



Real Influence

Persuade Without Pushing and Gain Without Giving In

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

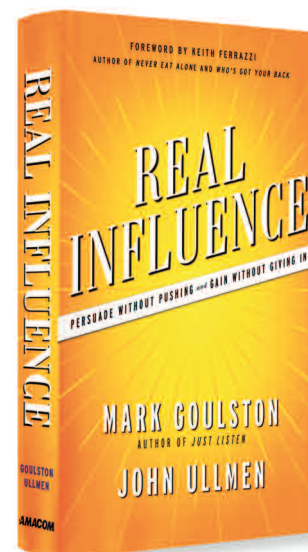
In this post-pushing, post-selling world, influence can no longer be viewed as something you do to someone to get what you want. In fact, real influence isn't even about what you want. It's about forging strong connections by focusing on *other* people's viewpoints and, quite simply, giving before asking for anything and always striving for win-win outcomes.

Now master communicator and best-selling author Mark Goulston teams up with esteemed executive coach John Ullmen to show why this kind of "connected" influence is the secret to achieving not only short-term gains but also long-term success. Goulston's popular book *Just Listen* offered insights into getting through to hard-to-reach people, and it laid the groundwork for the more far-reaching scope of *Real Influence*. Here the authors provide a blueprint for getting buy-in, agreement and enduring loyalty from anyone by using authentic communication, empathy and engagement.

Packed with enlightening stories from the authors' extensive interviews with high-level influencers — people in business, government, nonprofits, sports, the arts and more — *Real Influence* shows the remarkable power of real influence and offers insights for tapping into it. Its message has the power to transform your outlook, your relationships, your career and ultimately your life.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to get past the "blind spot" in our brains that makes connecting and influencing impossible.
- The simple four-step model that will help you connect with people you thought were unreachable.
- How listening with a real motive to learn and understand will change a relationship instantly.



by Mark Goulston
and John Ullmen

CONTENTS

The Problem: Why Are You Struggling to Influence People?

Page 2

Step #1 Go for Great Outcomes

Page 3

Step #2 Listen Past Your Blind Spot

Page 4

Step #3 Engage Them in Their There

Page 5

Step #4 When You've Done Enough ... Do More

Page 6

Taking Real Influence to the Next Level

Page 7

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: REAL INFLUENCE

by Mark Goulston and John Ullmen

The authors: Mark Goulston, M.D., is a business psychiatrist, consultant, chairman and cofounder of Heartfelt Leadership, and the author of the bestseller *Just Listen* and *Get Out of Your Own Way*. He also writes a *Tribune* syndicated career column; blogs for *Fast Company*, *Business Insider*, *Huffington Post* and *Psychology Today*; and is featured frequently in major media, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, CNN, NPR and Fox News.

John Ullmen, Ph.D., is an acclaimed executive coach whose clients include dozens of leading international firms. He oversees MotivationRules.com, conducts popular feedback-based seminars on influence in organizations and teaches at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

Real Influence: Persuade Without Pushing and Gain Without Giving In by Mark Goulston and John Ullmen. Copyright © 2013 by Mark Goulston and John Ullmen. Summarized by permission of the publisher, AMACOM (American Management Association). 272 pages, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-8144-2015-7. To purchase this book, go to www.amazon.com or www.bn.com.

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Introduction

Are you frustrated because you fail to get people to buy into your great ideas, can't close the deal on tough sales or constantly hit the wall when you try to influence people?

If so, you're not alone. As executive coaches, we know that it's harder than ever to influence people, because the old rules of persuasion no longer work.

Today we live in a post-selling and post-pushing world. As people grow more aware of manipulative tactics, their guard goes up. The Internet, television advertising, and wall-to-wall marketing have made us cynical about deceptive tricks and hard-sell approaches.

We call this outdated strategy *disconnected* influence. It's a shortsighted strategy that sometimes creates momentary "buy-in" but often at the expense of your relationships and reputation. When you make the transition to connected influence, you'll set the stage for strong, sustained influence by becoming the kind of person other people are eager to follow.

Connected influence pays off — and it pays forward. ●

The Problem: Why Are You Struggling to Influence People?

Disconnected influence doesn't earn you the commitment you need to achieve great things. Why? Because when you're stuck in *your here*, you can't get to *their there* — and that's where you need to be in order to

persuade people effectively.

The Dangers of 'Disconnect'

You tried your best, but they didn't budge. What's far worse is when it happens over and over again. And for millions of smart, caring and creative people just like you, it does. Even when these people are right — when they have brilliant ideas, inspiring goals or the best of intentions — they can't get through.

Most people most of the time aren't motivated to do what you want them to do. They don't feel your urgency, they're busy with their own priorities and crises, or they have hidden reasons for rejecting your ideas. To break down these walls, you need to create powerful connections that make people *want* to do what you're recommending.

On the surface, disconnected influence makes perfect sense. You've got to get things done. Important priorities are at stake. You size up a situation and see gaps that need to be filled and mistakes that need to be fixed. Maybe your project team is making a foolish decision. Or your boss needs to allocate more money to your project. Or your daughter is dating someone who isn't good for her. But when you view influence as "getting people to do what I want," you actually reduce your influence. That's because you're viewing the person you're trying to influence as a target, an object, something to be pushed or pulled. You're not hearing the other person's message. And the other person either recognizes this immediately or — even if you get temporary compliance — resents it later. You're dangerous



1-800-SUMMARY
service@summary.com

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 500 Old Forge Lane, Suite 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at \$99 per year. Copyright © 2013 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®.

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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Sarah T. Dayton, Editor in Chief; Andrew Clancy, Senior Editor; Amanda Langen, Graphic Designer; Corbin Collins, Contributing Editor

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

when you're blinded by your own point of view.

When you practice disconnected influence, you're stuck in what we call *your here*. You can see *your* position, *your* facts and *your* intentions clearly. But to connect with the people you're trying to influence, you need to communicate from a perspective we call *their there*. You need to see *their* position, *their* facts and *their* intentions clearly.

To reach people and win their long-term support, you need to stop pushing. Instead, you need to influence them in ways that spark a genuine connection.

Four Traps That “Disconnect” You

As you master the elements of the connected influence model, you're going to start freeing yourself from four “bad influence” habits that keep you disconnected. We call them *human nature traps*, and they're hardwired into your brain — but you can avoid them more successfully when you can spot yourself falling into them. Here's a look at all four and why they're so dangerous:

- **The Fight or Flight Response:** Your reptile brain focuses on *fight or flight*, your mammalian brain on *emotion* and your human brain on *reason*. The problem is that sometimes your three brains can get in the way of each other — especially when you're under stress. At times like this, an emotional sensor in your brain called the amygdala can become overly activated and it's as if your three brains have disconnected and are all functioning independently of each other. When you're focused on your own fears, your own stress, and your own anger, you're continually reagitating your amygdala.

- **The Habit Handicap:** We do what we're used to doing. We do what usually works. Whatever pattern we fall into, we go there because that's where we're on familiar ground. Ingrained habit combined with the stress response of our system put us at the mercy of our own dysfunctional default settings. We're stuck in a pattern of ineffective behavior. We're stuck at our here.

- **Error Blindness: It Feels So Right to Be Wrong:** While we're being wrong, we're like the cartoon coyote in midair before he looks down. We think we're OK, even though what we're doing isn't working, because we don't know it yet. We're tempted to make a sequence of assumptions about our counterparts: they don't know and it needs to be explained to them, they're not smart enough, and it needs to be explained again; and the evil assumption — they're working against us. Each keeps you locked into *your here*.

- **The Double Curse of Knowledge:** Being right also has its own dangers and shortcomings. When we're

failing to persuade and finding it difficult to get things done with people — what we “know” can change from asset to obstacle. Why? Because it's very difficult to “unknow” what you know. And this can create enormous gaps between *your here* and *their there*.

When you discover how to go beyond the limitations of your brain's hardware by writing new software that lets you move from *your here* to *their there* in every important relationship, you can create new habits that set the stage for you to have more genuine, lasting influence with other people.

The Four Steps to Connecting and Influencing

The connected influence model isn't a collection of strategies for manipulating people. Instead, it's a new way of acting every day. And it won't just change your business relationships; it will change all of your relationships by allowing you to overcome your blind spots and human nature traps so you can connect with the people who matter to you. The four core steps to moving from *your here* to *their there* and becoming the powerful influencer you want to be are:

1. **Go for great outcomes.** This isn't just a once-a-year exercise in setting ambitious goals. It's about standing for something noble and worthwhile, and it's about going beyond where people want to be and showing them where they could be.

2. **Listen past your blind spot.** To exert real influence, you need to have a willingness to learn, an open mind and sometimes the insight to discover that you're wrong.

3. **Engage them in their there.** Engaging strengthens the connection that comes from listening. It's about “getting” your audience — not using “gotcha” techniques to manipulate them into compliance.

4. **When you've done enough ... do more.** Doing more isn't just about the transactions you have with other people right now. It's about committing to making their great outcomes happen. ●

STEP #1 Go for Great Outcomes

To become a master at connected influence, you need to inspire people by going for what's possible — and then looking beyond that for what still might be possible. It's a determination to focus on the three “R's” of a great outcome: results, reputation and relationships.

The First “R”: Go for a Great Result

If you're going to influence others, go for something

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

grand. Go for a great outcome. It's ambitious. It's nearly impossible. It's energizing. It often triggers a response of "Do you think that's possible?" or "Could we really do that?"

Reverse cognitive bias means that most people wait for things to happen and then react to them. Fewer people have a *forward cognitive bias* — a willingness to engage the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead. These people ask, "Why settle for an opportunity when you can create and realize a possibility?"

When you take the bold step of going for a great outcome, you'll get people to think into their futures. You're not just trying to "trick" them into doing something that's good for you. Instead, you're showing them a path to a better *their there*. That leads to creative solutions, great results and stronger connections with the people you want to influence.

A great outcome doesn't need to be large in scope, but it needs to be rich in meaning. And it needs to be great for everyone involved.

The Second "R": Go for a Great Reputation

Connected influence requires you to prove that you're worthy of people's long-term commitment. To get people to support their great outcomes, you need to support them even when it's not in your best short-term interest.

They need to know that you're committed to *their* success as well as yours and that if they're in trouble, you'll stand up for them, even if the cost is high. In short, you need to be a hero. The actions you take to help others — or the actions you decline to take — can make or break connections forever.

Over and over, people tell us that the men and women who influenced them the most weren't the ones who persuaded them to do things. Instead, they were the ones who deeply cared about them and showed it. As one man put it, "This person was committed to not letting me fail." Commit to standing up for everyone who helps make your dreams a reality.

No matter how you build your own good reputation — through public gestures or behind-the-scenes support — it will empower you to wield positive influence both with the people you help and with the people they influence.

A strong reputation will make people want to work with you, deal with you, listen to you and help you. Because of what they've heard and learned about you, even before they meet you they will anticipate that good things will happen.

The Third "R": Go for Great Relationships

Disconnected influence steers us into thinking solely about getting results. But when that keeps us from thinking about building relationships, we often get worse results.

Relationships aren't always evident, but they always have an effect. If you damage your relationships, people will be less willing to support your great outcomes and might even work to undermine them.

Most influential people think about long-term implications even in their short-term actions. They drive for results, but they care about how they get those results. They don't make trade-offs between getting things done and earning trust and confidence with every interaction. The people around them know that they're not merely the means to the influencer's ends but are crucially important ends in their own right.

It's extremely easy to fall into focusing on results at the expense of the other two "R's". In fact, this is the core mistake that disconnected influencers make. And it takes mindful effort to break this bad habit. ●

STEP #2 Listen Past Your Blind Spot

To practice connected influence, you need to break down the barriers that keep you from knowing what other people really think, want and need. You do that by "hearing the music" of other people's words, mastering the fourth level of listening and being influenceable.

To Discover Their There, Listen to the Music

In the sort of listening we're talking about — we call it *listening to learn* — there is an energetic, determined humility. Listening to learn implies we don't know already. It implies there is work to do in order to connect with people on their own terms, with as little distortion as possible from our own biases. It involves not surrendering our judgment but suspending it.

When we master this type of listening, we draw others in and invite genuine buy-in. Listening with a strong personal motive to learn and understand more leads to real alignment and commitment rather than creating resistance or the mere appearance of going along.

Listening this way is a fully involved experience. It's an immersion in understanding. It's looking, hearing and feeling *into* another person's perspective and learning from it. Effective listening is an empathic exploration. It's an expedition into others' thoughts, feelings, mind-sets and attitudes.

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

Listen to them as if you're listening to music. Experience the tone, tempo, rhythm, harmony and emotion. Listen not just for the words being said but also for how the words are said and (very important) for what's *not* being said.

Master Level-Four Listening

To practice the kind of connective listening that increases influence rather than destroying it, you need to train yourself to listen at a higher level. And to do that you need to understand what happens at each level of listening. Here are the four levels of listening from the worst to best:

- **Level One: Avoidance Listening = Listening**

Over: This is more the avoidance of listening than listening. Listeners who listen over others say, "Uh huh," while clearly showing no interest in what the other person is saying. The person who's talking usually feels ignored.

- **Level Two: Defensive Listening = Listening**

At: This is listening with your defenses up. It's being quick to react and slow to consider. Listeners who listen at others take issue with everything they're saying. Rather than taking things seriously, they take everything personally.

- **Level Three: Problem-Solving Listening =**

Listening To: This is listening to accomplish things. It's problem-solving listening. Problem-solving listeners listen for the facts in order to move forward. In the correct circumstances, this is the right approach. But people will feel frustrated if they're hoping for something more than a solution to a problem.

- **Level Four: Connective Listening = Listening**

Into: Connective listeners strive to understand in the fullest sense. It's important for them to feel where people are coming from so they can establish genuine rapport. You're listening with the intention to understand the other person and forge a stronger connection. Connective listening is listening into other people to discover what's going on inside them. It's listening from *their there* instead of *your here*.

To Influence, Be Influenceable

When you're influenceable, it's possible to get buy-in for your ideas even if you think or feel very differently than another person does. That's because you'll lean into each other rather than resisting each other. When that happens, you'll nearly always be able to find common ground.

To demonstrate to other people that you're influenceable, you'll need to practice the following two types of openness:

- **Intellectual openness:** Being open to other people's logic, data, analysis and ideas. It means genuinely taking an interest in how others think and acknowledging how their ideas are influencing you. Intellectually open influencers say things like "You've really changed my thinking on this" and "I haven't thought about it that way before."

- **Emotional openness:** Being open to other people's feelings, passions, values, drives, motives, beliefs and convictions. You'll actively work to understand what other people are experiencing and why they feel the way they do. Emotionally open influencers say things like: "How are you feeling about the situation?" and "What's at stake for you here?"

You need to master one additional essential skill: the art of "shutting up." The next time someone's speaking with you and you feel yourself becoming angry or defensive, do not say the next thing you want to say — no matter how much you want to say it. Instead, stop and ask yourself "Why am I pushing back at what this person is saying?" ●

STEP #3 Engage Them in Their There

Once you understand where other people are coming from, it's time to connect with them in a way that makes them want to support you.

Use the Three Gets of Engage

The secret to reaching people in *their there* is to use what we call the "three gets of engage." By keeping these in focus, you'll be able to shift quickly and effectively from your own to another person's perspective.

- **Situational Awareness — You Get "It":** You show that you understand the opportunities and challenges a person is facing. You grasp that person's reality and you offer ideas that work in the person's there. When you do this, you'll hear comments like "You really get it!" or "You really understand what I'm dealing with here."

- **Personal Awareness — You Get "Them":** You show that you understand other people's strengths, weaknesses, goals, hopes, priorities, needs, limitations, fears and concerns. You demonstrate that you're willing to connect on a personal level. You'll hear people say things like "You get me!" or "You really understand where I'm coming from on this."

- **Solution Awareness — You Get Their Path to Progress:** You show people a positive path that enables

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

them to make progress on their own terms. You give them options and alternatives that empower them. You show them possibilities for making things better. You'll hear comments like "I see how that would help me."

Consistently, the three gets will take you to *their there* and then help you get them to where they want to be and could be.

Push Their Buttons — Positively

Engaging people in *their there* takes you outside your comfort zone. Now we're going to suggest something that will take you way, way outside your comfort zone. Think of it as "extreme engagement." This isn't something you need to do all the time. In fact, choose your moments very, very carefully. You can turn an encounter that's going nowhere into a memorable moment that leads directly to a great outcome.

In this approach, you won't just engage the other person. You'll provoke the person. It's a risky approach, but sometimes it's the only way to get through to a person who's completely disengaged.

Real engagement is hard work, and we sometimes need to make other people work at it by shaking them out of their inertia. The goal in this case isn't to force people to move to *our here* but rather to open their eyes to *their there* so they can see how they can make their own situation better.

Provoking people is a powerful approach that can quickly turn negative situations around. Use it carefully and sparingly. The key is not just to provoke but to provoke in specific ways that evoke the three gets of engage. So prepare before you provoke, by focusing clearly on the people you want to engage, what their situation is and what solutions they need. Go to *their there* and identify the real reasons for their disconnect. And then confront them with the intent of helping them move forward.

Engage Across Cultures

Brian Adams, the director of the Griffith University Multi-Faith Center in Brisbane, Australia, is an authority on how to engage with others and collaborate across cultures. Adams says that if you can master just seven words or phrases in a language, you can create an immediate connection:

- Say the person's name properly in his or her native language.
- Say hello.
- Offer a proper greeting.
- Say thank you.

- Say, "I appreciate your time with me."
- Offer a proper farewell when your interaction comes to a close.

Follow Adams' four guidelines for engaging across cultures: First, have courage. Many are hesitant to reach out to someone from another culture because they don't want to look foolish or cause offense. Second, show respect. You don't need to agree with everything the other person says, but assume you have as much to learn from the person's culture as that person has to learn from yours. Third, be curious. Show that you're interested in the other person's history, job, relationships and life. Fourth — and perhaps most important of all — exhibit humility and a good sense of humor. Apologize in advance for any inadvertent cultural slips you might make, and then join in the laughter if you screw up. In the process, you'll strengthen bonds with people who may still be trying to learn a new language or adapt to a new culture themselves. While they may chuckle, they'll admire you for reaching out to them in *their there*.

The cultural challenges aren't the only ones you'll encounter when you want to exert positive influence. While 70-year-olds, 40-year-olds and 20-year-olds may work together and share the same recent events, they have very different pasts, and in effect they come from very different cultures. As a result, they often wind up misunderstanding or resenting each other.

Connecting across cultures and ages isn't difficult if you're willing to take the first step. At work and in your personal life, make it a point to seek out relationships with people from other countries and backgrounds and with people who are older or younger than you. When you connect with people from different backgrounds and ages, they'll offer you new perspectives and new ideas. You'll learn from their successes and sometimes avoid their mistakes. Many times they'll show you an entirely different way of solving problems or approaching life. They may forever change the way in which you view your own world. ●

STEP #4 When You've Done Enough ... Do More

Real influence doesn't just mean meeting people's expectations. It means going so far beyond them that you make yourself unforgettable.

Do More Before, During and After

To connect in a way that makes you unforgettable, you need to do more, a lot more. You automatically do

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

more for the people you care about deeply, but you can go beyond what's expected in *any* relationship. When you do, you make a statement about who you are as a person and as a professional. "Overdelivering" makes you stand out in the moment and makes people remember you later. The response will be gratitude, respect or even awe.

Doing more isn't just a one-time thing but an ongoing practice. For maximum effect, you'll want to focus on three distinct times when you can do more: before, during and after an interaction.

- **Doing More Before:** When you do more before you even begin a relationship, you're immediately telling people that you're not just in it for yourself. When you begin interactions by doing more, sometimes even taking a risk in the process, you form instant bonds with people who are tired of being ripped off, manipulated or given the bare minimum of service. It's about a mindset that starts not with results but with relationships. You may not have any clue where those relationships will lead ... but that's part of the excitement of real influence.

- **Doing More During:** It's crucial to succeed at the task you're undertaking. But there's doing the task and 's turning that task into something greater. When you do the latter, people remember you and want to give back to you. Think about every project you are involved in right now, and ask yourself, what can I do to bring a little more value? What can I do that's a little more than what people usually do in this situation? To help the people around me, is there something else I can do, say, bring, offer or commit to? Then offer your help fully and generously without thinking about what you might get in return. You can make a lifelong impression by doing more in an interaction.

- **Doing More After:** Doing more doesn't end when an interaction does. In fact, you can often add tremendous value long afterward. And one of the most powerful ways to do that is simply by expressing your gratitude. Even when people know we're grateful, telling them is a gift of great value. Thank the person for something specific, acknowledge the effort it took and tell the person how his or her action made a difference in your life.

When you find ways to help other people learn, grow, gain, avoid problems, make progress and achieve their goals, you form the basis for ongoing results, enriched relationships and an integrity-based reputation. And that will lead to real, lifelong influence.

Do More in All Three Value Channels

The most powerful ways to do more in a business relationship usually don't involve writing a check or donating to charity. And in personal relationships, they don't involve giving your children bigger allowances or buying an expensive gift.

The best way to create real influence is to do more in ways that touch people's hearts and minds. Here are three ways to do this:

- **Expand their thinking ("the insight channel").** Find ways to help them see new insights, reframe their situation, gather new information and find new meaning in their lives.
- **Make them feel better ("the emotional channel").** Find ways to help them feel energized, capable, supported, empowered, successful, happier or valued.
- **Take effective action ("the practical channel").** Find ways to help them take action for themselves or for people they care about. Help them resolve issues, solve problems, build relationships, get projects done or accomplish tasks.

Your goal is to make things better for them in ways that will make you memorable.

Ask Other People to Do More

But don't do too much. To exert real influence, don't insist on doing more all on your own. Instead, open your arms to other people who want to help. Just as you've invited them to join in your great outcome, allow them to make it even greater by adding value.

When you do this, these people will contribute ideas you'd never think of on your own. By bringing them into the picture, you increase the chances that a great outcome will succeed, and in turn you increase your own positive influence.

When you look for other people to add value, be careful not to limit yourself to "experts" or people with the same experience and background as yours. Instead, look for people from different backgrounds who've done and experienced things you never have. These are the people who can often *do more* in unexpected and compelling ways. ●

Taking Real Influence to the Next Level

When you practice connected influence, you can transform vulnerability into triumph, create a lasting legacy and repair even the most damaged relationships.

Summary: REAL INFLUENCE

Let Adversity Lead You to Great Outcomes

Millions of people fail to achieve great influence because they're stuck in "I can't." They have a host of highly persuasive reasons why they can't create great outcomes and get others to buy into them.

But the truth is that our own setbacks or tragedies often lead us to missions that change our lives or even the world. An injured soldier and his friends and family started the Wounded Warrior Project. The Susan G. Komen Foundation raises millions in honor of a young woman who died of breast cancer. A First Lady who triumphed over substance abuse founded the Betty Ford Center.

One common thread in the stories of positive influencers who have been able to turn adversity into great outcomes is their determination to bring something positive from their experiences. A second common thread is that they were able to get out of *their there* and move to the *there* of other people in need. And the third is that many of them took a powerful first step: They shared their vulnerability openly. When you're in a vulnerable position, realize that you're not alone.

If you have endurance, tenacity and resilience — along with a big dose of courage — you have the tools you need to survive. You also have the power to wield positive influence and to turn setbacks into successes.

Influence by Getting out of the Way

The time may come to let someone else continue your legacy. This can be wrenching, because — like leaving home when you reach adulthood — it means letting go of a part of yourself.

But if you're strong enough to get out of the way so others can take over, you can ensure that your great outcome lasts forever. That's why letting go is a challenge that power influencers are willing to face head-on.

By stepping aside gracefully at the right time, you actually expand your influence.

Here's something else to think about if you reach a point when it's time to hand off a great outcome. John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth, later became a U.S. senator. John Grisham had a successful career as a lawyer before he became a best-selling fiction writer. So when it's time to say farewell to one great outcome, consider this: Maybe you're just opening the door to the next one.

Influence Positively After You've Made Big Mistakes

In an ideal world, we'd all be ideal people. We'd

never act stupidly, say hurtful things, lash out blindly or behave unethically. Of course, that world doesn't exist. All of us screw up occasionally. To repair the damage, we need to learn how to make things right after we've made them wrong.

The first step is the toughest one: facing your mistakes head-on. Often we shy away from doing this because we're too defensive or too ashamed to look honestly at the stupid things we've done. But mistakes don't make us weak or bad — they simply make us human.

Be brave enough — and humble enough — to make amends to the people you've hurt. Spell out what you did or failed to do, and say, "I'm sorry, and I was wrong." Describe how your mistake harmed the other person. State your commitment to avoiding this mistake in the future. Ask the person what you can do to make up for your mistake, and then do it.

Take a hard look at why you made each mistake in the first place. Real influence isn't about dwelling on the negative. Instead, it's about learning from mistakes.

Let Gratitude Magnify Your Influence

Gratitude is one of the themes we heard most often from our group of power influencers. Dozens of influencers eagerly shared their stories about people who'd helped them advance in their careers and become better people. These stories made us feel grateful to the people who shared them with us.

Interestingly, there's even a scientific reason for this. It's called "mirroring." The human brain contains "mirror neurons" — specialized cells that cause us to respond to other people's actions and emotions as if we're experiencing them ourselves. Thus, when you perform an act of gratitude, the person who's listening to you feels a strong sense of gratitude as well. And that immediately creates a stronger bond between the two of you.

So if you want to magnify your influence, share your appreciation whenever you can. And if you find yourself trapped in a cycle of negativity, actively break out of it and start a brand-new cycle of appreciation instead. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Real Influence*, you'll also like:

1. ***360 Degrees of Influence* by Harrison Monarth.** Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.
2. ***Just Listen* by Mark Goulston.** A veteran psychiatrist and business coach, Goulston reveals the secret of how to get through to anyone, even when productive communication seems impossible.
3. ***The 360 Leader* by John C. Maxwell.** According to Maxwell, you can learn to develop your influence from wherever you are in the organization by becoming a 360-degree leader.