

"If you want to be a leader of the future, you must know how to build alliances and partnerships—*The Connector's Advantage* will help you do just that."

MARSHALL GOLDSMITH, two-time Thinkers50 World's #1 Leadership Thinker



THE
CONNECTOR'S
ADVANTAGE

**7 Mindsets to Grow Your
Influence and Impact**

MICHELLE TILLIS LEDERMAN

Foreword by **Ivan Misner**



THE CONNECTOR'S ADVANTAGE

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"If you don't feel you're a social butterfly, don't worry: Michelle has solutions for you. If you're not very trusting, I'd wager that you'll be significantly more so after reading this book. Even if you don't feel you are a Connector now, you can become one, and all the knowledge you need to do so is within these pages."

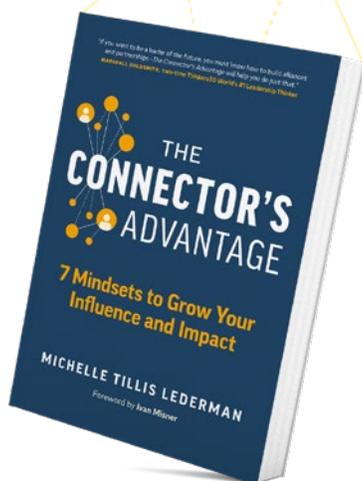
— FROM FOREWORD BY IVAN MISNER, founder and chairman of business networking organization BNI

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A HOW-TO GUIDE TO SUPERCHARGING YOUR NETWORK

From one of Forbes' 25 Professional Networking Experts to Watch comes the authoritative guide to creating authentic and valuable connections. Whether you're feeling stuck in your career, looking to expand your influence or just starting out, the simple steps and insights outlined in *The Connectors Advantage* will help you create new avenues to personal and professional success.

Through carefully curated expert advice from over two dozen authors, coaches, entrepreneurs and corporate executives, networking guru Michelle Tillis Lederman drills down into the unique skills, habits and of expert Connectors, uncovering the 7 Mindsets that set them apart. Then, she carefully outlines how anyone can cultivate these mindsets to build supportive, responsive and valuable connections of their own.



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The Connectors Advantage also provides practical information about how anyone can infuse these mindsets into their interactions, in situations ranging from networking events to email. Readers will also gain knowledge on how social media and technology tools can expand and maintain connections, with real-life examples that demonstrate how to use them to their greatest advantage.

The good news is, there's no mystery as to why some people are better at connecting than others. Whether you're an introvert or extrovert, entry-level worker or high-powered executive, you, too, can become a Connector. *The Connector's Advantage* shows you how.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MICHELLE TILLIS LEDERMAN is an accomplished speaker, trainer, coach, and author of four books, including the internally recognized *The 11 Laws of Likability*. She was named by Forbes as one of the 25 Professional Networking Experts to Watch. A former NYU professor, financial executive and recovering CPA, she now works with organizations and individuals to help them build real relationships for greater results through her company, Executive Essentials. She has worked with clients ranging from government to academia to non-profit to Fortune 500 companies, including Madison Square Garden, Citi, Johnson & Johnson, Ernst & Young, Michigan State University, Sony, and The Department of Environmental Protection. She has been featured on CBS and MSNBC, and in the *NY Times*, *Forbes* and *Working Mother* magazine.

WHY BE A CONNECTOR?

The simple truth is that Connectors find greater success in life. We are now living in the age of networking: In the agricultural age, the greatest asset was land. In the industrial age, it was the machine. In the information age, it became data and technology. Today, in the networked era, our greatest assets are our relationships; those that we have as individuals, and those we have with organizations and brands that have our loyalty.

That statistics say it all: When it comes to finding work, 85 per cent of jobs happen through connections with people you know. Scientists have found that social isolation is as detrimental to your health as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. Academic research has found that connected people are happier at work and at home, and that organizations that cultivate relationships within their staff are more productive and considered better places to work.

Relationship-building is critical to the success of brands and businesses as well; people are four times more likely to buy a service or product when referred by a friend. Relationship-focused businesses, such as the subscription industry, have been growing at 200 per cent annually since 2011. On the individual level, connections make things happen faster, more easily and, often with better results, whether you're searching for a new job, different career or wanting to change something in your personal life.

WHAT KIND OF CONNECTOR ARE YOU?

Michelle Tillis Lederman has identified seven levels of connector:

- 1. Global Super Connector:**
You have a broad network with geographic depth beyond their country's borders.
- 2. Super Connector:**
The breadth of your network crosses geographic areas, demographic differences, personal interests, professional industry, job functions, titles, and levels.
- 3. Niche Connector:**
You have a concentration in a specific area. It could be a geographic region, industry, or job function. The breadth and depth exist but only within the area of their niche.
- 4. Acting Connector:**
Connecting has become part of your thinking. You consider how to help those in your network with introductions and information. Your network's breadth and depth are growing.
- 5. Responsive Connector:**
You are open and willing but do not always recognize how and when you can add value, and therefore you don't initiate the connection or offer of assistance.
- 6. Emerging Connector:**
You embody some of the behaviors, but you have not yet mastered or are not consistently applying all of the elements and mindsets.
- 7. Non-Connector:**
You don't see the value in connecting, or are really uncomfortable with the idea of connecting.

THE SEVEN MINDSETS OF CONNECTORS

Michelle Tillis Lederman has uncovered seven mindsets that set successful connectors apart—and, in *The Connector's Advantage*, she outlines exactly how to cultivate them:

1. **Connectors Are Open and Accepting**

When you are accepting of yourself and accepting of others, you open up the potential for deeper relationships. Be aware of your own strengths, weaknesses and unique charms, and be accepting of others. Learn about the five levels of emotional intelligence and the Ladder of Inference—the thinking process you go to get from a fact or experience to a decision or action, often with untested assumptions.

2. **Connectors Have Clear Vision**

Know who you are, how you can be useful, what you are working on, and what assistance you need. Learn the SMARTER model of goal-setting to evaluate and refine your goals. Find balance in your life through daily rituals, and learn to ask for what you need.

3. **Connectors Believe in Abundance**

Cultivate a mindset of “abundance” in opportunities, work and relationships. Acknowledge when fear of scarcity causes to withhold from others, and learn to overcome it. Stop judging yourself in comparison to other people, and find opportunities to give credit to others. Transform feelings of envy into motivation.

4. **Connectors Trust**

Learn about the Four Pillars of Trust—authenticity, vulnerability, transparency and consistency. Learn how to work on rebuilding trust when it is lost, by apologizing and accepting responsibility, acknowledging its impact, and establishing a plan of action for re-establishing trust in the future.

5. **Connectors Are Social and Curious**

Learn the Dos and Don'ts of group settings, including eye contact and open body language. Find out why being an introvert or extrovert makes no difference in your ability to connect. Learn how to work a room, and find the format for connecting that feels right for you: virtual, group, or one-on-one. Find creative ways to connect, from gift-giving to podcasting.

6. **Connectors Are Conscientious**

Find out why it's important to follow through on your word—and make a plan on how you will do so. Learn about the communication hacks that will enhance new introductions and allow you to follow through. Know how and when to yes and no.

7. **Connectors Have a Generous Spirit**

Engage with others with an open heart and without judgment. Add value to others however small the action may be. Give credit to others and amplify their generosity. Set boundaries and, above all, be generous with yourself.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CONNECTORS ADVANTAGE:

1. What inspired you to write *The Connectors Advantage*?
2. This book is filled with examples featuring people from different walks of life, from members of your own family to high-powered CEOs. Who do you feel will benefit the most from reading this book?
3. Your first book, *The 11 Laws of Likability*, focused on networking. How does *The Connectors Advantage* build on your previous book?
4. What are the most common mistakes people make when it comes to networking and connecting?
5. You write that introverts can be great connectors. That seems counter-intuitive. Is it really possible for a wallflower to become a super connector?
6. I've always thought that people are born being good at connecting or not. But you describe a whole spectrum of connectors—can you explain why that is?
7. How can someone figure out what level of connector they're at, and what does it take to "level up"?
8. How did you come to discover the Seven Mindsets of Connectors that you write about?
9. You say that one of the mindsets is that connectors have a clear vision—and you write about asking for and receiving help. Can you explain why that's important?
10. One of the Seven Mindsets of Connectors you write about is being conscientious—but you also note that being conscientious doesn't mean saying yes to everything. How do you know when to say no, and how can a connector do that without jeopardizing a connection?
11. Should everyone aspire to be a "super connector" or "global super connector"?
12. Maintaining a large network of connections seems like a rather time-consuming task. How can someone keep their connections fresh and authentic without it eating into their schedule?
13. A lot of people really feel uncomfortable at traditional networking events. Can you be a Connector without attending these large gatherings?
14. What is one thing anyone can do to become a better connector?
15. What social media is your favourite for connecting? Why do you prefer it?
16. You end the book by talking about being an "inclusive connector". What does that mean?

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CONNECTORS ADVANTAGE:



Too often I've met women who are held back, not by their talents, but by a lack of confidence in putting themselves out there. *The Connector's Advantage* is the book many of us have been waiting for—a guide that truly illuminates how to cultivate and grow a strong circle of connections to attain greater and faster success." – **SALLY HELGESEN, best-selling author, speaker and leadership coach, cited by Forbes as the world's premier expert on women's leadership**



I've worked in the White House, Hollywood and Silicon Valley—none of which would have been possible if I hadn't cultivated strong relationships with the right people. Like me, Michelle Tillis Lederman has walked the walk, and has the credentials to prove it. As one of Forbes Top 25 Networkers, she is a virtuoso in creating connections. *The Connector's Advantage* is a masterclass in networking, from one of the best." – **JOHN CORCORAN, creator of Smart Business Revolution**



As the CEO of a multimillion-dollar business and a leadership coach, I'm often called on to share my insights with others. My advice is always the same: create authentic, human connections within your organization and beyond. Not only does Michelle Tillis Lederman understand how to do this, but she can communicate this knowledge with ease. *The Connector's Advantage* is the authoritative guidebook to navigating and maximizing the potential of your network." – **GARRY RIDGE, President and CEO of WD-40 Company, Marshall Goldsmith Certified Coach**

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CONNECTORS ADVANTAGE:



I know how many hurdles there can be to growing a business—a strong network gives you a leg up. *The Connector's Advantage* offers real, applicable advice on how to create authentic connections for reaching your potential, and standing out from the crowd." – **DORIE CLARK**, marketing strategy consultant, professional speaker and adjunct professor at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business



Any successful business person will tell you that they didn't get there on their own. Michelle Tillis Lederman's book not only describes how the most successful networkers create their connections, but also guides you through the steps of developing and supercharging your own relationships to take your life and career to the next level." – **JEFFREY HAZLETT**, primetime TV & podcast host, keynote speaker, best-selling author and global business celebrity



None of us goes through life alone—nor should we. Authentic, collaborative relationships are imperative to achieving any type of personal or societal transformation. *The Connector's Advantage* is essential reading for anyone desiring a stronger, more powerful launch pad for change." – **LISEN STROMBERG**, culture innovation consultant, speaker and author of *Work Pause Thrive*