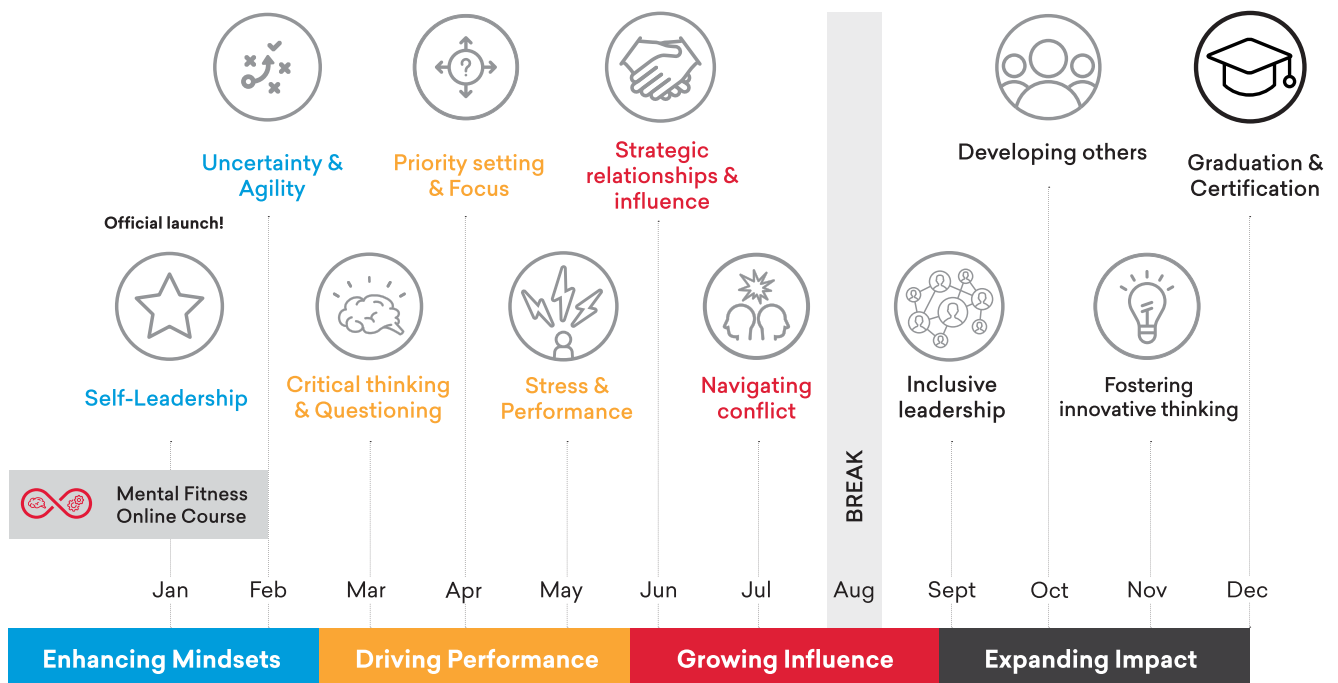


The **EDGE**

Welcome to The EDGE recap for zone 3

Growing Influence

Session 6: Strategic Relationships & Influence



In this module, it all comes down to **communication**. You'll learn how to **build strategic partnerships** on a foundation of trust and dialogue – and then leverage them to **influence decisions and outcomes**. Also covered? How **critical conversations** and **empathetic communication** can help you **navigate conflict**, reach a **constructive resolution**, and – ultimately – come out stronger.

Ready to expand your network and improve the quality of your business relationships? Get ready, get set, and GROW your influence!

Growing Influence



Growing influence

Strategic Relationships and Leveraging Influence

Build your network and influence via strategic partnerships

Navigating Conflict

Lean into conflict through critical conversations

Session 6: Strategic Relationships & Influence

Date: 16th June

Trainer: Andy Lopata

Professional Relationship Strategist Andy Lopata was our guide and guru on this session, where we learnt all about how to build relationships and influence strategically. Spoiler: we found out this is about *others*, not about us!

With a Little Help from My Friends (And Colleagues)

In any role, we rely on people who ‘have our back’ – people who support us in achieving our objectives. Because **we achieve more with the help and the support of other people.**

The purpose of this session? To focus on why it’s so important to have people who have your back. And indeed more than why it’s so important, how you can be strategic in doing so, while remaining authentic in your interactions at the same time.

Q&A Session

We started with a question: Are you proactive about building relationships? Do you approach it from a strategic angle, or is there something stopping you from doing that – either consciously or subconsciously?

How did you respond?

You acknowledged that you could be better at relationship-building, but feel you need to have some value to add rather than take up their time. So you get in your own way.

Others said you enjoy networking. You get energy from connecting with others, but struggle to find the time due to the volume of work demands. Perhaps it's time to reprioritise?

Observation: **Many people struggle to find time to get their work done and also nurture relationships.**

Andy's Response: You have to get your job done. Building relationships isn't about being open to all people all of the time. **It's about finding the right balance.** You can build the relationships, but you can close your door when you need to. **See time as an investment, not a cost – and understand what the ROI is going to be.** If you get the support of your network, it makes it easier to achieve your objectives more quickly and efficiently. **Make friends when you can, not when you need them.** Make it natural to ask for help because it's the continuation of an ongoing conversation.

Andy reminded us of Dale Carnegie's quote that **'The sweetest sound to any man is that of his own name.'** Remember to address people by name!

Curiosity is such an important skill for building relationships. So be curious about other people – not an interrogation, but genuine curiosity.

Then Andy unveiled two terms that are really important to understand:

- 1) **Human capital:** The people you know.
- 2) **Social capital:** The relationships you can leverage.

Both impact the power of your network. Think of yourself as a business. Your capital = your connections. Think of the network you build over the years as your capital and the resources that will help you progress, you need to keep that machine well-oiled.

Does that sound transactional? Remember that relationships are never a quid pro quo where you are using or manipulating people. Just as other people are resources to you, hopefully you can be a resource to them as well – so strive to create a network of mutual support.

Sometimes, people will be there to help you when you need them because you stayed in touch. Other times, you'll be there to help them because you stayed in touch. And other times, you just enjoy the fact that you've maintained these friendships that have made your life richer.

2 ways to stay 'in sight and in mind' with LinkedIn:

- 1) Through YOUR activity. Post regularly, and post in an engaging way. Post to share a pearl of wisdom, not to broadcast 'me me me' from the rooftops.
- 2) Through THEIR activity. If they're active, engage with their posts.

The 10 Minute Challenge: 10 Minutes, 3 People, 3 Posts

Spend 10 minutes every day scrolling through your LinkedIn news feed. Look for 3 different people and engage with 3 different posts each time. When you engage with people, they will notice. Like, comment, or share – the choice is yours. But know that Sharing > Commenting > Liking.

The 15 Minute Virtual Coffee

Is your workplace hybrid or remote? You can still build relationships and network – you'll just need to be a bit more creative with it.

Build a '15-minute virtual coffee' into your schedule every day, and use it to catch up with someone you haven't seen in ages. Small gestures like this can be really helpful in building and maintaining relationships.

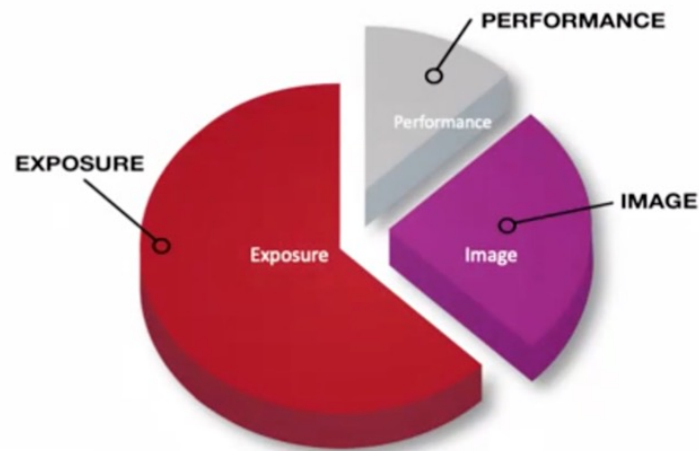
Fun fact: Introverts actually make better networkers and relationship-builders than extroverts. Why? Because introverts tend to listen and not dominate the conversation so much. This is an incredibly powerful skill.

The ROI of Relationship-Building

Think about the time spent on relationship-building as an investment, and understand what the return on investment (ROI) will be. There are many ways that people can help us in whatever we're trying to achieve (personal perspective – support you need to get a promotion.

Professional perspective – winning a new client or account, getting a new idea adopted by your organisation). You need people who have influence. You need people who can open doors for you, make trusted introductions for you. You need intel, insights, etc so that you can position your ideas/pitch in the right way. And you also need people on the ground to have your back.

Performance: Just One Piece of the PIE



Harvey Coleman researched why people got promotions and identified 3 key factors. The result was his **PIE: Performance, Image, Exposure** model.

Most people believe performance is the key component of success - i.e., if I do a good job, I'll be promoted. Coleman disproved this. What other factors determine who gets promoted? On top of performance, image and exposure are what count.

Good performance is imperative. But even if you're the best in the world at your job, without exposure, no one will know it.

10% Performance = what you do

30% Image = what people understand about what you do

60% Exposure = who understands that

Breaking Down Organisational Silos

What motivates colleagues to help each other?



Building Professional Relationships

What motivates colleagues to help each other?

- Personal Gain (WIIFM)
- Instruction
- **Because they like each other**

1. Personal Gain (WIIFM = What's In It for Me?): If people see that there's a benefit to helping you, they'll do what it takes to get that benefit for themselves.

2. Instruction: They're told to help you – they'll do the minimum to tick that box

3. Because they like each other: People will help each other if they like each other

Takeaway: When we're told to help people, we do the minimum. When we benefit from helping people, we'll do a bit more. But when we like someone, we'll go the extra mile to help them. To get people to support you when you're not in the room? They need to like you.

Emphasise: I'm talking about being transactional. How your network can help you and how your network can support you. That may not feel comfortable.

Emotional Bank Accounts: Putting Your Money Where Your Relationships Are?

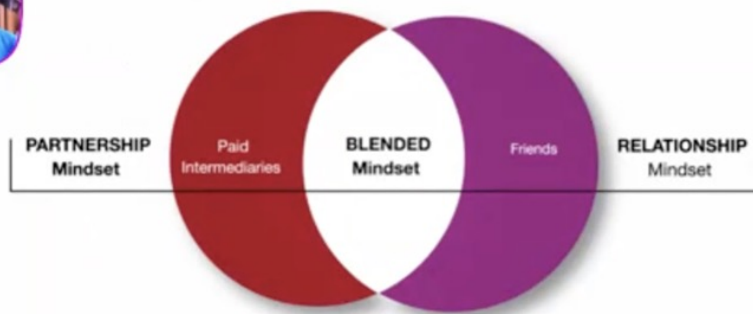
A relationship is like a bank account. You can't withdraw from the bank account if you haven't made any deposits into it in the first place.

Think of your network like a bank account too, and all of the people you bring into that network are your deposits – and you're investing in those relationships over a period of time.

Relationship-Building Mindsets



Building Your Professional Relationships



- 1. Partnership Mindset** - Who do I need to help me, and can I build a relationship with them? You can get too strategic and too transactional – you can get holes in your network. Someone may not be able to immediately help you, but they might know someone who can.
- 2. Relationship Mindset** - Who can I build friendships with? Building relationships because we like people.
- 3. Blended Mindset** - Mixture of both. You don't want to become too strategic and transactional with a 100% partnership mindset, you do want to be strategic with your professional connections (more so than with a relationship mindset).

"You are beginning to behave in a way that is no longer human and people who admire you are starting to regard you as cool, perhaps even cold

You see too many 'important' and not enough 'real' people."

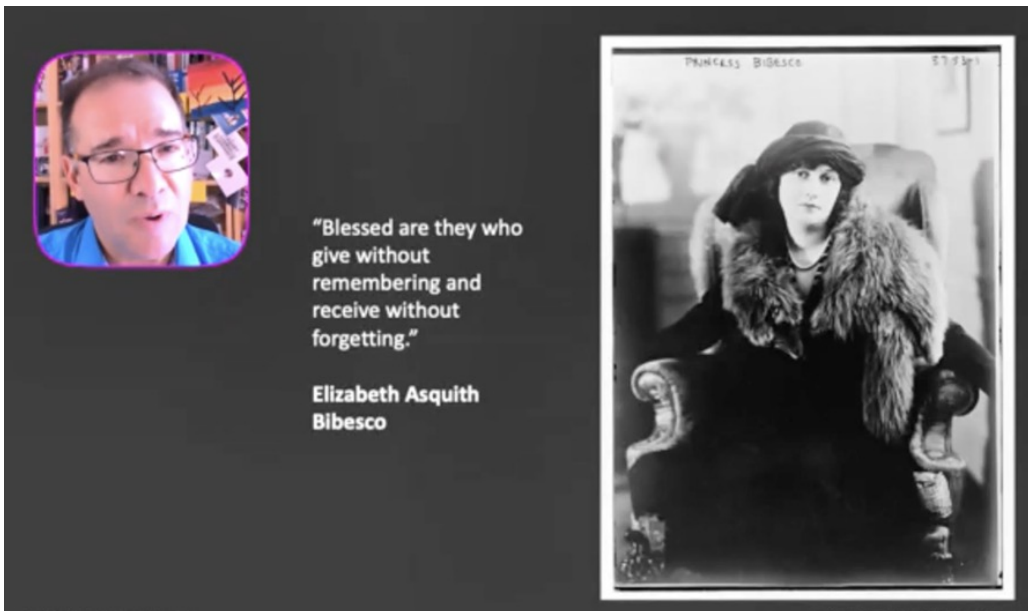
Fritz Kraemer to Henry Kissinger, 1958

This is what we want to avoid. Henry Kissinger became too transactional! Get a balance between the transactional mindset (who do I NEED to meet?) and the relationship mindset (who do I like to meet? Who should I be friends with?).

Make friends when you can, not when you need them. Build relationships and maintain them. Then when you need help, it's there for you.

Don't Keep Tally

'Blessed are they who give without remembering and receive without forgetting.' – Elizabeth Asquith Bibesco



What does this mean? That you can do your homework and be more strategic in understanding who you need to meet. But when you're in front of people, be authentic. Be a human being. Be you.

Understand what you want to achieve, but at the same time, understand what they're looking for. Seek to support and be supported – and don't keep count either way.

The Relationship Matrix

The Relationship Matrix™



		Strenght of Relationship							
		7 Friend	6 Advocate	5 Support	4 Trust	3 Like	2 Know	1 Recognise	0 Don't Know
Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Group 1								
	Stakeholder Group 2								
	Stakeholder Group 3								
	Stakeholder Group 4								
		Influencer	Introducer	Information, insights and ideas	Implementors				

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Step 1: Who Can Impact the Success of your Project?



The Relationship Matrix – Step One

Who Can Impact the Success of your Project?

- What is your objective?
- Who are the key groups who will influence your success?
- Who do you know, or know of, within those groups?



Step 1 is essentially name-gathering. Consider:

- What is your objective? Choose a goal – and be as specific as possible (e.g., instead of ‘be promoted,’ say, ‘be promoted to (insert desired position)’).
- Who are the key groups who will influence your success? This is where stakeholders come into the picture.
- Who do you know, or know of, within those groups?

Breakout groups

Our groups discussed the above question and came back with interesting examples of how they had approached projects and situations.

Response 1:

Our first group found it helpful to view the projects through the lens of different stakeholder groups. Understanding the different teams and relationships among those teams helped facilitate solutions to streamlining the approach to the problem.

Response 2:

The Relationship Matrix helped her understand how to better manage the transition to managing a new area of her organisation.

Step 2: How Can Your Connections Help You?



The Relationship Matrix – Step Two

How Can Your Connections Help You?

- Who has a say on key decisions that impact your objective?
- Who is involved in delivering your ideas and how would they impact them?
- What do you need to know to maximise your chances of success?
- **Who can introduce you to the people you need a direct conversation with?**



Step 2 is about figuring out who among your connections is a decision-maker or implementer and can help you realise your objective?

Breakout groups

Our groups applied the above question to their own experiences and situations.

Response 1:

One participant had the experience of feeling like he was operating in a bubble. This second question offered a way of ‘bursting’ that bubble to harness relationship effects that are strengthened by diversity.

Response 2:

Another participant realised he needed to pay more attention to seniority level on cross-departmental projects – but with an eye to who was less senior, because these people also impact decision-making.

Step 3: How Strong Are Your Key Relationships?



The Relationship Matrix – Step Three

How Strong Are Your Key Relationships?

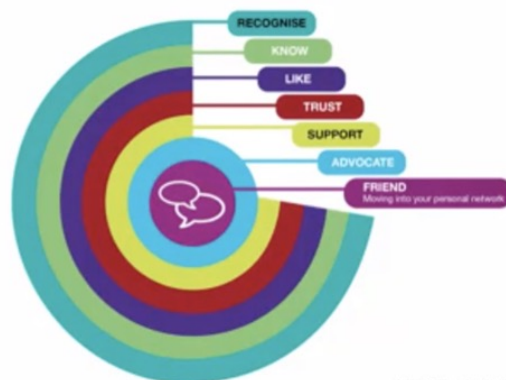


Step 3 is about really investing in the relationships that are truly important. Our relationships are not binary, meaning they are not either all-in or all-out. Andy walked us through what he calls the Seven Stages of Professional Relationships.



Nurturing Professional Relationships

Seven Stages of Professional Relationships



If we can get the people in our network on a path to becoming supporters, advocates, and ultimately, friends, we will have everything we need to be set up for success.

Questions

Andy dove into a few questions about how to nurture relationships in this way.

How to deal with 'difficult' people:

The most effective way to communicate with people who are 'difficult' is to address the elephant in the room!

How to build hard relationships:

Use commonality and vulnerability, take the 'I' test (how often you refer to yourself rather than others in your communication), reach out when you have no agenda (not just when you need someone), exceed expectations, be consistent and frequent in your communication, and play where they play (i.e. on the networks they're most active on).

How to leverage professional relationships:

Learn to ask for help by not worrying about being a burden, looking vulnerable, or assuming people don't want to or are unable to help us (just make it okay for them to say 'no' and accept that no is not a rejection of you).

Also, ask for help when the time is right to do so, make your ask simple and easy to deliver, and show appreciation for their help.

Summary:

Our networks really are our “net worth.” Managing relationships and different types of people is essential to our success in getting projects done and developing our careers as well. We need to treat everyone in our network well and not only look to those at the top of the decision chain to help us accomplish our goals.

- Manage your energy, not your time.
- Relationships are like bank accounts. When was the last time you made a deposit in your most important relationships?
- Performance is just one slice of the promotion pie. A bigger slice is how well-liked you are!
- When it comes to paying into your network, remember the words of Elizabeth Asquith Bibesco: “Blessed are they who give without remembering and receive without forgetting.”
- Someone in our morning session asked: ‘What TV series would you recommend for seeing strategic relationship-building in action?’ Andy’s response: *‘I would suggest political dramas (I’m thinking Borgen and The West Wing more than House of Cards!) often demonstrate both the best and the worst approaches to developing relationships. Short-term collaborations and coalitions (particularly in Borgen) portray many of the qualities of compromise and tough but respectful talk that transactional relationships can rest upon, while many people turn to long-term colleagues and connections to get deals over the line or get the insights they need.’*

Resources

- Reid Hoffmann’s [**The Startup of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career**](#) retrains you to think of yourself as a business – whose **resources make up its value**.
- Harvey Coleman’s [**Empowering Yourself: The Organizational Game Revealed**](#) looks into why people really get promotions. Ever wondered why your career has stalled? This book can **help you get unstuck**.
- You can **get more done** – but not by becoming a **master at time management**.