



The Power of the Other

THE SUMMARY

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CHAPTER 1: The Neglected Truth

Ask many people about their greatest accomplishments and challenges overcome, and you will find one thing in common: there was someone on the other end who made it possible.

Both your best and worst seasons were not just about the market or the business cycle, or even your own skills. Your best and worst seasons were also about *who* was in that season with you. Either for good or bad, it was not just about you. It was about the others who were playing a big part in whom you were becoming and what you were doing.

This book represents a major shift in the conversation on leadership, growth, and high performance. I want to shift the conversation from a focus only on *you* (i.e., here is how *you* can develop yourself) to a recognition that *your own performance is either improved or diminished by the other people in your scenario*. They hold power. Whereas most leadership advice and most business books focus on how you lead others, how you perform, and how you build your skills and competencies, this book will focus on the people—those others—who affect you and on the power you have as an “other” for them.

Other people *do* have power in your life, for good or bad. But what kind of power are others going to have over your life and performance? You don't have a choice about whether or not others have power in your life. They do. But you do have a choice as to what *kind* of power others are going to have.

THE POWER OF THE OTHER

The Startling Effect Other People
Have on You, from the Boardroom
to the Bedroom and Beyond—
and What to Do About It

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Henry Cloud is a psychologist
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How many times have you seen one person ruin the atmosphere or culture of a team, a circle of friends, or a family? How many times have you seen a situation, or your life, get turned around because the right person showed up? Other people play a role at every step. They influence you as much as you influence them. How you manage this power is the difference between winning and losing, between succeeding and failing to thrive. You can't master people, but you can become a master at choosing and dealing with people.

CHAPTER 2: The Science of Connection

Science confirms that getting to the next level *is* 100 percent dependent on relationships, but the relationship must be the right *kind* of relationship, more than just hanging out with pals. The relationship must provide very specific functions and very specific energy; it must deliver very specific constructive experiences and encode very specific information within the brains of those in the relationship.

Growth—getting to the next level—is not something we can control, or will into being, or just choose. Getting better is not just about “willing” better performance. *It's about becoming someone who performs better, and performs differently. It's about changing the equipment.*

You will discover that this kind of growth happens in key relationships with key dynamics, and as they are present, you will grow, change, and increase your capacity. That is the result of the power of other. If, for example, you want to live longer, do you tend to focus more on what you eat and how much you exercise and whether or not you smoke? Do you focus on counting fats, calories, and push-ups? *Or do you also focus on whether or not you are connecting with people you are close to and sharing your life with them?* If you are trying to reach a goal, do you focus only on your strategy, or on *whom you are going to engage to help you get there?*

If you are trying to change a behavior, do you set out a target for change, and begin to try to live up to that target? *Or do you seek coaching and support that will help you get there?* If you are trying to build a successful business or grow the one you have, do you focus on strategy and execution only? *Or do you focus on building a thriving culture?* When you try to close a sale or get an investor to back your venture, do you focus on the rational reason to buy in? *Or do you focus on the relationship and shared values?*

Whatever we hope to achieve, our success depends on relationships with others. Without the help of others or with negative dynamics from destructive others, we will usually fail. There is no standing still. We are either thriving in relational energy and growth or we are going backward, slowly or quickly.

CHAPTER 3: The Four Corners of Connection

Until your mobile phone connects with the network, nothing happens. But when it connects, the phone's capabilities are now empowered to be all they were designed to be. The reality is that you are always in one of *four* places of connection—four possible corners of relational space—and only one of them will help you thrive. No matter what life circumstances you are going through on the outside, it is the premise of this book, and science and experience agree, there are only *four possibilities of connection* that you can be in at any time and that figuring out *where you are* is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

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Think of this dynamic as the geography of relationships, a map with four corners:

Corner One: Disconnected/No Connection

When a person is disconnected, he is not able to make a real emotional investment in others, and lacks the ability to either give or receive in a relationship. It is common for high performers to have some Corner One realities.

Corner Two: The Bad Connection

When there is a bad connection, one person has the power to make the other person feel “not good enough.”

Corner Three: The Pseudo-Good Connection

When a relationship or a behavior makes a person feel good, at least until he needs the next “fix.”

Corner Four: True Connection

When a person is emotionally present and able to give and receive in relationships.

You start in Corner One, feeling a bit alone and by yourself. You reach out, hoping for some support or a sense of partnering or community. But you have unwittingly drifted into Corner Two, into some kind of connection that ends up making you feel not good enough. Now you feel bad, less of something than you should be, guilty, or some other version of inferior.

Well, enough of that, right? So you do something to make yourself feel better. Let's take a trip into Corner Three, whatever your medicine of choice. You imbibe for a while, feeling some relief, and then, before too long, you make a U-turn and go back to Corner Two. Now you feel ashamed and defeated, struggling to admit that you gave in again. So you're back in Corner One again, feeling that you have nowhere, really, left to turn.

What now? Well, you could go back to three to take another dose, and sometimes you do. So it goes, round and round and round. You pass through the same places over and over, but you're not able to escape or find a way out. Is there anywhere else to go?

CHAPTER 4: Go to Corner Four

In the simplest terms, a real connection is one in which you can be your whole self, the real, authentic you, a relationship to which you can bring your heart, mind, soul, and passion. Both parties to the relationship are wholly present, known, understood, and mutually invested. What each truly thinks, feels, believes, fears, and needs, can be shared safely.

On the best teams, in business or in war, this is what happens. In the best lives, no matter where you are or what obstacles you might be facing, you need your connection in order to win. They help you figure out where you are, where you need

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to go, where the real enemies are; they give you the reinforcements you need to win. That's what it means when someone "has your back." Like a Navy SEAL who parachutes into hostile territory, the connection that comes in Corner Four stems from three questions:

"Where am I?"

"Where is the enemy?"

"Where is my buddy?"

No matter what the answers are to the first two questions, the way out of difficulty is going to come from having the answer to the third question. If you are lost, you can connect with your buddy and find your way. If the enemy is about to get you and you're surrounded with no way out, you can call for reinforcement and your buddy will take the enemy out. If you can't find your buddy, you're in some deep stuff. You might not make it out at all. Everything ultimately hinges on each other. SEALS know that, and they train to always be there. So should we.

Corner Four is a place where people have true connection, where they can be authentic which means not copied, not false or imitation. When you can find a place to be authentic, you gain access to the resources that have been wanting. There is no such thing as a self-made man or woman. Every great leader has opened up to someone who could meet a need, whatever that might have been. The range of human needs is broad, but the way to meet those needs is very narrow: it involves humbly and honestly embracing the need and reaching out to the "power of the other." There is no other way.

Head to Corner Four and seek someone who can meet the need that you have. Whether for emotional support, courage, wisdom, expertise, or pure community, go to Corner Four . . . and stay there.

CHAPTER 5: The Fuel for High Performance

In your personal life, what kind of energy are you surrounding yourself with? Positive or negative? Goal-oriented or stagnant? Healthy or unhealthy? Where are your Corner Four fueling stations? Whom do you catch the energy or growth from? In your professional life, ask yourself the same questions. Who brings fuel to you? Who brings the energy of new intelligence, support, and other provisions? We all need that kind of fueling, and it's important to know where we're going to get it.

Look at your own life and work right now. Are you surrounding yourself with people who fuel you? As the steward of your life, make sure that you have these kinds of Corner Four "fueling stations" in your life at regular intervals. For example, I have a small group that I meet with regularly, and I know that no matter how I'm doing at the time, after I'm with them, I'm going to feel and function better. I'm certain of that. Do that audit for yourself.

Similarly, start paying attention to those who drain your energy. I'm not suggesting some sort of self-centered, faux-New Age attitude where you suddenly say to someone, "I'm sorry, but I'm sensing negative energy here, and I do not

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allow that into my life," then walk away and lose the person's number. Spare us all from people who never want to be inconvenienced by "negative energy" (although there are relationships for which a necessary ending is essential!). We can't and shouldn't always walk away from the tough situations, obviously. Being a fruitful person, the kind of person who actually changes the world around you, means that you sometimes intentionally enter negative situations and work hard to transform them. Be a change agent if possible.

However, it is still very important to know who the drains are in your life, why you're spending time with them, and what their impact is. It's also important to know what your strategy is going to be to make sure that you are not *infected* in these encounters. People give energy, and they take it away. Know the difference and plan accordingly.

If you were in an airplane, the gauges would tell you when you were in trouble. Knowing the state of your plane is the key to staying in the air. If you find yourself heading into Corner One as a way to avoid conflict and intimacy while wrongly calling it alone time, you'll end up with a loss of energy and drive. You can also spot the signs of Corner Two trouble when alarm bells start ringing, "You're not good enough," or fear of displeasing someone starts driving your actions. The pull to seek something else that makes you feel "good"—that's Corner Three on the map—is another warning sign. If you find yourself itching for comfort in illicit relationships, addictive substances, or other compulsive behavior, you know you're risking a stalemate at best, and eventually a big crash.

Whenever these alarms start going off, seek out Corner Four. Be honest about where you are and what you need when you get there. That's where all the good stuff is.

CHAPTER 6: Freedom and Control

This is not a book about self-control. In fact, this isn't even a book just about self. It's about the power of the other—the power that someone *else, not* you, has in your life of performance, achievement, and well-being. Seems like a contradiction, right? On the one hand, I'm saying *you're* totally in control of your performance, but on the other, I'm telling you that other people have power over your performance too. Which is it: self-control or the power of others? Anyone confused?

The answer is yes. We are all confused. The reason we're confused is that we see self-control and our individual performance as *totally dependent upon ourselves and what we do*, which is right, and as having nothing to do with anyone else, which is wrong. The truth is that, while our self-control and performance is totally in our control, it derives much of its sustenance from the power of our formative relationships. Yes, others, in the past and the present, help build our capacity for self-control. That is the paradox of performance.

Said another way, how much you perceive yourself as being in control of your life depends in part on how much the most significant people in your life support that ability *and* simultaneously hold you responsible for it. Winners not only perceive themselves as being in control of themselves and their choices, but also they exercise this control every day, and we can see it. They have that incredible sense of ownership, but in part it was built and is sustained by relationship. Here it comes again: Corner Four.

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Self-control, agency, self-efficacy are all hallmarks of psychological health that undergird performance, and are built and supported in relationship to others. The degree to which you are going to soar depends in part upon finding Corner Four partners, who empower your sense of self-control instead of trying to take it away or diminish it somehow. Self-control is built through several functions that others provide: support, growth, respect, and accountability.

Corner Four relationships also give us autonomy and responsibility. Supporting people and still letting them have control over themselves builds limitless potential. It is the recipe for greatness.

CHAPTER 7: Freedom Requires Responsibility

Corner Four relationships don't rescue us from hard decisions or responsibility. In business, for example, when your protégé makes a mistake the first time she leads a project and ruffles some team member's feathers; you don't jump in to smooth out the problems her style has caused. You do encourage this less experienced manager to find a solution and adapt her style.

In dealing with an addict, a Corner Four relationship doesn't mandate trying to physically stop another person from using substances. It does depend on truth telling, on making it clear that if the addict continues down a destructive path, he will have to live with the consequences. The message of a Corner Four relationship is, "I cannot get you out of difficulties created by your choices, but I can require you to be responsible for them."

Certainly leaders can't take a hands-off approach in total. Obviously, communicating freedom and responsibility is not abrogation of one's own responsibilities. There is a balance to be sought, holding the delegated one responsible without interrupting or disempowering. A very important leveraging aspect of leadership is requiring people to be in charge of what we have put them in charge of, and then holding them responsible, with consequences. At Apple such a person is called a DRI, a directly responsible individual. He or she owns it.

One of the words we hear thrown around the most in any kind of performance circle is *accountable*. In Corner Four relationships, accountability is different. The responsibility we are discussing isn't the punitive, shaming, or angry kind, which usually serves the purpose only of giving the disappointed parties a chance to vent their wrath or take care of their feelings.

Corner Four accountability is a commitment to what is best at three levels: (1) for all the individuals involved (2) the relationship(s) and (3) the outcomes. There are some big factors in this kind of accountability that keep it from going the route of shame and push it forward to greater performance. The first is the clarity of agreed-up expectations, which have been communicated and embraced by all. Second, the timing of those expectations is *early* and *continuous*. Before anything substantive is done or not done, everyone knows the expectations and checks in with them during the process. Corner Four relationships increase responsibility by preventing most surprises.

Few things are worse for the culture of a team than rewarding or overlooking poor performance. It clearly tells the underachiever, "What you are doing is good enough," and tells the others, "Your efforts toward excellence, your care, and your diligence have no value." Corner Four relationships hold us responsible for our performance. There are standards and there are consequences.

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CHAPTER 8: Defanging the Beast

In one of my darkest moments in business, I had blown it significantly, and one of my hero-mentors called me in the midst of my failure. His kindness and empathy made me feel less alone during that time. But that Corner Four connection also helped me confront something else: the very real and deadly grip of failure, *my* failure. I knew that things had gone badly because of *me*. I had been the one who had made the stupid mistake. I had been the one who thought I was doing well but didn't have the wherewithal to know that I wasn't.

How was I supposed to deal with the feeling of being such a *loser*? The "fangs" of the beast that was slaying me were feelings of judgment, guilt, shame, and condemnation for missing the standard against which I was judging myself. I had really, really blown it, and winners don't blow it this badly. Or do they?

What truly released me to be able to move forward and ultimately overcome the failure was the statement, "Well, we've all been there." Why were those five words the key that helped me not only recover, but get even better?

As a psychologist I can tell you that when we are in a negative critical state, the brain, the mind, the spirit, and the soul are all in a downturn. Our brains experience chemical states that create a toxic ocean of self-recrimination. The brain is not doing its best thinking, problem solving, or a host of other capacities that you need to win. The cycle continues, pulling us deeper and deeper into a depression that saps energy and our capacity to think differently. But breaking the pattern requires more than a shoulder to cry on. We need to take the fangs out of failure. That's what my friend's statement—"We've all been there"—did. It normalized failure.

With his help, I didn't have to fear failure anymore. I could see that never failing wasn't the standard I should shoot for; rather, the goal was to continue to go after things, to seek out opportunities, not to avoid them for fear of failure. In other words, failing should be viewed as just another way of putting yourself on the path to winning. As he said, they (the winners) "have all been there."

CHAPTER 9: The Right Kind of Push

Let's say that you accept my premise that you're going to need something from outside yourself to get where you want to go. You've defeated the crippling bite of failure, but you realize that not feeling bad is not the same as accomplishing your goals. Corner Four relationships possess specific ingredients that help people move uphill, so you need to surround yourself with Corner Four people. What should you look for in a Corner Four relationship that will help you surpass current known limits?

I should make perfectly clear that I'm not suggesting that you jettison all of your dysfunctional or non-growth-producing friends, family members, or coworkers. Goodness knows our lives are made interesting, fun, and sometimes slightly wacky by all types of people. We are blessed to have them in the mix. But you do have to realize one thing: *they're not all likely to provide you with new energy or intelligence*. Headaches, belly laughs, and unforgettable experiences, yes; juice, maybe not. So you have to make sure that you are sourcing energy through multiple channels and looking, in particular, for the kinds of relationships that add energy to the system.

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Frequently, we don't have a clue about the abilities and assets we possess. They have never been pointed out to us. That's what the right kind of Corner Four relationship does: it spots a hidden asset you possess and shows you how to access it. The best leaders, coaches, and friends do two things. They push you past where you have been or through where you could go, but not so far that you can't recover. *They stretch but don't injure.*

Sometimes the stretching we need is what Jim Collins refers to as "big hairy audacious goals." To reach these goals would surpass anything we have ever done before. Not just incremental steps, but goals that change everything, taking us ten times farther than we ever thought possible. Great visionaries push people to these seriously mind-blowing achievements.

An absolutely critical role that others play in helping us achieve our goals is to help us create a realistic plan for getting there. The goals we set for ourselves and others must be *challenging* enough to activate our energy and our brains, but they also must be *realistic* and *achievable*.

CHAPTER 10: Bringing the Outside In

What makes Corner Four relationships so powerful is that they don't end even after they end. The lessons we learn, the phrases that motivate us, are ours to keep forever. Psychologists refer to this process as *internalization*. It's bringing what was on the outside inside. It sounds a little mysterious, and it is. It's a gradual process by which the patterns, tones, fueling, and cadences of our relationships become embedded in the internal structure of our minds.

Early in life, we don't get to choose what kinds of relationships we're exposed to or which of those voices start replaying in our heads. But as we mature, we have the opportunity to choose what kinds of relationships we want to participate in, what kinds of voices to internalize in order to stretch further and reach higher. Fortunately, neuroscience research shows that we can *rewire our brains*—literally. Just because you had voices that diminished you doesn't mean that you can't get new ones. Your brain is available for downloads and updates to its software, but just like your cell phone, *it has to be plugged into a good network with unlimited data and no viruses.*

If you're trying to grow something new in your head, in a business, or in a relationship, existing patterns in your internal wiring will continue to dominate until there are new ones. External structure to build them in time and space, and define activities is the only thing that'll give you new ones.

If your Corner Four experiences and activities are well structured they will build new wiring patterns and capacities in you that you would never be able to construct on your own. So look at whatever you are trying to build at this moment with your various stakeholders, including yourself. What is the right dosage? What is the right amount of time? How frequently? What has got to take place in each dose? As you apply the structure quotient, you will know something isn't working or not taking hold by adding "one more" until it works. Then you will have found the right dosage. If it doesn't, you'll know at that point. But remember, while it is a matter of quantity of time, it's not *only* a matter of time. It's a matter of doing the right activities in the time allotted. That's where the quality in quantity of time really comes in. Throw the right information, the right kind of relationship, and the right experience into each dose in a structured pattern, with enough dosage. If you do that, the results might amaze you.

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CHAPTER 11: The Bermuda Triangle of Relationships

I was fascinated by the Bermuda Triangle as a kid. Corner Four relationships risk similar outcomes when communication goes into its own dark triangle. I'm talking about a situation when A should be talking to B but is talking to C *about* B instead. Obviously it will be impossible for A to work out his issues with B if he's not even speaking to her, but that's just the beginning of the problem with this indirect (aka passive-aggressive) style of *non*-communication, which I like to call triangulation.

Triangulation sets up something called the victim-persecutor-rescuer (VRP) triad, which I'm calling the Bermuda Triangle of relationships. Let's say I'm bugged by you. I feel like the victim of something you did to me, and that makes you the persecutor. Therefore, instead of talking directly to you about what's bothering me, I take my hurt feelings to a sympathetic third person, who becomes my "rescuer." I'm not talking to the rescuer for legitimate feedback about our conflict and for help resolving it. That would be good motivation, but instead, I'm talking to the rescuer to get validation that I'm right and you're wrong. I want support for my side of the argument. It makes me feel better, bleeds off the pain, and helps me avoid talking directly to you.

This is so destructive. *Divisiveness is one of the most destructive forces in teams, companies, families, marriages, friendships, and any other relational systems.* It not only prevents resolution, growth, and forward movement, but it also makes problems worse by putting one person against another and creating further splits throughout the team, family or organization.

The solution for triangulation is to not let it happen anymore, but that takes more than just telling people to stop it. First, name the problem. Sidebar conversations are not divisive if they're done in the spirit of trying to heal or find resolution, but they are if they keep people from hearing what they need to hear. Second, establish a covenant to help eliminate triangulation from your relationships. Third, if someone begins to gossip about someone else, you decline to join in. Fourth, be a good receiver of feedback. Be easy to talk to, non-defensive, and welcoming to differing opinions.

CHAPTER 12: Trust

We've examined what it takes to become a high performer. First of all, we've established that, whether we acknowledge it or not, other people have power in one's life that greatly influences one's performance. Second, that power can be positive or negative in its influence. Third, we can't get to the next level without opening ourselves up to the positive power that others bring. We must be an "open system." Fourth, in order to open up and receive, we must be vulnerable and willing to go into a place of need. Fifth, there are certain components that Corner Four relationships provide including fuel, self-control, responsibility and ownership, a realistic positivity about failure, stretches and pushes, steps, structure, and process.

Still, not all high performers are alike. One size does not fit all. But there are a handful of universal concepts and principles that apply to *every single individual or group performance challenge*. **Trust** is one of those concepts, especially when it comes to tapping into the power of the other. To make an investment in anyone, trust is paramount.

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Let's take a deeper look into the *anatomy* of trust. Trust can be defined as a confident expectation. In the same way that we invest in the stock market when we feel confident that we'll see a positive return, so it goes with trust in relationships. We invest ourselves, our time, our energy, our resources, our talents, and so forth, when we're confident that doing so will lead to good outcomes. Trust fuels investment of money, time, energy, and self.

When should you trust? Through research and experience, I have come to believe that there are five crucial ingredients to look for when you're ready to make such investments:

Understanding — we trust people who we know understand us, our context, our situation, our needs, what makes it work for us, and what makes it break down. When they truly understand, listen, and care, we are more than willing to open ourselves to them.

Intent or motive — we trust people when we know they want good things for us, even if it costs them, even if we make a mistake or drop the ball.

Ability — we trust people only if they have the ability to do what we need done. We want to know our pilots have flown before. We want to know our surgeons have cut before, and the patient woke up.

Character — we trust people who inspire our trust by *how* they do what they do. Are they an optimist or pessimist? Are they proactive or passive? Rigid? Impulsive? Kind?

Track record— we trust people who have delivered in the past. If you're thinking about trusting someone with a poor track record, have a very good reason to take that step.

CONCLUSION: Nice Guys Don't Finish Last

The truth is that Steve Jobs was successful because of incredible talent, brains, vision, marketing abilities, design strengths, charm, and initiative. He was assertive, he had amazing reservoirs of creative energy, and he didn't hesitate to push people to their limits and beyond. These are all *positive* attributes that made him successful. But he could also be a real jerk.

The jerk behavior just got in the way, unless you think getting fired, losing key people and relationships and creating sometimes toxic environments are the recipe for an iPhone. It was *not* the oppressive, domineering behavior that made it all work. Apple worked in spite of it and probably could have been even more outstanding without it. What if he had never gotten fired? What might the company have done if he'd been less difficult?

Mark these words: *Nice guys do not finish last, and jerks do not finish first. Great performers finish first, and if they are great and good people, they do even better.*

As you go through the routines of your life such as meeting with colleagues, catching up with family at holidays, having dinner with friends, or taking walks with your spouse, don't be afraid to check with your own internal GPS to see how

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it's going. Where are you? Are you lonely in Corner One? Are you feeling crappy in Corner Two? Are you experiencing a fleeting thrill in Corner Three? Or are you feeling protected, advised, supported, and rewarded in Corner Four? Which corner are you in? Who is in that corner with you?

The answer to those questions will determine whether or not you get past your current limit, even all the way to your dream. I hope you find your Corner Four, live there as much as possible, and outperform even your wildest dreams.

Communicator's Corner

Illustration #1

Your plane lands, and the flight attendant says, "It is now safe to use your mobile phones." You turn yours on, and what's the first thing that happens? You receive a message at the top of the screen that reads: "Searching . . ." or "Searching for connection . . ." or "Searching for network . . ."

Until the phone connects with the network, nothing happens. But when it connects, miracles occur, in the invisible world. The phone's capabilities are now empowered to be all they were designed to be. It can now automatically download or fix bugs in the software; it can download new apps that enable it to do things it couldn't do before. Through this connection, all of the resources of the outside world are suddenly at your disposal and ready to provide benefit. Through this link, the phone connects you to the entire world, all of its information and knowledge, help and skill, to enable better performance. From this one connection, almost anything is possible. The phone surpasses its previous limits . . . it can get bigger, and better.

But without a connection to the right network, that little device will never be able to do everything it was designed to do. Sure, it might still be able to tell you the time or see a calendar of your events or serve as a repository of previous communication and photos, but nothing *new* or *better* can occur. Without a connection, the device has hit its limit. It continues to produce the same results you were producing on the plane, even if you try harder.

Illustration #2

Early in his business career, Richard Branson was taken under the wing of a mentor friend of his parents, David Beevers. He spent one evening a week with Beevers gaining business guidance. Beevers even helped Branson learn the fundamentals of financial accounting. What if the young entrepreneur had not been able to reveal his need for help?

Further along on his path of building Virgin Airlines, Branson turned to an established veteran in the airline world, Freddie Laker. Laker is credited by Branson as the mentor who helped make it all work: "I wouldn't have gotten anywhere in the airline industry without Freddie's down-to-earth wisdom."

Think about it.

Henry Ford had Thomas Edison.

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Mark Zuckerberg was mentored by Steve Jobs.

Bill Gates had Warren Buffet and Ed Roberts.

Jack Nicklaus had Jack Grout.

Michael Jordan had Phil Jackson.

Bill Hewlett and David Packer had Frederick Terman.

Sheryl Sandberg had Larry Summers.

There is no such thing as a self-made man or woman.

Illustration #3

As a person of faith, I'm often reminded of a certain stern passage in the New Testament (Titus 3:10-11). For a long time, I didn't understand what it really meant. On the face of it, it sounds so harsh. It is speaking to the church community and says this: "If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them."

Sounds pretty extreme, right? That's what I thought until I became a leadership consultant and spent a few decades working with teams and organizations. I learned something: *divisive people cause more harm than whatever the good things they bring are worth*. If they are truly dividers, they *must* go away.