

SUMMARY

THE 11 LAWS OF LIKABILITY

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Summary of “The 11 Laws of Likability” by Michelle Tillis Lederman

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Learn how to grow your business by making people like you!

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Introduction

You like your friends, right? If the answer is no, you guys probably don't have a lot of fun together! (Or else, you're in some pretty toxic relationships!) But with the exception of cases where the latter option is true, most of us are very close to our friends and we find laughter, joy, and fulfillment in our interactions with them. But have you ever taken a moment to ask yourself why you like your friends? What qualities drew you to them? What made you say, "I want to spend more time in this person's company?"

Maybe it's the fact that you have some things in common, like the same sense of humor or the same values. Maybe you admire their kindness, their honesty, or their reliability. Any and all of these qualities can influence your decision to befriend someone. And, by contrast, if you feel that someone is unkind, manipulative, or disloyal, you're equally inclined to reject an opportunity to be friends with them. In fact, you might even feel that such a person is dangerous or suspicious. Each of us make these judgments about others every day. It impacts our relationships and our business partnerships. But have you ever wondered what people conclude about you? Have you ever wondered how your own likability impacts your career and your personal life? Over the course of this summary, we'll explore these questions and learn more about the 11 laws of likability.



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Forge Authentic Connections

You might have noticed that, in the introduction, honesty was one of the first qualities we considered when it comes to assessing potential friendships. That's because, whether we're conscious of it or not, all human beings assess new interactions to determine whether or not we can trust the other person. Quite simply, we're hardwired to do so; it's hardwired into our evolutionary survival mechanisms, much like our "fight or flight response." Just as our primitive ancestors would have relied on the "fight or flight" response to assess the potential danger of an encounter with a mammoth or another predator, so we use our assessments of others to further our survival and keep ourselves safe in social situations.

So, how does this apply in the business world? Well, quite simply, it means that you need people to trust you if you want to succeed. Unfortunately, however, most of us have seen firsthand that many people who succeed in the business world are neither likable nor trustworthy; rather, they are simply skilled manipulators who have learned how to play on people's emotions in order to get what they want. And that is absolutely not what this guidebook is advocating! Rather than promoting the "fake it till you make it" model for life and relationships, the author is interested in providing actionable tips for genuinely becoming a likable person and using your skills to forge positive and authentic connections with others.

So, how can we make that happen? Well, one of the first steps is to attack an arena that is often characterized by insincerity: networking events. If you've ever been to one, you know that most people approach networking events with the aim of finding someone who can give them what they want. This doesn't necessarily have to be colored by malicious intent; in fact, a person's motivation can be as innocent as, "I want to talk to that person because they're friends with someone who could really grow my business!" There's no harm in wanting to make friends in high places, but the author argues that we should carefully consider our attitudes. So, instead of approaching a networking opportunity with the mentality of, "What can I

get out of this?” try to reframe the question in your mind. Instead, ask yourself, “How can I genuinely connect with someone today? And how can I bring value to our partnership?”

When you approach networking opportunities with this mentality, you can really see how it changes your perspective! That’s because you’re thinking with a “mutual value added” attitude. This term is often used to describe the best approach to networking and it’s easy to see why. Because every relationship is going to be better when, instead of thinking about what you can get out of the relationship, you’re thinking about how you can help the other person! The author observes that remembering this is the key to successful business (and personal!) relationships. So, the next time you’re faced with a networking opportunity, try to start by thinking about what you can bring to the table. This attitude will also impact your relationship with likability.

Here’s how: for starters, being genuinely kind and considerate of others will instantly make you more likable! But it will also help you look for things to like about the other person. That’s because you have a new perspective that has revolutionized your attitude. Now, instead of wondering what the other person can do for you, you’re thinking, “What can I do for them? How can I get to know them?” This attitude will invite you to ask meaningful questions and listen closely when the other person talks. For example, you might ask them about their career goals, their life experiences, their opinions, or a new project they’re working on.

All of these questions can lead you to some interesting insights about someone else, so make sure you’re listening closely and looking for things to like! For example, their answer to a particular question might reveal that they are very considerate of others or that they are passionate about a charitable cause. You might learn about their experience with battling adversity or hear about a time when they practiced extreme perseverance and determination. You might not have a lot in common with everyone you meet, but there’s a strong chance that you can find at least one thing to like about everybody. So, be on the lookout for the good in other people and

practice attitudes that will make you a more likable person. This will help you to form genuine and authentic connections with others every time!



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Always be Authentic

It would be great if we could turn that chapter title into a catchy little acronym like “ABC,” which stands for “Always Be Closing,” but unfortunately, our message isn’t quite so punchy. But even if it isn’t catchy, it’s definitely still important! That’s because the author believes that authenticity is the key to likability. However, that comes with the vital caveat that authenticity isn’t the same as brutal honesty! No one should be brutally honest all the time; you’re not likely to make friends if you go around telling people, “You look so fat in that!” or “That’s the dumbest idea I’ve ever heard!” So, it’s important to remember that being authentic is different from being blunt. At the core, authenticity is simply about being yourself.

And in the professional world, we often find it hard to freely be ourselves. Many of us feel pressured to play a role or craft a persona. We might feel as though we have to be one person at work and someone else when we’re at home. But the author asserts that this is deeply unhealthy. Even if we fail to explicitly acknowledge that, we all know the difference. Because when you’re being yourself, it feels as natural as breathing. But when you feel pressured to put on a show, you’re overly conscious of everything you do and say. And it often shows in our tight, bright, fake smiles, our too-loud voices, or our nervous chuckles. Being fake is never fun, so why do we spend so much of our lives engaging in this useless performance?

The author observes that we often force ourselves to jump through hoops because we feel pressured or nervous. For example, we might feel the need to impress someone and worry that we’re too awkward to make a good first impression. Alternatively, you might find yourself in a conversation with someone you don’t like and feel pressured to be nice to them. But because we’re all going to be in these situations multiple times through our lives, the author believes it’s important for us to find better coping mechanisms. For example, even if you’re enduring the company of someone you dislike, you can still employ the strategy we discussed in the previous chapter. Sure, you

might not like everything about them; maybe they're loud, conceited, or obnoxious and they-- understandably-- get on your nerves.

But maybe you can look for something good about them. Is it possible that they're really great at public speaking or that they did an awesome job at leading the team on a certain project? Maybe they have admirable time management skills. It's vitally important that we look for these things in the people we dislike because our personal biases can sometimes cause us to be unfairly biased. You know this to be true if you've ever been infuriated by the innocent actions of someone you disliked. For example, have you ever felt irrationally annoyed by the sight of someone eating crackers or posing for a picture on Instagram just because you don't like them? If your feelings were different, the action alone wouldn't bother you at all. But when it's someone you dislike, you might feel an overwhelming sense of annoyance. If we're not careful, these feelings can cause us to become unfairly biased toward others and this can skew our perspective. So, try to be aware of these feelings when they pop up and work to balance them with fairness.

This will help you to lose that sense of awkwardness or inauthenticity and allow you to truly be yourself in every situation. You don't have to like the person or be their biggest fan. But wherever possible, you should try to be fair, genuine, and unbiased in your attitudes and interactions.



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Know Your Three V's

Have you noticed that every genuinely likable person has one key thing in common? If you haven't, I'll give you a hint: it's the fact that they're great communicators! Now, this necessarily doesn't mean that they're confident, great at public speaking, or that they always know the right thing to say. Instead, it simply means that they know their "Three V's" really well. The author defines the Three V's as the three keys to successful communication, and therefore, the secret to likability. How do they work? We can understand the role of the Three V's by breaking down their individual roles in communication.

The first V stands for "Verbal." Your verbal communication is characterized by the words you say in conversation with someone else. Next up is "Vocal" or how you say what you're saying. And lastly, we have "Visual" communication, which can best be defined as your body language. In every single conversation you have, each of these Three V's work together to convey your message to the receiver. And they have the power to change the entire course of your conversation. To examine how they work in practice, let's consider a couple of examples. Imagine for a moment that someone told you, "I love you so much." But what if they yelled it while shaking their finger in your face? Would you feel loved? Or would you feel threatened, angry, and scared? On the flipside, imagine that someone told you, "I really, really hate you! I think you're the worst person in the world!" But what if they said it with a big smile on their face and they were giving you a tender hug? Would you instantly feel enraged? Or would it take you a minute for the vile nature of their words to ring up on you?

I think it's a pretty safe bet that, in both cases, everybody would opt for the latter response. Why? Because whether the person is saying something nasty or something kind, in both hypothetical scenarios, their words don't match up with their tone of voice and their body language. And both of those things impact our perception of the conversation. The same is true for pretty much every interaction we have with people. And if you're sending

weird or conflicting signals with one of your Three V's, it can alter not only the course of your conversation but that person's perception of your likability. So, as you approach future conversations, try to make sure your Three V's are aligned when you're talking.

It's also important to consider the factors that can get your V's out of whack. For example, if you're trying to sound confident but you actually feel really nervous, this could cause some internal confusion and result in you coming across as fake. Similarly, if you're trying to act like you like someone when you don't, the same result can occur. That's why the author believes that it's important to be authentic whenever possible, especially when that means being honest with yourself. So, if you're nervous, just admit it! Go ahead and tell someone and don't try to fake it. Likewise, if you dislike your conversation partner, admit that to yourself and do your best to be extra honest and positive. And last but not least, remember the tip we discussed in the very first chapter: always approach interactions by looking for the good in others!



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Final Summary

When it comes to networking, it's easy to see it as an exercise in inauthenticity. We may feel as though we have to present a fake and carefully curated version of ourselves to impress others or get what we want. But the author argues that if you want to be likable, you have to start by looking for the good in others! And, above all, it's crucial to always be authentic. So, remember to approach networking events with a "mutual value added" mentality, ask yourself what you can bring to the table, and ask genuine questions to get to know others. You should also make sure to listen closely to what they have to say and remember to keep your Three V's in sync!



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