

THE SOCIAL STRATEGIST

HOW TO MASTER YOUR SOCIAL LIFE, RAISE
YOUR STATUS, AND WIN MORE NEGOTIATIONS

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AND

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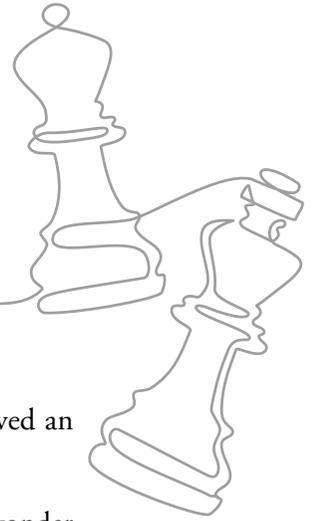
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INTRODUCTION



Once upon a time, there was a 16-year-old boy who lived an ordinary life.

Every day, he would dream of living “the good life” and wonder how to get it.

One day, this boy had an unfamiliar, near-death experience, and he was isolated and left to die.

He had hit rock bottom, a pitch-black place, a living hell. It was either climb or die there. And, climb he did.

He craved wisdom to help himself learn how to survive. He eventually managed to fight his way back into the light. He climbed out of hell.

Unfortunately, that climb cost the boy his childlike innocence.

But, after much more suffering and effort, he was no longer isolated and no longer dying. He was, finally, back to his ordinary life.

And yet, something had changed. Now, the boy wanted to get the good life even more—to get health, wealth, love, and happiness—and he wanted to help others get it too.

My name is Ali Scarlett. When I was 16-years-old, I was isolated and left to die.¹ I’ve spent my life since then trying to be for myself and others what

¹ You can get more information about Ali Scarlett’s inspiring life story in his free chapter giveaway of *The Clever Connector* Second Edition: <https://thecleverconnector.com/all-guides/>

no one was for me, to be a helping hand in order to help myself and others achieve personal empowerment by using helpful information as the pathway to achieving more. That's why I wrote this book with Lucio Buffalmano.

So, now, I'd like to share with you a fascinating idea.

What if we lived in a world where anyone, anywhere had the power—the helpful information—to transform their life through learning?

How would the world change if we applied and shared with each other the helpful information that could transform our lives for the better?

What would the world look like if we transformed the powerless into helpful, powerful people who could help themselves and others live better, happier lives?

That's my vision, and that's why I wrote this book.

This is what Lucio says of his own learning experience:

Before I started learning the advanced social skills I'm about to teach you, I was an underdog. Socially unaware, romantically mediocre, naive, and, of course, clueless about the advanced social skills I needed to navigate the toughest times that were headed my way.

Back then, I used to think that "things will turn out fine in life, because...why shouldn't they?" I was a young, naive optimist—the kind that didn't have the real-world skills or awareness to handle my life's biggest failures.

One particular December night, Christmas lights adorned a snowy white Berlin. It was beautiful and picturesque. Not for me, though. That night I was crouching on the floor, crying.

I was in a cramped-up back-room of a gay couple's apartment because that was all I could afford. I was broke, jobless, alone, and desperate. My search for employment amounted to a string

of rejections. Equally fruitless was my search for a partner. No surprise there—women don't exactly lust after losers with a beaten-dog face.

I remember a particularly difficult evening, after yet another job rejection. I picked up the phone to call my parents. I wanted to talk to someone. But I didn't make the call. I just looked at the phone and then put it back. I wasn't sure I could make that call without breaking down, and I didn't want to bring that pain to my parents.

For the first time in my life, I wasn't so sure that I was going to find a way. For the first time in my life, I could barely see the light at the end of the tunnel.

But, now I know better. Now, I know that those real-world skills that naive me didn't have back then—those advanced social skills—are necessary. And, they're necessary for more than being able to survive the worst that life can throw at us. They're necessary for those of us who want more out of life. For you, that could be to book the career deals you dream about, sign the clients you want, or win the raise that you've been working toward. Or, it could be to drive the cars you love, buy the clothes you deserve, or get the partner you're attracted to.

Or, if you've read Ali's work, it could be to build the celebrity, executive, or billionaire friendships that you envision.

Whatever it is for you, the real-world skills that will get you your life's biggest dreams are the advanced social skills that can turn the people behind your goals into friends, allies, and mentors. Knowing how to navigate your relationships with those key people and decision-makers will leverage them into an advantage that helps you achieve your goals.

In today's world, reaching the heights of social success is harder than ever. When was the last time you had a conversation with someone or was in a

negotiation and always knew exactly what to say? Or, when was the last time you got made fun of in front of others and knew exactly how to come out of it on top?

Luckily, this book has been designed to resolve your daily stumbling blocks and elevate you to a new level of social success in a concise and easy-to-read fashion. This book is for you if you feel like you suffer from tricky conversations, assertiveness obstacles, or ineffective persuasion.

As lifetime students of personal and professional development and experts in the art of navigating social relationships, we've read and tested hundreds of the best books, courses, articles, and studies on the subject of advanced social skills. Driven businesspeople, goal-oriented students, and many others who struggle with the higher levels of socialization have already experienced great success by implementing the advice and action steps in this guide.

A student of Lucio's who took the course this book is based on says, "I was expecting good content, but I also thought I was going to read things I already knew. Boy, was I wrong. It's the first time I'm hearing about most of this stuff, even though I bought dozens of other courses and had a mentor for a year."²

Another student of his expressed publicly on ThePowerMoves.com forum, "I'm completely blown away by the material of this course. I have an elite background, first-class education, and yet I didn't have a clue about this stuff. This material is so powerful that I couldn't help but feel angry that I had been kept in the dark."

Bestselling authors who have read my work have also commented on how impactful it was for them. Lise Cartwright, bestselling author of *Side Hustle Blueprint*, says, "I really enjoyed this book, particularly learning more about how the author came to learn how 'power' and the perception of others believing you have power, leads to them valuing you more. The action steps at the end of each chapter help turn this topic into clear actionable tasks, something I enjoyed instead of just passively reading. I'm glad I grabbed this book!"

² You can get more information about the course this book is based on at The Power Moves website: <https://thepowermoves.com/courses/power-university/>

Dillon Barr, bestselling author of *The Happiness Gap*, also said, “What a fun and quick read from someone that has succeeded in the industry. He walks you through people in high power positions having the best success with marketing [themselves] while at the same time talking about how our perceptions dictate our reality. A definite recommendation to anyone looking to build themselves up through the power of networking.”

But don't take their word for it. As you go through this book, you'll see for yourself that its valuable information speaks for itself. If you follow this helpful how-to guide, we promise you'll get three times as much social success than you have right now.

Don't be the person who misses out on opportunities because you lack the advanced social skills needed to master your social life, raise your status, and win more negotiations. Instead, be the kind of person who goes after what they want in life and gets it. Be the kind of person who takes action.

WHO THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR

This book is not for people without a basic, foundational understanding of social skills. The lessons we teach throughout each chapter are advanced and, if you feel unprepared to move beyond the popular advice and literature, then there are other resources out there that would be a better starting point for you. (Basic, foundational social skills include knowing your preferred approach to socializing, moving past small talk, smoothly changing topics, and ending conversations gracefully.)

If, however, you already have a ground level understanding of social skills, then to reach new levels of social success, you only need to keep reading. The advanced social skills and social strategies you're about to learn have been proven to create long, lasting results. Each chapter will give you new insight as you strive to reach your goals.

So, once again, don't be the person who takes too long to apply the resources that can make their life better and suffers costly losses because of it. Take

control of your life right now; make it socially powerful, and enjoy the new life you're creating.

WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW

If you're already at the point of being ready for this book, chances are you're a driven person. That means you're also probably a busy person with lots to do.

We know there's a risk that your interest won't translate to immediate action right now. So, here are two suggestions on what you *can* do right now to make your first breakthrough today.

1. **Grab the free guide to the best social skills books at The Power Moves.**³

It's completely free, and you get twelve recommendations of the best social skills books available as well as full reviews and pros and cons as to why they made the list. You're welcome to share those recommendations with your peers, friends, or team. But, be sure to come back to this book to learn how to get even better after building that base.

All free guides are in the footnotes, so keep an eye on the footnotes if you want additional, free, in-depth training from either Lucio or me.

2. **Read the next two chapters today.**

You've already made it this far into the book—we're nearly through the introduction now. Done is better than perfect, so do your best to schedule out some time to go through the next two chapters today. In those chapters, you'll learn the factors that make the difference between short-term success, long-term success, and failure in your social efforts.

You'll also get specific, practical action steps that mean you'll never again be unsure of the difference between those who make it to the top and those who remain stuck at the bottom.

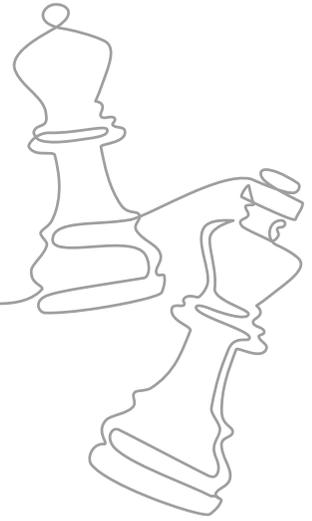
³ You can get a free, in-depth guide to the best social skills books at The Power Moves website: <https://thepowermoves.com/best-social-skills-books/>

We'll be referencing some comprehensive resources throughout the book you can visit and read for free if you're the type of person who wants more.

Social success is yours for the taking. It's up to you to take it. Simply turn the page and go get the success you deserve.

CHAPTER 1

HOW TO GAIN POSITIVE INFLUENCE AND LEVERAGE OVER ANYONE YOU WANT



“Charismatic people are that way not because they have access to a bunch of techniques most of us don’t. But, because they execute many of their social fundamentals a little better than normal... Social skills are skills like any other...in the end, you have to practice to really get things down.”
—Chris MacLeod, *The Social Skills Guidebook*

Lucio agrees. The most charismatic people are not using any special techniques, they’re simply executing the fundamentals better than most.

If at any point in time throughout this book you feel like things are getting “too advanced” for you or that there has to be an easier way, be patient with yourself before you throw in the towel. Social skills are a skill set. There is no magic technique, insider tip, or quick hack to get good at them—especially not if you want to reach the advanced level. Social skills are a skill like any other that take time and practice before you can gain any understanding or mastery in them.

With that said, feel free to go back over any points that you feel you don't quite understand yet as many times as you need. The information you'll discover in this book (including this chapter) is unlike anything the common self-help literature is teaching, and it's certainly not taught in school. So, it's completely OK to take your time learning and understanding the concepts, strategies, and techniques you are going to get from this point forward.

Now, finally, let's start with the very first thing you need to know to develop advanced social skills. The social exchange.

The social exchange is foundational to how the most successful high-achievers of this world navigate their relationships. With this chapter, you'll learn how to navigate your relationships like a high-achiever too.

First, let's start with a definition:

"The social exchange theory is a framework model that looks at social relationships as exchanges among individuals who seek to maximize their selfish interests."⁴

The social exchange theory starts from the proven premise that people prefer relationships that add value to their lives. These are the relationships that advance their interests, make them feel good, and generally make them better off.

HOW THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE HELPS YOU

When you understand the transactional nature of human relationships—the parts of us that are always checking whether or not a relationship helps us or hurts us—it will help you to:

1. Assess people's character.

⁴ Lucio Buffalmano, "How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2)," The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

2. Recognize and choose givers and collaborators who make your life better.
3. Recognize and cut out the “takers” who hamper your progress.
4. Be a better friend or partner.
5. Be a better leader.

To clarify what we mean when we say “value,” here is a quick definition:

“In social exchanges, value is an umbrella term for everything that makes or has the potential to make people better off (when the value is positive).”⁵

“Value” includes both material and emotional benefits.

Emotional benefits include things such as attention, gratitude, appreciation, or a positive energy that uplifts people. It can also be as simple as an honest compliment.

What people want and appreciate is “value-positive” (meaning it adds value to your life), and what they dislike and avoid is “value-taking” (meaning it takes value from your life). People naturally prefer dealing and engaging with value-giving individuals (people who give value or make us generally better off), and we often avoid the value-taking ones (people who take away value or make us worse off).

High-value people are people with an abundance of positive value to give us. Generally speaking, these high-value people are people who provide (or could provide) what others want. For that simple fact, high-value people are highly sought after.

Now, your efforts to develop a relationship with someone is a negotiation. And, you negotiate your relationships both verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, if you want to have the best chances of building solid relationships with others,

⁵ Lucio Buffalmano, “How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2),” The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

you need to care for more than what you say. You also need to make sure you present yourself to others as a high-value individual.

Why? Simple—because people want to be around people who make their lives better.

We'll dive deeper into this in later chapters, but this is the not-so-secret secret to how to master your social life. You can build a social circle of cool friends, allies, and mentors at will when they know you can add value to their lives (make their life better). So, since high-value individuals are people who make (or can make) the lives of others a lot better, who are the low-value people? They're the opposite. They are people who rarely make others better off and who often make others worse off. It's the low-value people who are far more likely to become value-takers, and for this simple reason, they are shunned, avoided, and disliked.

So, your takeaway is this: by providing value and/or becoming a higher-value individual, you become the person everyone wants to be around—so long as you're also smooth and warm toward others (more on that later).

Now, to keep tabs on how much value you're giving, people do something called value accounting.⁶ Think of value accounting as a sort of social book-keeping where people naturally keep track of who is giving and who is taking, including who *could* give and who *could* take.

There is sound evidence that almost everyone keeps a “social accounting tab.”⁷ People do this to make sure they are surrounded by the type of person who makes their life better and not someone who makes their life worse.

When we expect a value-negative transaction from someone (when we expect someone to be value-taking), we avoid them. And when we see the potential

⁶ Lucio Buffalmano, “How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2),” The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

⁷ Lucio Buffalmano, “Evolutionary Psychology (6th Edition): Notes & Review,” The Power Moves, December 16, 2019, <https://thepowermoves.com/evolutionary-psychology-by-david-buss/>.

for a value-positive transaction (which is where someone could be value-giving), we welcome them—and sometimes even chase them. Generally speaking, we are also much more likely to follow the value-givers and be influenced by them.

You might notice that the main takeaway here is to become and act like a value-giver and avoid being (or coming across as) a value-taker. And, that's right. The more you can get others to view you as helpful to their life rather than harmful, the more you can get relationships with those people—including high-value people who could make your life a lot better.

So, acquiring social capital is a great way to make others see you as a helpful giver (which will make them more willing to build a relationship with you).

*"Social capital is a measure of the social credit
(or social debt, in cases of negative social capital)
that you have with other individuals."⁸*

Your social capital is like a bank account. The difference is, instead of financial transactions flowing money in and out, you have “social transactions” flowing gestures of goodwill in and out.

Think of it like a video game. You're playing a game where, in the game, your character is walking by and, suddenly, a random shop owner stops you and asks for your help finding their lost dog. You accept the quest, you go get their lost dog for them, and, as a result, you've helped them. So long as you take credit for finding their dog, they'll give you a reward in the form of a ticket that has “social credit” written on it.

Now, that ticket (social credit) goes into your (social) bank account. And you can cash in that ticket with that shop owner to ask for something from him

⁸ Lucio Buffalmano, “How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2),” The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

and, now, he will be far more likely to give it to you. As an alternative, you can also simply hold onto that ticket for a while, which allows him to remember you positively as the one who helped him with something he needed.

As a matter of fact, many of the happy givers who succeed at life don't go around constantly "calling in their favors." Instead, they keep accumulating credit and goodwill (tickets) from others because they're happy to give value.⁹

The more favors you do for others, the more social credits go into your social bank account and the more you can cash in those social credits for things in return. Or, you can simply keep adding to your social bank account to add to the goodwill, leverage, and influence you have over the people you helped.

That's social capital. Having lots of social capital means people see you as someone who has given them lots of value—someone who has been very helpful to them.

Here's a practical, real-life example that Lucio himself added when first reviewing this book's draft:

When Ali sought to give me value, he took a look at what I might find valuable. Then, he gave me his feedback on how to make the graphic designs of my eBooks and website logos more aesthetically pleasing. He gave a full teardown analysis of the psychology of some of my website's marketing. And, finally, he shared his ideas on a tagline for my business that reflects the themes and beliefs of personal empowerment we encourage over at The Power Moves.

These are all things that I did actually find super helpful (AKA valuable). The more value he gave me that I actually found helpful, the

⁹ It's true that many successful people are happy givers who don't call back favors. However, if success is a higher priority for you than fulfillment and happiness right now, then it pays to be more strategic about giving to the right people—such as high-value people and collaborators—and to ask for at least some of the favors back.

Also, you want to avoid any giving that is based on a lack of strength to say "no." That's weak people-pleasing behavior.

more social credit I gave him in return, which raised his social capital with me further.

Ali could've asked for something back from me, and I would've been far more likely to give it to him than if he had never done those things for me. But, instead, Ali chose to hold onto his social credits and keep his social capital with me high, using it to deepen our friendship as we interacted online.

Fast-forward to today, and here we are co-authoring this book.

One of the things I am happiest about with this book—besides its value to you, dear reader—is that I had the chance to do it specifically with him. That's because I feel close to Ali, because I see Ali as a huge value-giver and “force for good” in the world, and because I finally had the chance to share some more concrete value with him as thanks for all the value he has given me.

And the “agreement” to go ahead with it? A breeze! An idea on the forum first, five texts on WhatsApp to agree on the terms, and done, all because Ali understood the social exchange, adopted a giver mindset, acted as a value-giver, and, as a result, had a ton of positive social capital, trust, and goodwill with me.

Back to us now.

You can also start out a relationship with some social capital even before having helped someone. How is that possible? Well, think about it...if you're a high-value individual, they will already know that you have the potential to give them lots of value and make their life a lot better. In that case, your *potential* to give, on its own, still earns you almost the same (and sometimes even more) goodwill, leverage, and influence over people that you would have by actually giving.

As a result of having lots of social capital (a social bank account well-funded with social credits), people will like you, want something from you, and want to be around you because you lift them up—or *can* lift them up (which would

be like “passive social capital” because it’s based on your potential to give, rather than what you’ve actually, already given).

Now, the opposite side of that is that you can lose social capital by taking from others. That’s not always bad though, because if there’s a fair balance between your give and take, exchanging with someone often can deepen your relationship with them, so long as you’re being fair and respectful throughout each exchange.

The main issue is if you’re *consistently* taking from someone without giving them anything in return. That’s the social equivalent of putting yourself into “overdraft” because you don’t have any social credits to cash in to get what you want. When you haven’t given before and start out a relationship by taking—especially if the person didn’t offer to give something on their own—those people will view you as a value-taker and avoid you. Positioning yourself as a value-giver first is the surest way to gain the negotiating power to build a relationship and get what you want.

Here’s another quick real-life example Lucio shared on ThePowerMoves.com:

On Twitter, a person I’d never met or interacted with before sent me a tweet saying, “Direct message me, I have a question on a recent article you wrote.”

In light of the social exchange, why do you think this was doomed to fail?

It’s because when you ask a question, *you* need an answer, and, on top of that, you are making a demand of someone’s time. That puts you in social debt.

That’s why, ideally, you want to make up for your request and give some value back so you can field your request with a balanced social capital—preferably, a positive one or, at least, one that’s less in “overdraft.” (Later, you’ll see a better way this person could’ve gone about asking for an answer to their question.)

OK, let's do a quick recap. For a successful social life, you need to grow your social capital (social bank account). You do that by giving value to others that they will appreciate and, as a result, give you social credit for (such as by giving others helpful favors). By growing your social capital, you also get goodwill, leverage, and influence over others while increasing your chances of also getting value back.

The only question left now is: what value should you give to someone? What value can you give that they would appreciate enough to give you social credits for in return?

For example, if you had found the shop owner's dog when it was never missing, they would never have given you social credits because the value you gave wasn't helpful. It didn't make their life any better. In other words, your value was "value-neutral." To master your social life with new and deeper relationships, you need to give value that's value-*positive*. Value that others appreciate enough to give you social credit for.

So, to answer the question of "what value to give," first, we need to cover the different currencies in the social exchange. Not all forms of values (currencies) are always accepted, and some currencies are more in-demand and more valuable than others.

"A social currency is a specific form of value that people seek in social exchanges."¹⁰

Value can come in many different forms. The currency is the specific form of value that is being offered or traded—for example, a character trait like kindness or a more material benefit like owning a villa in Tuscany that you can share with others (such as for free food and cultural holidays).

¹⁰ Lucio Buffalmano, "How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2)," The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

Think of currencies as sub-categories of your total value, similar to how different investment classes sum up your total personal financial net worth. At any time, people can exchange different classes of investment. And, similarly, at any time, people can exchange different social currencies.



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As a practical example, you can see in dating that since people can offer and trade value in different currencies, couples can pair up while looking very different to each other—think of a beautiful woman with a less attractive but wealthy, high-status man. Both offer very different currencies to each other (beauty, money, and status), yet they still create a balanced enough value exchange to make the relationship work as a win-win.

SOCIAL CURRENCIES: “SURFACE” CURRENCIES AND “DEEP” CURRENCIES

As we said before, social currencies are specific forms of value that people offer and seek. There are countless currencies that people exchange in the social marketplace.

One of the most helpful ways to develop social strategies is to divide the currencies in terms of “visibility.” We’ll call them “layers.” “External layers”

encompass the highly visible social currencies (the ones on the surface) while “inner layers”—or “deeper layers”—include the lower-visibility currencies.

Your external layers are the qualities that people first notice about you. They include:

- Beauty
- Style
- Physical fitness
- Body language / Nonverbal cues
- Posture
- Grooming

The more you improve each quality, the higher each currency’s value rises. For example, becoming very beautiful, very physically fit, or very stylish raises each currency as well as your “total (social) value.”

The more you can raise the value of each of your social currencies, the higher-value you become from the get-go.

Deeper layer currencies, however, are a bit different because, while they work the same way as external layer currencies in terms of raising your value the more you improve them, they’re not directly visible. To access your deeper layers, people need to get to know you.

Your deeper layer currencies include:

- Humor
- Knowledge
- Connections
- Personality
- Life achievements
- Mastery (of something)
- Future potential (to acquire any of the above)

People need to actually get to know you to discover how funny you are, what life achievements you may have, and what your overall personality is like.

These are not things people can pick up about you and understand simply from looking at you, which is what separates them from the external layers.

Now, get this...your external layers are a “pass-through” to your deeper ones.¹¹ Most people are not interested in your deeper qualities if you don’t reach at least a minimum threshold for your external qualities.

Here’s an example. How willing are you to talk with a smelly homeless person in tattered clothes? That’s an extreme example of someone having not only low-value external social currencies but *negative* ones.

That homeless person might have a lot of wisdom to share, and that wisdom might be a high-value currency to many people. The issue is that the currency of wisdom is a “deeper layer currency,” and deeper layer currencies take time to show. They require someone who’s willing to stick around to access them.

Unfortunately, few people are willing to stick around long enough to access any deeper value from a homeless person. This is because sticking around is value-taking for most people because of the homeless person’s negative external currencies (including smell, social shame for being with a homeless person, perceived risks of erratic behavior, perceived risks of diseases, and so on).

Now, compare that to a person who you know equally as little about but who looks like a model. Who would you rather engage with for a date, a friendship, a chat, or even a business deal?

It’s an easy choice. The latter person takes better care of themselves and, as a result, has higher external value. Those higher-value external qualities also allow them to eventually showcase their deeper layers of value to you. In other words, in life, those external values can help get their foot in the door.

The same applies to you. The better your external qualities, the better your chances will be of showcasing your deeper ones. Plus, simply having a higher external value will brighten everything about you—including your deeper, character-based traits.

¹¹ A few exceptions always apply, but, generally speaking, this is a basic and almost universal social law.

Studies have shown that anyone's external layers can make their deeper layers look better, and, vice-versa, because both layers always influence each other and feed into one another:

- Beautiful people are perceived as smarter.¹²
- People in authority positions are perceived as taller.¹³
- People with great personalities who make us feel good are perceived as being more attractive.¹⁴

Of course, the opposite is also true.

Value-negative appearances will make you come across as a worse person, and value-negative personality traits will make you come across as less physically attractive.

So, the takeaway here is to take care of your looks, because they do matter. Especially, since your looks also influence whether or not people view you as having a good personality.

Now, you might be thinking that, since both the external and deeper layers feed into one another and influence each other, “actually” being high-value (with your deeper layers) is as important as *appearing* high-value (with your external layers).

Well, honestly, that's generally true—and, the other way around is also true. As we saw from the example above, taking care of your personality and character is pointless if they never see it. And yet, at the same time, taking care of your looks alone is also not enough, because the better your deeper layers are, the more value you have to give once people do get to know you.

¹² Satoshi Kanazawa and Jody L Kovar, “Why Beautiful People Are More Intelligent,” *Intelligence* 32, no. 3 (May 2004): pp. 227-243, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2004.03.003>.

¹³ Lucio Buffalmano, “Winning Body Language by Mark Bowden: Summary & Review,” *The Power Moves*, October 18, 2017, <https://thepowermoves.com/winning-body-language-summary/>.

¹⁴ Michelle Tornquist and Dan Chiappe, “Effects of Humor Production, Humor Receptivity, and Physical Attractiveness on Partner Desirability,” *Evolutionary Psychology* 13, no. 4 (October 12, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474704915608744>.

So, the question remaining is, once you've done your best to improve both layers, how can you *advertise* your deeper layers—the value that people can't immediately see? How can you make sure people see your worth as a person and see you as actually being high-value beyond the surface-level value of your looks?

Well, let's start with what *not* to do. For starters, avoid bragging. Bragging doesn't work because anyone can lie, and the bragger, having an obvious interest to inflate their own value, is going to be biased. Plus, it will look like you're trying to gain the approval of others, which is low-value behavior, and it just sounds cheap on top of portraying poor social skills.

Also avoid being too blatant and obvious with your demands for value because it can easily rub people the wrong way. For example, avoid a demanding attitude coupled with saying things like, "I know my worth." It makes you come across as an entitled status inflator because it sub-communicates, "*I* set my value, not *you*. So, regardless of what you think, you have to put in a lot of effort for me because *I* say I'm worth it."

That's a covert power move (more on that later), and it annoys people because it seeks to rob them of their right to do their own evaluations. And it's especially annoying to high-value individuals who tend to be aware of power dynamics and the games many people play (and most high-value people are naturally aware of power moves).¹⁵

If you know your value, great. Just don't say it—*show* it.

So, moving on from what *not* to do and focusing more on what you can do—when it comes to pitching your deeper, not so immediately obvious currencies, it's advanced social skills to the rescue.

¹⁵ Lucio Buffalmano, "Women: Never Say 'I Know My Value.,'" The Power Moves, October 5, 2020, <https://thepowermoves.com/forum/topic/women-never-say-i-know-my-value/#postid-2964>.

DO THIS:

- Talk in a way that *indirectly* shows your deeper qualities (which is an art in itself, we'll see some examples).
- Bait others to ask you the questions—or bait them to compliment you.¹⁶
- Compliment others (which leads them to think you are smart and have great taste).
- Compliment others for the qualities you also have (a shrewd way to make them realize both your qualities and the commonalities between you two).
- Share your achievements not with a focus on the achievements but on the fight to get there.
- Frame whatever could come across as “look how cool I am” as advice or lessons learned¹⁷

On ThePowerMoves.com forum, Lucio shared a popular post for that latter technique. He says:

On one of my travels, I saw a breathtaking view I absolutely loved. I took a picture that I wanted to share on social media, but I knew it could come across as showing off—especially given that social media is fast-becoming a medium where people only compete with one another about who's “higher value.” It's easy for a post of a good time to sub-communicate, “Look how much better I am than you,” even if it's only a picture of a beautiful view.

So, in the caption of the post, I made sure to say, “Do stop here whenever you can...” In doing so, I changed the subcommunication

¹⁶ Lucio Buffalmano, “How to Make Women Compliment You (Dating for Men),” The Power Moves, August 27, 2020, <https://thepowermoves.com/forum/topic/how-to-make-women-compliment-you-dating-for-men/>.

¹⁷ A “frame” is a way of looking at the world, a specific topic, or a social interaction. You'll hear and learn more about frames as you continue reading.

from, “Look how much better I am than you,” to, “Here’s me simply sharing tips on where to visit.”

That caption brought people up to my same level, indirectly saying that they can travel there, too, and appreciate the view and experience as well.

The result? That picture was one of the most popular pictures I ever posted.

Back to us. Now that we’ve covered a basic overview of the social exchange, what it is, and how it works, let’s review some foundational social exchange laws. Though they may sound simple on the surface, take some time to internalize them because they may well contain your keys to success.

SOCIAL EXCHANGE LAWS: THE BASICS

Straight from the social exchange theory, the major laws for social success are:¹⁸

1. To get what you want, give others what they want.

As we said before, asking without giving is the equivalent of a social overdraft.

Your request is likely to be denied for “lack of sufficient social funds.” In other words, you get denied for lack of social capital when you haven’t given anything or if what you’ve given doesn’t make up for what you’re asking for.

So, if you instead give others what they want, you are far more likely to also get what you want (which is a “socially balanced request”).

2. To achieve popularity, influence, and power, give value or develop the ability to give value.

¹⁸ Lucio Buffalmano, “How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2),” The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

People with lots of value to give are walking moneybags. Everybody wants them. Most people are willing to follow them and do as they ask since they know that the high-value person can pay them back (of course, they will rarely rationally think that way, but everyone subconsciously thinks that way).

3. To avoid rejections, isolation, and general life failures, avoid taking value from others and avoid positioning yourself as a taker.

Since nobody wants to transact, befriend, or date value-takers, value-takers struggle to develop and/or maintain relationships.

That's why a positive reputation is so helpful. A good reputation is like a personal recommendation preceding you and saying "this guy is an honest value-giver."

That's also why some psychopath value-takers are constantly on the move—they have to keep escaping the negative social bank account balances they keep creating.

4. To befriend, date, do business with, or generally socially transact with high-value folks as a lower-value individual, find something to give to make up the difference or with which to provide "promissory notes" of future paybacks.

Everyone wants to associate with high-value folks, but high-value folks prefer associating with other high-value folks—or, at least, with people who are willing to make up the difference. That's why the first step to transact with high-value people is to avoid framing yourself as just another taker. They have enough of those vying for their time already.

Next, you must show that you are not simply neutral. You can also *give* something. If you don't have much to give right now, you must give loyalty and gratitude. Gratitude is a promissory note of your willingness to pay them back in the future. (You'll see examples of that soon.)

5. To develop lasting and happy relationships, keep a positive account with everyone (make your relationships win-win).

In a negotiation, things often end one of four ways: in a win-win (where both parties win), a win-lose, (where one party wins and the other loses), a lose-lose (where both parties lose), or a no deal (where no deal happens, oftentimes because neither party could reach an agreement).

Win-win relationships are the gold standard of social exchanges. When everybody wins, everybody walks away happy. The happiest relationships are the ones that tend to last the longest.

Win-lose relationships (where one party is a value-taker, causing the other party to lose) either end soon or turn toxic and must be kept in place with coercion (force) and/or manipulation.

Lose-lose are toxic relationships that don't last. Exceptions always apply—for example, in a toxic relationship where both parties are dependent on one another and make each other worse. But, sticking to the norm here, usually, one major or multiple small lose-lose exchanges in a relationship will lead both parties to part ways, knowing their time and effort is better invested somewhere else (unless, once again, the relationship is kept in place with coercion and/or manipulation).

Value-neutral relationships are the equivalent of “no deal” relationships. They can last, but they don't thrive.

So, when you're negotiating for a relationship, by presenting yourself to others as a value-giver and/or high-value individual, you increase the chances the other person will see a relationship with you as a win-win¹⁹—the best kind of relationship out of the four. That will increase the chances they'll want to build and even deepen a relationship with you.

¹⁹ And of course, make sure they're also collaborators or givers. There are plenty of people who'd be happy to take from you while giving little or nothing back.

On the other side of that, equally as important is for *you* to also be avoiding value-takers. A win-lose relationship wouldn't be good for you either. No one benefits from constantly being drained by a leech.

Now, as you begin working on raising your value (we'll go deeper on how to do that as we move forward), you might be wondering how exactly you can connect to and build relationships with people who are already high-value.

Well, before you can build a real relationship with your target connection, you need to know and understand them first.

Enter the profile of the high-value person.

HIGH-VALUE PEOPLE: PROFILING

*"High-value people are individuals
with an abundance of value."²⁰*

Easy, right? As we said, that "value" can be traits, skills, or possessions that others enjoy or want.

As a rule of thumb, the more you can associate with high-value people, the more successful you will be. But, as we've seen, high-value people prefer associating with other high-value people.

Why? Because they can get back more, of course! The social exchange theory says that people who have a lot to give also demand a lot back in return. So, if you're a high-value person, it doesn't make sense for you to associate with someone who doesn't have anything to give back. That would be the same as purposely adding leeches to your life, and no one wants to do that.

²⁰ Lucio Buffalmano, "How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2)," The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

The law of social exchange is also the reason why people tend to pair up with mates who are similar in socioeconomic background, education, and general physical attractiveness. Most people max out their results when they associate with people who have a similar level of value. That ensures a good exchange, with good relationship stability, while reducing the odds that they end up with a lower-value value-taker.

Keep in mind that high-value people perceive people with little value to offer as a personal risk. Low-value people trying to hobnob with high-value people are under heavy scrutiny as potential leeches of value. They ask and want but give nothing back (much like a value-taker does).

Here's an example of the burden of being high value: Sara is the head recruiter for a major corporation. She's smart, cute, and takes care of herself. She has lots to give, particularly to those looking for employment—or a mate.

Lots of people pleading for her help send her poor CVs that only waste her time. Some of them are “friends,” who are really people looking to take what she can give while giving nothing back. Some of them are even people on their way out of her social circle, trying their luck at getting a new job by begging Sara for help. They'll ask her for a job and put her in the difficult situation of having to reject them. Some colleagues are also out swinging after the value in her attractiveness. At the company's after-hours, there's always “that guy” who gets drunk and sloppily makes a pass at her.

She tries to fight it all, but she's irritated at being a target to so many simply because of her looks.

“God,” says Sara, “Can't these people appreciate me for who I really am?” Sara is complaining that people only see her external currencies. Nobody is interested in her deeper layers.

She particularly feels a pang of resentment when she sees the eyes of people brightening up when she mentions her job in recruitment. She feels they only care about what she can do for them without them giving anything back. Here, Sara is complaining about the lack of reciprocity in the social

exchange. She's surrounded by value-takers. And value-takers can only offer win-lose exchanges.

That's how many high-value people often feel in the presence of value-takers. The value-takers are trying to get something from them without giving anything back.

So, this begs the question: how do you ask for value strategically and lift yourself up when you have nothing concrete to give?

The simplest solution of them all: you give *emotionally*. Make people feel good.

For example, give praise and gratitude.²¹ When well-executed, praise and gratitude do a few great things for you:

- They show you understand social and power dynamics (and that you owe them).
- They make the receiver feel good.
- Gratitude works as a promissory note of future support (for the receiver, it's like making an ally).

This is far better than being the “entitled value-taker” who asks for value, takes that value, and then acts like it was owed to them by never giving anything back. Those entitled value-takers are the types of people who high-value individuals dislike the most.

If you need something from someone, that's OK. However, seek to give something in return that's helpful to the other person. Barring that, seek to give emotionally, at the very least, by making the other party feel good for being so giving and helpful (by giving that praise and gratitude).

This is crucial to understand because this is what keeps many low-value individuals stuck at the bottom. They don't understand that high-value people

²¹ Lucio Buffalmano, “How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2),” The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

don't want to mingle with low-value people who don't make an effort to rebalance the relationship.

Even in simply showing that you are willing to make an effort to make your relationships and exchanges win-win can help you go very far with high-value people.

Now, do you remember the random stranger who tweeted Lucio, “Direct message me, I have a question on a recent article you wrote”? He was in social overdraft because he was looking to take Lucio's time and personalized advice without giving any value back.

So, how could he have offered a better exchange? A compliment, when well-executed, can be an easy first step to help make up the difference. Then, he could have put in a little effort to also show his willingness to give.

For example, he could have said, “Hey man, your article was so insightful! I already shared it with some friends. There is just this one thing I'm not sure about.” Had he done that, Lucio might have actually answered him.

Now, since we're on the topic of low-value people stuck at the bottom, let's discuss the profile of value-takers so you know what behaviors and attitudes to avoid—both in yourself and in others.

VALUE-TAKERS: PROFILING

There are countless ways of being a value-taker. Some of them include:

- **Nasty Social Climbers.** Trying to climb status and power hierarchies is normal, but the value-taking social climbers do so by pushing others down.
- **Complainers.** Complainers are actually not value-taking to other complainers (as the old saying goes, “Misery loves company”), but they *are* value-taking with the driven go-getters of this world.
- **Nervousness and Insecurity.** Emotional states are contagious, so nervous people make for poor social interactions.

- **Party Poopers/Mood Dampeners.** They take value by making people sadder.
- **Braggarts/Status Inflators.** We like people who make us feel important, not those who are out to make themselves feel important.
- **The Socially Oblivious.** These individuals have no idea how social and power dynamics work, whether it's basic or advanced (one example below).

It's dangerous to be any of these types of value-takers with high-value people if you want to go far in life.

Here's how value-takers can reveal themselves as such to others. They'll ask something like, "Hey, can you leave me a good review?"

The high-value person will think, "How about you earn your good review by giving great value? I'm an honest reviewer; don't corner me into this and take my power and freedom away."

Or, as another example, they'll say, "When are you free for a coffee? I'd love to pick your brain on that business I want to start."

The high-value person will think, "If I hear 'pick your brain' one more time, I'm gonna lose it. Why would I want to sit around for a coffee and expend effort to explain things, while you take as much value as you can from me without giving?"

Notice that these are requests for value from people with no social capital. It'd be different if they had a previous history as friends, or if they had just done favors for these high-value people. In that case, their past history would justify their requests (because of favors that earned them social credits in the past that they're now cashing in). What makes the people in each of these examples takers is that they have no social capital. On top of that, they're making no effort to give anything back or communicate that they'd give back in the future.

Just a little fix could make the exchange more balanced and move you closer to getting the "yes" you're looking for. For example, if you're a high-value

individual receiving one of these requests, and I was the guy who wanted to “pick your brain,” instead I could simply invite you to lunch.

Here’s the difference. “I want to pick your brain” communicates, “I want you to give me your time and sit there and answer all of my questions while I give you nothing.”

Lunch is better than coffee, because you usually grab coffee in the morning. Asking to grab coffee communicates, “In the middle of the day, right when you’re probably working, let’s go out and have a casual conversation while I ask you a ton of questions. And, just in case I decide to pay, it’ll be cheap for me (that’s probably what your input is worth, anyway).”

It would be far more effective for me to say, “I want to exchange ideas with you,” because that communicates that you’ll be sharing ideas with me, and I’ll be sharing ideas with you in return as well. You’ll be getting something out of it, which makes it more of a win for you.²² Plus, lunch is more valuable than a cheap coffee. It’s still only a small token given the person is a high-value and financially well-off individual. But, far more than the monetary value of the lunch, it shows that, as the inviter, I understand the importance of making my relationships and exchanges win-win, including my relationship and exchanges with you. So, in going from a cheap coffee to buying you lunch, it shows I’m the type of value-giving individual who respects your time and knowledge.

This is the “What’s In It For Them” (WIIFT) approach to social relationships, and it’s one of the most important mindset shifts in life.

Now, to bring it all back around, the most important takeaway for this chapter is: “The more value you give, the more value you can ask for back.”

²² Lucio notes to be careful with this one. It works if—and only if—you’ve already worked on yourself to a level where you can chip in some good ideas. Otherwise, this can come across as a power move from someone who’s faking being higher value than they really are (which is called a “status inflater”). And it would be an example of manipulative, value-taking behavior because you’re setting up a win-lose exchange by pretending to give.

That value you can ask for back can be anything, so long as it's equal to the value you gave so you're still creating a fair, balanced, win-win exchange. In your negotiations for a relationship, this is the most crucial rule to understand.

As far as what to do from here, your most important real-life applications from the social exchange are to:²³

1. **Focus on what you bring to the table.** Make this your number one rule for social exchanges.
2. **Focus on what *they* bring to the table.** As much as you want to bring value, you also want to associate with other value-givers (and avoid the value-takers).
3. **Ask yourself if the relationship is balanced.** Seek to have balanced relationships, as they are stronger and happier. Imbalanced relationships often hide an element of emotional manipulation.
4. **Cut out the takers.** You no longer have any space for them in your life.
5. **Stick with the value-giving collaborators.** You can recognize good collaborators because they want to give back. One of our Power University²⁴ alumni says that good collaborators feel bad being in debt and seek to give back. They might also refuse a favor if they feel it's "too much."
6. **Maintain the win-win.** Win-win people and partners are social treasures. Tend to these people, and keep these relationships.

To recap fully, here's what we covered in this chapter.

- Everything in life is a negotiation, including your negotiations for a relationship.

²³ Lucio Buffalmano, "How the Social Exchange Theory Can Get You the Network of Your Dreams (Part 1 of 2)," The Clever Connector, January 5, 2022, <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

²⁴ You can get a free preview of the course this book is based on, Power University, at The Power Moves: <https://thepowermoves.com/courses/power-university/lessons/power-university-welcome-lesson/>

- You negotiate relationships with more than your words but how you present yourself to others.
- Present yourself to others as the type of person who makes their life better by presenting yourself as a value-giving individual.
- The more value you give, the more social capital you can build. The more social capital you have with someone, the more influence, goodwill, and leverage you also have with that person. This allows you to ask for something back (if you want to) and they will be far more likely to give it to you.
- To reveal your “harder to see” deeper layer social currencies, you need advanced social skills. With advanced social skills, you can effectively show the value you have to offer and increase the chances that others will want to build a relationship with you.
- To become a higher-value individual, follow the basic laws of the social exchange, the real-life applications from the social exchange, and the action steps that follow.

Keep in mind that if you don't understand everything we just went over right away, that's completely OK! It took both Lucio and me years to learn these advanced social skills—but they are achievable for anyone who is willing to invest the time and effort to develop them. The more time and energy you're willing to invest into practice, the less time it will take for you. And, when you reach that light at the end of the tunnel of this journey, it will all be well worth it in the end.

Now, to make sure you apply the information in this chapter effectively, follow the action steps below. They're practical, well-tested, and geared toward making sure you get as much benefit from this chapter as possible.²⁵

Action Steps:²⁶

²⁵ You can get more information about the social exchange at The Clever Connector website: <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-one/>.

²⁶ You can get a free, in-depth guide to the best strategies, techniques, and mindsets for social exchanges at The Clever Connector website: <https://thecleverconnector.com/social-exchange-theory-part-two/>.

#1. Review your network for who's high value and who's low value.

If you're the highest value person in your network, you're doing it wrong. Generally speaking, look for people who are higher value than you to learn from and grow with, and find a way to give back to them so they'll want to associate with you.

Who can you approach, and what can you give them? Find ways to give them value, write those ways down, and then try delivering that value.

#2. Review your relationships for who's giving and taking.

Stop for a minute to consider how this information applies to your life.

First, think about your relationships that did not go well or about the relationships you wanted but didn't manage to develop. Was there a mismatch in value or a mismatch in giving and taking?

Now, think about your current relationships. Who are the collaborators in your life? Those are your win-win opportunities. Tend to those relationships.

Are there givers in your life? And are you giving enough back? If you don't, they may feel spurned and taken advantage of, and they may pull back. Watch out for that, and consider giving more.

Are there any takers in your life? Can you demand more back, maybe with more assertive communication (which you'll see more of in the next chapter)? If not, can you consider cutting them out of your life?

Write it all down and start balancing or ending your relationships accordingly.

#3. Switch to a "What's In It For Them" (WIIFT) mindset.

The easiest way to increase your social efficacy is to avoid just asking for stuff but to instead approach social exchanges with the mindset of, "What can I do for or offer to others?"

Then, present your offer in a way that appeals to their self-interests.

When you adopt this mindset, you automatically think and talk more persuasively.

It's a foundational, basic mindset. And yet, countless people constantly stumble with it.

Whenever you enter a social exchange, think, “What can I give to make this more of a win for them?” until looking for ways to give value is your habit of thinking.

#4. Start viewing your social exchanges strategically.

For example, this is what Lucio says in one of his lessons in Power University:

Keep some value “undelivered,” and only then make your ask.

The reason is that if you give away all your value at once, then you lose the leverage of being able to give them more value later.

Depending on the situation, this can look like choosing to pay for a service in installments rather than giving the seller all the money they want right away in a one-time payment.

If you empty out your value jar and have nothing left to give, you will lose leverage because people have already gotten everything from you. So, what's their incentive to give back or treat you well?

Sure, some people are honest, and might even appreciate your attitude, but, whenever you're dealing with someone for the first time—and especially if it's a one-off exchange and/or you have no particular reason to trust them yet—it's a better strategy not to give away all of your value at once.

So, instead of giving everything, only give a part of the value you have to offer, use it to showcase the value you can add to them, and then ask for something back.

In the next chapter, we'll be going beyond social exchanges and talk more about a communication skill that ensures your relationships with others are built on a two-way street of fairness and respect—assertiveness. If you ever

wanted to stand up to people who are disrespectful toward you or prevent yourself from being taken advantage of, this next chapter is for you.

More than how you can be more assertive, we'll also go over the mindset you need to surgically remove to optimize your assertiveness, how assertiveness can raise your status by making you look like a high-value individual, and why being strategically aggressive and/or submissive is sometimes better than being consistently assertive.