Why do you think Jesus made these strategic choices? What are challenges that face you in emulating Jesus' strategy and how can you or have you overcome them?

Are there people in your life that if you invested in them more, you believe it would create a disproportionate impact on the world? What is stopping you from doing this?

Take Action

Take time to express your gratitude to a person who has invested in your personal development. This week, find a creative way to express that gratitude and value for his or her contribution to your life.

Self-Reflection

Take an inventory of the people you're investing in. Identify whether they're more of a "consumer" or an "investor." Refer to chapter 8 to find a list of characteristics of *investors.* Reflect on what choices and conversations you need to have to become a true "disproportionate investor"?

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