

Relationship Networking . . .

Because People Do Business

With People They *Like*



The
11 LAWS
of
LIKABILITY

MICHELLE TILLIS LEDERMAN

The 11 Laws of Likability

1. **The Law of Authenticity:** The real you is the best you.
2. **The Law of Self Image:** Before you can expect others to like you, you have to like you.
3. **The Law of Perception:** Perception is reality—how you perceive others is your reality about them, and the same is true for them of you.
 - **The Sub Law of Law of First Impressions:** It is much easier to make a good first impression than change a bad one.
4. **The Law of Energy:** Energy is contagious! What we give off is what we get back.
5. **The Law of Curiosity:** Curiosity creates connections.
6. **The Law of Listening:** You have to listen to understand.
7. **The Law of Similarity:** People like people like them.
 - **The Sub-Law of Association:** People trust the sources they know best.
8. **The Law of Mood Memory:** People are more apt to remember how you made them feel than what you said.
9. **The Law of Familiarity:** People feel comfortable with who and what they know.
10. **The Law of Giving:** Do because you can – giving creates value.
11. **The Law of Patience:** Give it time, things happen.

The Real You Is the Best You—and the Most Likable!

How to Live the Law of Authenticity for More Productive and Enriching Connections

From job interviews to working the crowd, business interactions can be stressful—and exhausting. Especially for people who try so hard to act like a serious, successful person.

Yet, the right way to interact with people—whether a prospective employer, several potential clients or donors, or a room full of fellow networkers—is what feels right for *you*.

“The real you is the best you, and it’s the most powerful tool for forming real connections,” assures **Michelle Tillis Lederman**, a specialist in enhancing interpersonal communications. “When you show your authentic self, people will respond in kind, laying the bedrock for mutual understanding, connections, and growth.” In her new book, **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY: Relationship Networking...Because People Do Business with People They Like** (AMACOM; September 2011), Lederman offers the following tips for excelling in business interactions (and social interactions, too) by just being you:

- **Identify what it means to be your authentic self.** Pay attention to how you feel at the beginning of a new interaction and how you feel at the end of it. If you experience a sense of dread, ask yourself: *What, exactly, provoked it? Is it a person, the task, or the environment?* If you experience ease, ask yourself the same questions. Your answers should reveal information about the kind of experiences that prompt you to shy away from representing your true self, and those in which you feel effortlessly authentic.
- **Take time to reconnect with your authentic self.** When you’re in a situation that is making you feel uncomfortable or disconnected, take a moment to ask yourself: *Am I being me?* If your answer is “No,” then ask yourself, “Why?” Are you actively changing your behavior because of how you think you should act? Is there something about the situation that makes you feel inadequate or out of place? “Take a deep breath and reconnect with that part of you that feels authentic and honest,” Lederman urges. “Conveying your genuine self will ground you regardless of the outcome.”
- **Cultivate the connections you *want* to have, not the ones you think you *should* have.** The most valuable career-sustaining network is the one made up of people who not only respect you, but also genuinely like you. “Build relationships with the people you enjoy,

based on your authentic experiences of them—that is, when you are being your authentic *you*,” Lederman advises. “The rest will follow.”

- **If you can’t do it and be authentic, reframe it or delete it.** “*Get To*,” “*Want To*,” “*Have To*,” “*Should*.” These are the four basic attitudes everyone brings to each situation. Use them to reaffirm what is authentic for you or help you readjust your approach to let the authentic in. Whenever faced with a *Have To* or *Should* do task, convert it into something you *Get To* or *Want To* do. Consider it from a different angle, focusing on the aspects that make you feel positive and energized. Or, if the *Have To* or *Should* task isn’t imperative, just hit the “delete” button. As Lederman stresses, “You have choices!”
- **When you need to fake it, make it real.** At work and in life, sometimes you have to deal with a person who gets under your skin or rubs you the wrong way. For goodness sake, don’t plaster on a forced smile and try to hide your true feelings. Instead, look at the person with unbiased eyes and find something about him or her that you can relate to, empathize with, or admire. Identifying these traits will transform your interactions with that person. You’ll gain conversational ease and more relaxed body language, coming from an authentic place. “When you can focus on what you truly do appreciate about other people, their likability—and yours—will naturally increase,” Lederman assures.

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Living the Law of Curiosity

How to Work Your Genuine Curiosity to Create Powerful Business (and Personal) Connections

“Curiosity may have killed the cat, but I can tell you it never killed a conversation,” attests communications expert **Michelle Tillis Lederman**. “In fact, showing genuine curiosity about a person’s job, life, interests, opinions, or needs is a great way to start a conversation, keep it going, and create connections.” In her new book, **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY: Relationship Networking...Because People Do Business with People They Like** (AMACOM; September 2011), Lederman offers the following tips for putting that natural curiosity to work for networking and relationship-building:

- **Spark interest by being curious.** What would you genuinely like to know about the person? If you’re wondering about the smash hit project she led or his stellar racquetball game, why not ask? If you don’t know anything at all about the person, ask general questions about the types of things you like to discover about people you meet. “Often picking one topic to pursue is all you need to get the dialogue rolling,” Lederman notes.
- **Open up by asking questions.** Ask open-ended questions to start a conversation and keep it flowing. If possible, make your opening person- and situation-dependent. Do you work in the same industry? Then ask industry-specific questions. If you are meeting someone for the first time in an unfamiliar place, rely on the tried and true, “*What do you do?*” Or tweak it slightly by asking, “*What field are you in?*” or “*What do you do when you’re not working?*” or even, “*What do you want to do next?*” “Your goal,” Lederman stresses, “is to uncover what you might have in common and what value you might bring to that person.”
- **Ask their opinion.** Asking someone’s opinion of something is a surefire conversation starter. Choose whatever topic you’d like—politics, the latest news from Wall Street—just make sure it’s something you want to talk about, too. “If you are not genuinely curious about it you won’t be fully engaged in the exchange,” Lederman cautions, “and your chance of forging a real connection diminishes.”
- **Follow the other person’s lead.** Even the most curious people, full of probing questions, sometimes find themselves in conversations where they suddenly hit a brick wall. When that happens, change the course of the conversation by following the lead of the person you’re talking to. “If you hit a topic and the other person’s energy flags, move on to a

new topic until you land on one that helps the dialogue flow again,” Lederman suggests. “The more energetic responses you get, the better your chances for continuing to probe in ways that build connection.”

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- **Learn the art of the probe.** “Probes are excellent conversation continuers once the initial spark of dialogue has been lit,” Lederman observes. There are three main types of probes. A *clarifying probe* effectively demonstrates that you are paying attention. Rephrase or summarize what you’ve heard and ask if you’ve understood it correctly. A *rational probe* seeks to understand the reasoning behind a stated choice or action; in other words, it asks “How come?” A better choice than “Why?” since it is less likely to put someone on the defensive. An *expansion probe* delves for more information about a given response, epitomized in the classic phrase, “Tell me more.”
- **Don’t interrogate.** Be careful not to let your curiosity tip over into a machine-gun questioning style. Bombarding people with rapid queries, regardless of your enthusiasm, will make them feel as if they need to protect themselves, and they’ll stay guarded. “Conversations are two-sided dialogues,” Lederman reminds the curious. “Sprinkling in information about yourself is important, making you more likable, increasing your chances of discovering commonalities, and making whomever you’re talking to feel comfortable enough to share.”
- **Google with restraint.** Thanks to the Internet, it’s easy to search every bit of information you can before meeting a person. Yet, how genuinely curious can you be if you already know all the answers? What’s more, knowing so much about a person in advance might make the actual encounter feel awkward and forced. Lederman’s advice: “Do enough research that you have a solid base of background knowledge, but don’t go overboard. You want there still to be plenty you want to know because, after all, this is the essence of curiosity.”

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Suggested Interview Questions for **Michelle Tillis Lederman,**

Author of **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY**

1. Most networking experts focus on working a room, getting in front of key people, and making every conversation strategic. How is your approach to networking dramatically different?
2. In **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY**, you affirm your belief in one of your dad's favorite sayings: "the world is a mirror." Why is this true and how does it apply to networking?
3. Why, even in business interactions, does likability—being liked and liking others—matter?
4. Different qualities make each person likable. So, why are the drivers of likability the same for all of us? How did you identify the *11 laws of likability*?
5. Why did you decide to open your book, and establish the foundation for successful networking, with the law of *authenticity*?
6. As we all know, first impressions are critical. Would you share your law and a few practical tips for making a strong and positive one?
7. Would you explain what you mean by the law of *energy*?
8. Many people struggle with a fundamental element of starting a conversation and keeping it going: asking questions. What is your answer?
9. In **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY**, you emphasize the importance of listening—not only actively, but also on different levels. Would you explain what you mean?
10. Would you let the networkers out there in on how to uncover and capitalize on what they have in common with strangers?
11. Social networking on the Internet has become a true phenomenon. Regardless of their wild popularity, are sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn valuable tools for business networking? How can networkers effectively use them?

12. In **THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY**, you acknowledge the importance of being memorable to acquaintances. Would you offer pointers to help networkers end their conversations with a lasting, positive impression?

13. As you stress in your book, the ultimate goal of networking is to convert conversations into genuine, meaningful relationships that lead to win-win situations for everyone involved. How, specifically, can networkers make this happen?

14. Why is *patience* a law of likability?

15. What would you most like readers to learn from—and genuinely like about—**THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY**?

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