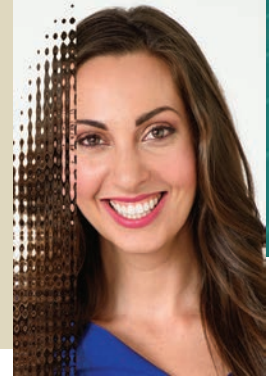


Science of Connection

Vanessa Van Edwards

+ Founder & Lead Behavioral Investigator, Science of People



“It’s Been a Bit of a Long Shift”

Do Leaders Think Differently? (3:15)

- The most effective leaders have distinct brain patterns.
- The most effective leaders excel at understanding and using emotions to connect.
- Good leaders focus a lot on logistics, but great leaders focus just as much on the connection.
- Leaders can get trapped in logistics, metrics, and small talk.

Levels of Connection (5:51)

- Researcher Dan McAdams found that humans use three levels of connection.
- To feel connected to another person, we have to move through each of those levels.
- Level 1 is general traits: occupation, hometown, family status.
 - We can get trapped in Level 1.
 - It’s impossible to connect on autopilot.
- Level 2 is personal concerns: goals, worries, values, motivations, personality.
 - When you know someone’s Level 2, you know what keeps them up at night but also what gets them up in the morning.
 - Level 2 is where we begin to break those social scripts and have true connection.

Conversation Starters (8:11)

- The lowest ranking conversation starters are “How are you?” and “What do you do?”
- They’re our default questions, yet they produce no connection.

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- Dopamine is the chemical of connection and excitement. It makes us feel motivated and makes you more memorable.
- We can create dopamine in our conversations if we ask the right questions.
- The highest ranking questions are:
 - What was the highlight of your day?
 - What personal passion project are you working on?
 - Have anything exciting coming up in your life?
- Extroverts love the question “What’s your story?” Introverts hate it.

Level 3: Self-Narrative (15:30)

- Our self-narrative is the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, how we make sense of our journey and purpose through life.
- Our self-narrative creates our life.
- Common self-narratives are:
 - Hero: Think of themselves as having had a lot of obstacles, but with hard work and smarts, they’ve overcome them. Very resilient.
 - Healer: Have dedicated themselves to a life of service, tend to pick professions that align with their self-narrative. Struggle with burn out and boundaries.
 - Victim: Feel they have had a lot of challenges and haven’t been able to overcome them. Repeat the same mistakes.
- Once you unlock someone else’s self-narrative, you uncover a key to how they behave and what they believe.
- To begin to uncover your self-narrative, ask yourself, “Are you lucky?”
 - Your own perception of your luck changes your luck.
 - People who think they’re lucky and tell themselves they’re lucky, they see more opportunities.

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- People who see themselves as unlucky miss the opportunities.
- Our self-narratives are self-creating.
- To understand the self-narratives of the people in our lives:
 - List the names of the five people you interact with most.
 - Give each person a level number.
 - Circle one name of the person who you most want to level up with.

The Connection Blueprint (23:03)

- Level 1 questions:
 - What was the highlight of your day?
 - What's your personal passion project?
 - Working on anything exciting these days?
 - Have any fun plans coming up this weekend/vacation/holiday?
 - How's [hobby/family member/project]? (moment that lit them up)
- Level 2 questions:
 - What's your biggest goal right now?
 - Are you learning anything right now?
 - What book, TV, or movie character is most like you?
 - What's weighing on your heart and mind? Can I help you with anything?
 - What's your story?
- Level 3 questions bring us below the surface. It gets us off autopilot and into belonging.
 - How do you feel most misunderstood?
 - What's something that most people don't know about you?

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- What forces shaped your personality and made you who you are?
- Who's your hero?
- What's the proudest moment of your life?

Ask, Listen, and Answer (33:45)

- Shining light on fear makes it feel less dark.
- It takes courage to both ask and answer non-autopilot questions.
- Ask Level 2+ questions to the people who matter to you.
- Do all three levels with your family once per year.
- Don't just plan, connect.