



INTRODUCTION

I'm sure you've met those people who seem to get along well with everyone. They always have something interesting to say. They close the best deals, land the biggest clients and quickly work their way up the professional ladder. Are these people just born natural communicators with magnetic personalities? Do they have something you don't, or know some secret to being popular and successful? Absolutely not. They've simply mastered the process of interacting effectively with others. They know how to click with people from the first time they meet, and understand the importance of maintaining their relationships for the long term.

I've spent my entire adult life travelling internationally, meeting new people, learning new cultures and re-establishing myself in different places. I've worked numerous jobs, established two businesses and even started a family in a foreign land. Many of my friends say they could never imagine living so far away from home, and they wonder how I do it. Of course I miss my friends and family, but there is much truth to the adage, 'Home is where the heart is'.

To feel at home no matter where I am in the world, I've learnt how to make new friends. It's as simple as that. My old friends are always in my heart and I carry them with me wherever I go. Thanks to modern technology, I can maintain strong relationships with them in ways that would not have been possible ten, or even five, years ago. I also understand that my personal happiness (and professional success) is dependent on applying powerful people skills in order to form, build and maintain new and meaningful relationships wherever I may be. Luckily I've found that there are great people everywhere, and it's really just a matter of approaching new relationships with an open mind and heart.

You might not be doing something as drastic as starting a business overseas, but you're still faced with situations regularly where you have to apply some interpersonal intelligence. You need to interact with clients and customers, colleagues and bosses, and family and friends. Depending on the strength of these relationships, you'll either enjoy the interactions or you'll dread them.

Making friends isn't as easy as our kindergarten days when we could go up to someone in the playground and ask, "Will you be my friend?" As adults, we complicate matters with our judgements and expectations of others. Plus, we carry that heavy, debilitating stuff called 'baggage'. We've been hurt by the people who have said (figuratively or literally), "No, actually, I don't want to be your friend." We've embarrassed ourselves by saying or doing foolish things, and we swear we'll never make those mistakes again. We lose confidence and our self-esteem suffers. As a result, we end up holding ourselves back from taking chances to achieve great things and meet caring people who can help us along the way.

That's my motivation for writing this book — to help you overcome any shortcoming you may think you have that is holding you back from forming stronger, long-lasting and powerful relationships personally and professionally. I'll take you step-by-step from preparing for new relationships and building your confidence in meeting new people, to how to click with them from the moment you meet. You'll learn how to apply powerful interpersonal skills such as active listening and great conversational techniques to further enhance your relationships.

And let's not forget the relationships you've already built! I'll show you winning ways to maintain those relationships and keep them strong and enjoyable. We'll also look at how technology is changing the way we interact in our relationships on a global scale. And since our world is getting smaller and smaller, I'll show you how to manage cross-cultural relationships confidently and successfully.

I hope the lessons and techniques you learn in this book will give you greater confidence in your interactions with others and enable you to make the most of all your relationships.

Enjoy your life and the people you share it with!

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