



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

bestseller

"*Give and Take* is a truly exhilarating book—the rare work that will shatter your assumptions about how the world works."

DANIEL PINK
AUTHOR OF *DRIVE* AND *TO SELL IS HUMAN*

"Because I was reading Adam Grant's book... I became much more self-conscious about trying to connect people... I was surprised by how often it turned out to be useful to both sides."

SUSAN DOMINUS
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Give and Take is about why some people rise to the top of the success ladder while others sink to the bottom. For generations, we've assumed that excellence is achieved by people who are hardworking, talented, and lucky. This three-legged stool explains much of success, but it's missing a fourth leg. In a rapidly changing world, our styles of interacting with other people are increasingly important drivers of success. Combining a decade of cutting-edge research with fascinating stories, the book opens up a fresh way of thinking about success and illuminates new choices people can make to achieve it.

Summary by Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver email: chiefnetweaver@gmail.com

Chapter 1 – Good Returns – *The Dangers and Rewards of Giving More Than You Get*

The chapter begins on a girl's soccer field as two dads – Danny Shader and David Hornik - are watching their daughters play. As they start up a conversation, they learn what each has accomplished – **Danny**, a serial entrepreneur who has bought and sold companies including the last one to Motorola for \$500MM. . .and **David**, an angel investor/VC guy who invests in companies for a living

New-be entrepreneurs with an idea but no track record, are a dime a dozen and most have a difficult time getting investors to be interested, no matter how good the idea might look.

But for guys like Danny, who have a proven track record, and whose new idea – supplying a way for the QUARTER of Americans who have no credit cards or ways to make online purchases, to be able to do so – the investors would be lined up a block long.

Grant explains that one of the techniques that investors use to close deals is first, to try and be first in line, but then to set a 'drop-dead' deadline to try and secure the deal before the other investors can even make their approach.

Contrary to this approach, we learn that David is a contrarian and his approach is totally different: "*Hornik believed entrepreneurs need time to evaluate their options, so as a matter of principle, he refused to present exploding offers.*" David says: "*Take as much time as you need to make the right decision*".

So my expectation was that Adam was giving us a case of "*Good guys don't always finish last*". But the call from Danny to David comes as a bit of a shock: "*I'm sorry, but I'm signing with another investor*".

Turns out that although "*The financial terms of the offer from Hornik and the other investor were virtually identical*". . . "*Shader worried that Hornik would spend more time encouraging him than challenging him. Hornik might not be tough enough to help Shader start a successful business, and the other investor had a reputation for being a brilliant adviser who questioned and pushed entrepreneurs. . . Hornik is so affable that I don't know what he'll be like in the boardroom*".

According to Grant, the crowning blow Danny said: "*My heart said to go with you, but my head said to go with them. I decided to go with my head instead of my heart.*"

So as Adam observed: "*David Hornik learned his lesson the hard way: good guys finish last.*" . . . "**Or do they?**"

Here's a great observation by Adam Grant:

"*According to conventional wisdom, highly successful people have three things in common: **motivation, ability, and opportunity**. If we want to succeed, we need a combination of **hard work, talent, and luck**. The story of Danny Shader and David Hornik highlights a **fourth ingredient**, one that's critical but often neglected: success depends heavily on how we approach our interactions with other people. Every time we interact with another person at work we have a choice to make: do we try to **claim** as much value as we can, or **contribute** value without worrying about what we receive in return.*"

Adam calls this a difference in their "**preferences for reciprocity** – their desired mix of taking and giving":

"*Takers have a distinctive signature: they like to get more than they give. They tilt reciprocity in their own favor, putting their own interests ahead of others' needs. Takers believe that the world is a competitive, dog-eat-dog place. They feel that to succeed, they need to be better than others. To prove their competence, they self-promote and make sure they get plenty of credit for their efforts. Garden-variety takers aren't cruel or cutthroat; they're just cautious and self-protective. **'If I don't look out for myself first, ' takers think, 'no one will.'***"

In contrast, Adam describes Hornik and 'givers' this way:

*"In the workplace, **givers** are a relatively rare breed. They tilt reciprocity in the other direction, preferring to give more than they get. Whereas takers tend to be self-focused, evaluating what other people can offer them, givers are other-focused., paying more attention to what other people need from them. These preferences aren't about money: givers and takers aren't distinguished by how much they donate to charity or the compensation that they command from their employers. Rather givers and takers differ in their attitudes and actions toward other people. If you're a taker, you help others strategically, when the benefits to you outweigh the personal costs. If you're a giver, you might use a different cost-benefit analysis: you help whenever the benefits to others exceed the personal costs."*

Adam also points out that **outside the workplace**, 'giving help' is much more common in such ways as, *"providing mentoring, sharing credit or making connections for others."*

But in the workplace, *"give and take becomes more complicated."* According to Grant:

*"Professionally, few of us act purely like givers or takers, adopting a third style instead. We become **matchers**, striving to preserve an equal balance of giving and getting. Matchers operate on the principle of fairness: when they help others, they protect themselves by seeking reciprocity. If you're a matcher, you believe in tit for tat, and your relationships are governed by even exchanges of favors."*

And although Adam points out, depending upon the circumstances, we tend to act in different roles among the three styles (e.g. more of a taker in a salary negotiation), he maintains that we all have a **"primary reciprocity style"**.

About at this point in the chapter, I was tending to believe that Adam's research was going to show that to be REALLY successful, you need to be a **"matcher"**.

But then I felt even worse because he really starts picking on '**Givers**' and why many of them end up at the bottom of the 'success' ladder:

"In the world of engineering, the least productive and effective engineers are givers. In one study, when more than 160 professional engineers in California rate one another on help given and received, the least successful engineers were those who gave more than they received"... ."Going out of their way to help others prevented them from getting their own work done."

Then he piles on even more:

"The same pattern emerges in medical school. In a study of more than six hundred medical students in Belgium, the students with the lowest grades had unusually high scores on giver statements like "I love to help others" and "I anticipate the needs of others." The givers went out of their way to help their peers study, sharing what they already knew at the expense of filling gaps in their own knowledge, and it gave their peers a leg up at test time."

And how about for salespeople? Adam says:

“In a study I led of salespeople in North Carolina, compared with takers and matchers, givers brought in two and a half times less annual sales revenue. They were so concerned about what was best for their customers that they weren’t willing to sell aggressively.”

So you might imagine that at this point – as Chief NetWeaver – I’m beginning to think I’d better roll up my tent and find something to do other than spreading the word about “**NetWeaving**” – a **Golden Rule** and **Pay it Forward** form of networking – consisting of acting as a ‘**connector**’ of others, and a gratuitous ‘**resource-provider**’ for others – no strings-attached.

But, as Lee Corso, the flamboyant roundtable reporter on **ESPN’s College Football Day** often says, “**Not so Fast!**” (Funny aside but in a later chapter before I got there, I saw that Adam also uses this same thought-reversal line)

Adam Grant:

*“So if **givers** are most likely to land at the bottom of the success ladder, who’s at the top – **takers** or **matchers**?” . . . “**Neither**. When I took another look at the data, I discovered a surprising pattern: It’s the **givers** again.”*

*“As we’ve seen, the engineers with the lowest productivity are mostly givers. But when we look at the engineers with the highest productivity, the evidence shows that they’re givers too”. . . “**The worst performers and the best performers are givers; takers and matchers are more likely to land in the middle.**”*

And back to the beginning and David Hornik. Guess what style he turns out to be? One of those highly successful ‘**givers**’. Danny Shader felt so badly about leaving Hornik out of the deal, he approached him about ‘**investing**’ in the company which he agreed to do. Adam wrote that while attending board meetings, “*Shader was impressed with Hornik’s ability to push him to consider new directions.*” According to Shader, “*I got to see the other side of him. It had just been overshadowed by how affable he is.*” And Hornik is credited with having really helped the startup to take off.

So was this situation an exception for Hornik and these kind of ‘nice guys finish last’ scenarios keep happening to him again and again, putting him at a disadvantage when competing for deals? According to Adam:

*“Hornik estimates that when most venture capitalists offer term sheets to entrepreneurs, they have a signing rate near 50 percent”. . . “Hornik has offered **twenty-eight** term sheets to entrepreneurs, and **twenty-five** have accepted. Shader is one of just three people who have ever turned down an investment from Hornik.”*

So return to Adam’s criteria for success mentioned earlier:

“Hornik’s hard work and talent, not to mention his luck at being on the right sideline at his daughter’s soccer game, played a big part in lining up the deal with Danny Shader. But it was his reciprocity style that ended up winning the day for him”. . . “By operating as a giver,

Hornik created value for himself while maximizing opportunities for value to flow outward for the benefit of others.”

*At this point Adam returns to those unsuccessful engineers and salespeople and as he says, “What separates the champs from the chumps?”. . .”The answer is less about raw talent or aptitude, and more about the **strategies givers** use and the **choices** they make.”*

Adam debunks two myths about ‘givers’ especially the most successful ones: First, “they’re not necessarily nice “ and secondly, “they’re not necessarily altruistic”:

“We have goals for our own individual achievements and it turns out that successful givers are every bit as ambitious as takers and matchers. They simply have a different way of pursuing their goals.”

By now, as Chief NetWeaver, I’m feeling a little better as Adam introduces a third element which is unique about successful ‘givers’:

*“Let me be clear that givers, takers, and matchers all can – and do – achieve success. But there’s something distinctive that happens when givers succeed, it spreads and cascades. When takers win, there’s usually someone else who loses. Research shows that people tend to envy successful takers and look for ways to knock them down a notch. In contrast, when givers like David Hornik win, people are rooting for them and supporting them, rather than gunning for them. **Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them.** You’ll see that the difference lies in how **giver success** creates value instead of just claiming it.*

The next section of Chapter 1 is the story of Sampson and his political rise to success following defeat after defeat after defeat. It turns out that Adam’s Sampson is really “Lincoln’s” story and how as a ‘giver’, he eventually won over some of his staunchest enemies, even going so far to put some of them in his own cabinet.

But there’s also a great lesson here about ‘givers’ needing to be in it for the long-haul: “. . .giver advantage grows over time. In the long run, giving can be every bit as powerful as it is dangerous.” As Chip Conley, the renowned entrepreneur who founded Joie de Vivre Hotels: “Being a giver is not good for a 100-yard dash, but it’s valuable to a marathon.”

Towards the end of the chapter, Adam describes one feature of giving “that’s more timeless when we reflect on our guiding principles in life”. . .that is “many of us are intuitively drawn to giving. Over the past three decades, the esteemed psychologist, Shalom Schwartz has studied the values and guiding principles that matter to people in different cultures around the world.”

When given choices between the importance of these two sets of values, guess which set universally was chosen by the majority of people in every country and culture:

Wealth (money and material possessions), **Power** (dominance, control over others), **Pleasure** (enjoying life), and **Winning** (doing better than others). . .

VS.

Helpfulness (working for the well-being of others), **Responsibility** (being dependable), **Social Justice** (caring for the disadvantaged), **Compassion** (responding to the needs of others).

In 12 countries surveyed in the study and over 70 countries in total, it was reported that “**caring more about giving**’ to be more important than about power, achievement, excitement, freedom, tradition, conformity security, and pleasure”.

Adam says that in the second part of his book, he will shift the focus from the benefits of giving to the costs of giving, and how they can be managed. He will also touch upon how to protect yourself from burnout as a giver, and how to avoid becoming a ‘pushover and doormat”.

Here’s a fitting conclusion to this extraordinary first chapter:

*“By the time you finish reading this book, you may be reconsidering some of your fundamental assumptions about success. **If you’re a self-sacrificing giver**, you’ll find plenty of insights for ascending from the bottom to the top of the success ladder. **If you endorse giver values, but act like a matcher** at work, you may be pleasantly surprised by the wealth of opportunities to express your values and find meaning in helping others without compromising your own success. Instead of aiming to succeed first and give back later, you might decide that giving first is a promising path to succeeding later. **And if you currently lean toward taking**, you may just be tempted to shift in the giver direction, seeking to master the skills of this growing breed of people who achieve success by contributing to others.”*

I have taken more time and space to cover Chapter 1 of Adam’s book than any of the other book summaries I’ve written to date and yet I didn’t cover many of the other great points he makes. You should own this book, if nothing else just to re-read Chapter 1 on multiple occasions.

I’ll be covering the remaining chapters of the book in far less depth than this first one, and as I normally do, I’ll ‘tease’ you with information contained, or a question whose answer appears on a page I will reference, which will hopefully motivate you to purchase the book and stick my summary right inside.

Chapter 2 – The Peacock and the Panda – *How Givers, Takers, and Matchers Build Networks*

*“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism
or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

I think I’ve got Adam’s writing style figured out. Just when you’re sure of the point he’s getting ready to make, he does a “**Columbo**” (remember the detective TV show) and throws you a surprise twist. I love it!

He begins Chapter 2 with an **American Dream** story – Missouri farm boy grows up in home with no indoor plumbing. . .goes to college – graduates Phi Beta Kappa – distinguished and decorated Navy career. . .built company that when he stepped down was worth \$110B (as in billion). . .company recognized as a ‘*Best Place to Work*’. . .**Fortune** – one of “America’s Most Innovative Companies”. . . his family foundation donated over \$2.5MM to over 250 charities and company donated 1% of annual profits to charity.

What a hero – **“Not So Fast!”**

His name – Kenneth Lay – CEO of Enron. After the largest restatement of earnings in U.S. history, the company was left bankrupt and twenty thousand employees jobless - many whose life savings went down the drain along with the company.

And although you can debate how much Ken Lay actually knew about the shenanigans going on financially, Adam says, “. . .*it’s difficult to deny that he was a taker. Although Lay may have looked like a giver to many observers, he was a faker: a taker in disguise. Lay felt entitled to use Enron’s resources for personal gain.*”

So how did he do it? And just as important, how did he get away with it for so long?

According to Grant:

*“He knew somebody. In fact, he knew a whole lot of somebodies. Ken Lay profited greatly from claiming his company’s financial resources as his own, but much of his success in growing that company came the old-fashioned way, **he built a network of influential contacts and leveraged them for his own benefit.**”*

The rest of page 29, Adam goes on to detail how he built and leveraged the web he wove. He quotes Brian Uzzi, a management professor at Northwestern about the three major advantages of a ‘**network**’: **private information. . .diverse skills. . .power.**

“By developing a strong network, people can gain invaluable access to knowledge, expertise, and influence. Extensive research demonstrates that people with rich networks achieve higher performance ratings, get promoted faster, and earn more money.”

Here Adam contrasts why and how ‘takers’ network versus how ‘givers’ and ‘matchers’ network:

“You’ve probably experienced the frustration of dealing with slick schmoozers who are nice to your face when they want a favor, but end up stabbing you in the back – or simply ignoring you – after they get what they want.”

“On the other hand, givers and matchers often see networking as an appealing way to connect with new people and ideas.”

Grant then poses a fascinating question: “*Can people build up networks that have breadth and depth using different reciprocity styles? Or does one style consistently create a richer network?*” And as you might guess, Adam will argue that, “. . .while givers and takers may have equally large networks, givers are able to produce far more lasting value through their networks, and in ways that might not seem obvious.”

So in this chapter Adam will examine how Givers, Takers, and Matchers ‘build’ and ‘manage’ their networks differently. He also provides some ways you can spot each style by ‘clues’ they may leave or ‘lek’ (that’s not a typo).

Much of this chapter features an individual who in 2011, according to Fortune Magazine, was the person who was most connected to America’s most powerful people. According to Adam:

*“The winner had more than 3,000 **LinkedIn** connections, including **Netscape** cofounder, Marc Andressen, **Twitter** cofounder, Evan Williams, **Flickr** cofounder, Caterina Fake, **Facebook** cofounder, Dustin Moskovitz, **Napster** cofounder, Sean Parker, and **Half.com** founder, Josh Kopelman – not to mention the **former chef** of the **Grateful Dead**.”*

And guess what style: a “Giver”. Adam quotes Reid Hoffman, LinkedIn founder: “*It seems counterintuitive, but the more altruistic your attitude, the more benefits you will gain from the relationship. . .If you set out to help others, you will rapidly reinforce your own reputation and expand your universe of possibilities.*”

Adam adds this powerful statement, “*At the heart of my inquiry, though, lies an exploration of how the **motives** with which we approach networking shape the strength and reach of those networks, as well as the way that energy flows through them.*”

And if you ask me, when your motives are un-genuine, there’s a lack of energy flowing that keeps the ripples from expanding.

I’m going to leave you to read the section entitled, “Spotting the Taker in a Giver’s Clothes” - pages 31-38, on your own, along with the ways that Ken Lay showed his true colors in many different ways which would have labeled him – at best – a ‘matcher’ – but more accurately – a master ‘taker’ in disguise.

One thing I will point out that Adam covers in that section is the definition of “lek” or “lekking”.

My wife and I live in Big Canoe – a wonderful mountain community in the N. Georgia Mountains which we share with a variety of wildlife from deer to black bears to snakes, to gaggles of Canada geese, to ‘rafters’ of turkey (bet you didn’t know that one which I found online).

Much like an “**ostentation**” of Peacocks (there’s another one for your next trivia competition), when those male birds *go a courtin*, they strut their stuff in a ‘ritual’ to attract a feathered companion. That’s referred to as “**lekking**”. Adam described it for peacocks like this:

“Each mating season, the males assume their positions and begin parading their plumage. They strut. They spread their feathers. They spin around to flaunt their tails.”

In the next section, “The Transparent Network”, Grant provides an amazing statistic about the growth of the internet, and that of the 7 billion people in the world, by 2012, Facebook’s active users approached a billion meaning more than one out of every 10 people in the world are connected on Facebook.

.Adam points out that in old days prior to this internet explosion, people could easily identify ‘takers’ by reputational evidence, as well as obvious signs of ‘lekking’. So in today’s online universe, Adam says:

“Now it’s much harder for takers to get away with being fakers, fooling people into thinking they’re givers. On the internet, we can now track down reputational information about our contacts by accessing public databases and discovering shared connections. And we no longer need a company’s annual report to catch a taker, because lekking in its many sizes and forms abounds in social network profiles. Tiny cues like words and photos can reveal profound clues about us, and research suggests that ordinary people can identify takers just by looking at their Facebook profiles.”

So now getting back to who is this ‘giver’ who has the greatest number of most influential contacts in the world? Probably some raving extrovert with the true gift of gab. **Not So Fast!!**

Adam: *“In Silicon Valley, a quiet man who looks like a panda bear is taking transparent networks to the next level. His name is **Adam Forrest Rifkin** and he has been called the giant panda of programming. He describes himself as a shy, introverted computer nerd who has two favorite languages: **JavaScript**, the computer programming language, and **Klingon**, the language spoken by the aliens on **Star Trek**”.*

So how has he done this? According to Grant, quoting Rifkin, *“My network developed little by little, in fact a little every day through small gestures and acts of kindness, over the course of many years.. ..with a desire to make better the lives of the people I’m connected to.”*

Rifkin has helped literally dozens if not hundreds of entrepreneurs with everything from advice, to connections, to financial support. Does he do it totally out of altruism? Perhaps, but it might be better said in his words, *“You never know where somebody’s going to end up. It’s not just about building your reputation; it really is about being there for other people.”*

And as Grant adds, *“... takers and matchers also give in the context of networks, but they tend to give **strategically** with an expected personal return that exceeds or equals their contribution. When takers and matchers network, they tend to focus on who can help them in the near future, and this dictates what, where, and how they give.”*

I could spend as much space in this summary on Chapter 2 as I did for Chapter 1 but you can hopefully recognize that you must buy and read this chapter in its entirety. But before moving on, I want to cover two more important points and concepts that I found especially valuable in this chapter.

For those who honestly might consider themselves more of a 'matcher' or at least with some 'matcher' tendencies, Adam Grant points out two downsides to '**giving with strings attached**' or with the expectation of '**reciprocity**'. First:

"When favors come with strings attached or implied, the interaction can leave a bad taste, feeling more like a transaction than part of a meaningful relationship. Do you really care about helping me or are you just trying to create quid pro quo so that you can ask for a favor?"

And secondly:

"It's one to which matchers are especially vulnerable. Matchers tend to build smaller networks than either givers, who seek actively to help a wider range of people, or takers, who often find themselves expanding their networks to compensate for bridges burned in previous transactions."

The other concept which Grant covers is a term called "**Weak Ties**". Adam references a classic study by Stanford sociologist Mark Granovetter who is credited with creating this term. Describing what Granovetter means, Adam says: "*Strong ties are our close friends and colleagues, the people we really trust. Weak ties are our acquaintances, the people we know casually.*"

In the referenced study of people in a job search mode, when the question was asked, "**Where does our help come from?**":

"Nearly 17 percent heard about the job from a strong tie. Their friends and trusted colleagues gave them plenty of leads. But surprisingly, people were significantly more likely to benefit from weak ties. Almost 28 percent heard about the job from a weak tie. Strong ties provide bonds, but weak ties serve as bridges; they provide more efficient access to new information.

But Adam cites a dilemma with 'weak ties' in this situation: "*It's tough to ask weak ties for help. Although they're the faster route to new leads, we don't always feel comfortable reaching out to them.*"

So what's the key? Grant suggests to do what Adam Rifkin does: "*The key is reconnecting, and it's a major reason why givers succeed in the long run.*" But it's not in just 'reconnecting' with them. It's hopefully finding a way that you can be of help to them. If you left a good taste in their mouth, even if you haven't spoken in a long time, that 'good taste' will last. Also as Rifkin says, "*Givers get lucky.*"

And in line with the saying Grant reminds us of, *“What goes around comes around”*.

Grant:

“Just as matchers will sacrifice their own interests to punish takers who act selfishly toward others, they’ll go out of their way to reward givers who act generously toward others. When Adam Rifkin helped people in his network, the matchers felt it was only fair to plot his well-being”.

This discussion of **“Weak Ties”** ‘ties in’ to the final point I’ll cover from this chapter which Grant calls **“Dormant Ties”**. These are the people who you have previously met and perhaps at one time were even very strong ties, but just as your life has changed and moved on, so has theirs, and so you’ve lost touch.

But as Adam points out and other research shows, in the years in which you have been out of touch: *“. . .they had been exposed to new ideas and perspectives.”*

And so what’s the advantage again of being a giver?:

“Dormant ties are the neglected value in our networks, and givers have a distinctive edge over takers and matchers in unlocking this value. For takers, reactivating dormant ties is a challenge. If the dormant ties are fellow takers, they’ll be suspicious and self-protective, withholding novel information. If the dormant ties are matchers, they may be motivated to punish takers.”. . . “If the dormant ties are smart givers, as you’ll see later in this book, they won’t be so willing to help takers. And of course, if a taker’s self-serving actions were what caused a tie to become dormant in the first place, it may be impossible to revive the relationship at all.”

So here’s the bottom line according to Adam Grant:

:

“According to network experts, reconnecting is a totally different experience for givers, especially in a wired world. Givers have a track record of generously sharing their knowledge, teaching us their skills, and helping us find jobs without worrying about what’s in it for them, so we’re glad to help them when they get back in touch with us.”

Immediately following finishing this chapter, I sent out 5 emails to persons with whom I want to ‘reconnect’. And hopefully I’ve done something in the past when we were more closely connected which would help put me more in their ‘giver’ category, which would then make them want to re-connect as well.

Why don’t you do the same?

Here’s a great finishing quote from this chapter:

*“When takers build networks, they try to claim as much value as possible for themselves from a **fixed pie**. When givers like Rifkin build networks, they **expand the pie** so that everyone can get a **larger slice**.”*

So now I will finish the summary with what I consider to be some key points but with more 'teasers' with page references which will encourage you to buy the book for complete explanation of questions I leave unanswered or information I leave semi-completed.

Chapter 3 – The Ripple Effect – *Collaboration and the Dynamics of Giving and Taking Credit*

"It is well to remember that the entire universe, with one trifling exception is composed of others."

John Andrew Holmes, former U.S. representative and senator

Ever heard of George Meyer? Adam says you've probably not, although you are almost certain to be VERY familiar with his work. And in spite of almost getting kicked out of Harvard – twice. . .thinking he had a system figured out to make a career at the dog track, until he ran out of money testing his system. . .and during the last five years of Jerry Garcia's life, attending over 70 different Grateful Dead concerts, Adam Grant illustrates in this chapter how George became a true success where it really counts. He is a 'giver', but even more so, he's a 'giver' who consistently gave credit to others for work which in many cases, was largely his own.

On pages 61 and 62, learn how George overcame a coup to remove him as President of the "Harvard Lampon", and ended up befriendng the leader of the attempted coup.

On pages 62 - 64, how he earned the title of the "funniest man in America" which led to his selection to help create, "**Late Night with Letterman**" and "**The Simpsons**" and in the process winning **7 Emmy's**.

And in the section entitled "**Collaboration and Creative Character**" (pages 62 – 67), which category do you think most 'genius' and 'creative' architects would fall into: "givers". . ."matchers". . .or "takers"?

HINT: In a 1958 historic study of architects which Adam references, where **art**, **science**, and **business**, all are critical success elements, it was the '**takers**' who were considered to be the most creative.

But in the next section, "**Flying Solo**" (pages 67–72), Adam not only shows us how this creative independence is often earned at a high price. He cites two historic examples of famous '**creatives**' – chronicling the architect, **Frank Lloyd Wright**, and the medical researcher largely credited with discovery of the Polio vaccine, **Jonas Salk**, who were both '**takers**' whose self-centered prideful styles burned the bridges of peer support within their respective fields.

But how about George? Adam shows that 'givers' can be just as creative as 'takers' and do so in ways that enlist the talents of others.

I'll end this chapter with one of my favorite parts from Adam, contrasting Frank Lloyd Wright's '**self-centered**' style with George's collaborative and '**sharing-credit**' style:

“He [Frank Lloyd Wright] threatened apprentices that if they didn’t credit him first and submit all documents for his approval, he would accuse them of forgery and take them to court.”

*“Meyer’s reluctance to take credit might have cost him some fame in the short run, but he wasn’t worried about it. He earned credit as an executive producer, landing a half dozen Emmys for his work on *The Simpsons*, and felt there was plenty of credit to go around.”*

Here’s the line I like so much. *“The thing about credit is that it’s not zero-sum. There’s room for everybody, and **you’ll shine if other people are shining.**”*

And in line with the title of the chapter, Adam says:

*“George Meyer’s success had the opposite effect on his collaborators: **it rippled, cascaded, and spread to the people around him.** Meyer’s colleagues call him a genius, but it’s striking that he has also been a **genius maker.** By helping his fellow writers on **The Simpsons**, George Meyer had made them more effective at their jobs, multiplying their collective effectiveness. **‘He made me a better writer, inspiring me to think outside the box’**, Don Payne comments. Meyer’s willingness to volunteer for unpopular tasks, help other people improve their jokes, and work long hours to achieve high collective standards rubbed off on his colleagues.. **‘He makes everyone try harder.’** Jon Vitti told a **‘Harvard Crimson’** reporter, who exclaimed that **‘Meyer’s presence spurs other Simpsons writers to be funnier’**, extolling Meyer’s gift for **‘inspiring greatness in those around.’** “*

Chapter 4 – Finding the Diamond in the Rough – The Fact and Fiction of Recognizing Potential

“When we treat man as he is, we make him worse than he is; when we treat him as if he already were what he potentially could be, we make him what he should be.”

Attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the German writer, physicist, biologist, and artist

Adam covers four areas in this chapter: 1) Tracing the techniques C. J. Skender uses in his classes; 2) How talent scouts identify world-class athletes; 3) Why people end up over-investing in low-potential candidates; 4) What top musicians say about their first teachers.

So who is the famous accounting professor, C.J. Skender? and why is he so good and so much in demand that Duke and the University of North Carolina put their rivalry aside and allow him to simultaneously teach at both schools, as well as some at N.C. State? To paraphrase some of Adam’s short description and some made by his students: *“He’s a fat old white-haired guy who aspired to be disc jockey, musician, actor, talk show host, and stand-up comedian whose compulsive nature allows him to know the words of an astounding number of songs; quotes Usher and Cee Lo Green and plays four songs at the start of each class; tosses candy bars to the first students who shout out correct answers.”*

Adam will also introduce you to Stu Inman who has the dubious distinction as an NBA scout, of having made the two biggest draft mistakes in NBA history. How could this ‘giver’ who passed up chances to draft Bob McAdoo, Julius Erving (Dr. J), and Michael Jordan, be revered as one of the best ever at spotting ‘*diamonds in the rough*’?

So you'll definitely want to read pages 94-125 to see the answers to the questions above and where you'll learn why 'givers' DO make better talent scouts and why 'takers' stick with bad decisions longer than 'givers'. You'll learn the importance of **'grit'** and why it often outweighs talent.

Chapter 5 – The Power of Powerless Communication – *How to Be Modest and Influence People*

"Speak softly, but carry a big stick."

Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. President

If you are speaker, presenter, or if you are in sales or are often mediating disputes or negotiating deals, this chapter will be especially valuable to you. Or if you're like me who sometimes finds himself 'talking a little too much', this chapter will help you understand why listening more and talking less, will help you discover the power of **'powerless communication'** (pages 126-154).

You'll learn the power of admitting or demonstrating **'vulnerability'** and why it only works when competence is also evident or has been established.

Adam will also show you why the most successful sales people are not the obnoxious, hard-charging, stuff-it-down your throat, know-it-all's (i.e. takers in most cases), but they're 'givers' who are competent but don't strut it; often quiet and unassuming; not worried about saying they need to check something out and ask for advice. Also why *genuine* 'asking for advice' can be one of the most powerful forms of 'powerless communication' and the benefits of doing so, especially in a negotiating situation.

Chapter 6 – The Art of Motivation Maintenance – *Why Some Givers burn Out but Others Are On Fire*

"The intelligent altruists, though less altruistic than the unintelligent altruists, will be fitter than both unintelligent altruists and selfish individuals."

Herbert Simon, Nobel Prize winner in economics

According to Adam, the next 3 chapters are going to be dedicated to the critical question: **"What separates the 'successful givers' from the 'failed givers'?"** Being more specific, and referring to strategies that *'catapult the successful givers to the top'*, here are questions that will be answered: 1) *"Why do some givers burn out while others are on fire?"*; 2) *"How givers avoid being exploited by takers?"* 3) *"What individuals, groups and organizations can do to protect givers and spread their success?"*

The answer to the first question concerning 'givers' who 'sink to the bottom, and who burn out, is one that I recognized immediately from my "NetWeaving" experiences. There are limits to everything you've read about up to this point even though Grant doesn't suggest any

formula for establishing exactly *how much time spent giving is too much*. But, according to research and particularly one Canadian study that Adam references on page 156, which compared ‘**motivation**’ among participants in a study according to whether they were motivated by “**self-interest**” vs. “**other-interest**” there were some surprising results. **Not surprisingly**, the goals that a selected group of ‘givers’ listed, mentioned *giving* and *helping others* twice as often as the randomly chosen group.

And yet the real surprise was that the ‘givers’ also scored higher on ‘self-interest’.

Grant:

*“The Caring Canadians had roughly 20 percent more objectives related to gaining influence, earning recognition, and attaining individual excellence. The successful givers weren’t just more other-oriented than their peers; **they were also more self-interested. Successful givers, it turns out, are just as ambitious as takers and matchers.**” . . .*

“These results have fascinating implications for our understanding of why some givers succeed but others fail. Up until this point, we’ve looked at reciprocity styles on a continuum from taking to giving; is your primary concern for your own interests or others’ interests. Now I want to complicate that understanding by looking at the interplay of self-interest and other-interest. Takers score high in self-interest and low in other interest; they aim to maximize their own success without much concern for other people. By contrast, givers always score high on other-interest, but they vary in self-interest. There are two types of givers, and they have dramatically different success rates.”

Grant continues, *“Selfless givers are people with high other-interest and low self-interest. They give their time and energy without regard for their own needs, and they pay a price for it.”*

Selfless giving is a form of pathological altruism which is defined by research Barbara Oakley as *“an unhealthy focus on others to the detriment of one’s own needs,”*.

Here’s a great quote from Adam by Bill Gates made at the World Economic Forum: *“there are two great forces of human nature: self-interest and caring for others,” and people are most successful when they are driven by a ‘**hybrid engine**’ of the two. If takers are selfish and failed givers are selfless, successful givers are **otherish**; they care about benefiting others, but they also have ambitious goals for advancing their own interests”*

Also here I can’t resist dropping in a term I’ve used in my talks and writings on “NetWeaving”. I have long said that most genuine “NetWeavers” **do not act out ‘pure altruism’**. They act out of ‘**enlightened self-interest**’. In other words, their motivation is to help other people, but if you totally buy into the genuine belief in the universality of the saying: ‘**what goes around does come back around**’, then NetWeavers have the confidence to believe that somewhere down the road, their benevolence will come back around to benefit them.

But as mentioned before, sometimes ‘giving’ without positive results causes **burnout** and on pages 158-161, Adam reports such a story in the education field. But Adam’s point is that even when the

vast majority of 'givers' who overwork themselves for the cause without results – burnout – there are some who 'catch fire'.

According to Adam, the differentiator is the **'feedback'** which 'givers' receive from their generosity. And in one story on pages 163-164, he reported that one single letter from a student who had been helped, totally re-energized a 'giver group'. This example showed some results from 'callers hired to raise funds for the school', where interacting with one scholarship recipient, motivated 23 phone reps to raise an extra \$38,451 for the university in a single week. That reinforces the power of 'feedback' of the benefits from giving:

Grant:

*"The turnaround highlights a remarkable principle of **giver burnout**; it has less to do with the amount of giving and more with the **amount of feedback** about the **impact of that giving**."*

At this point, Adam introduces two terms I love: Are you a **'chunker'** . . . or a **'sprinkler'**?

Adam maintains that "*chunking giving*" is an **'otherish'** strategy. Go to pages 169-178 to learn why this - along with other personal activities - can reduce 'stress' that will reduce **'burnout'** to 'givers'.

In the last section of this chapter, "***The Myth of Giver Burnout***" (pages 178 -185) Adam reinforces the idea that an **'otherish'** strategy helps provide a vaccine against burnout by providing positive results – internal and external – some that make a positive difference in the world, but others that DO come back around to benefit you personally.

Chapter 7 – Chump Change – Overcoming the Doormat Effect

"No good deed goes unpunished."

Attributed to Clare Boothe Luce, editor, playwright, and US. Congresswoman

Adam's advice, based again on great research, the best way to avoid becoming a 'giver Doormat' is to take an 'otherish' approach which overcomes the reasons why too many 'selfless givers' fail. As Adam says the Achilles heels include: "*being too trusting; too empathetic, and too timid*".

Here's what Adam suggests and how an **"otherish"** approach can prevent this from happening: ". . .**becoming highly flexible and adaptable in their reciprocity styles**".

The balance of the chapter 159-215 covers other ways to be 'otherish' as well as a number great ways for 'givers' to avoid becoming the proverbial 'doormat'. One I especially like is that instead of being the sole source for mentoring within a company, invite junior managers to a lunch along with you and the mentee, in order to set the stage for persons other than you to share the mentoring.

Chapter 8 – The Scrooge Shift – *Why a Soccer Team, A Fingerprint, and a Name Can tilt Us in the Other Direction*

“How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, although he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.

Adam Smith – Father of Economics

In this Chapter, Adam explores questions like, “Is the reason behind ‘selfless’ giving , genuine empathy for someone needing help? Is it because we feel so good when we do it? Is it truly part of our human nature? Are we in a way, really ‘helping ourselves?’

He also looks at how ‘scrooges’ (‘takers’) are sometimes converted and become selfless givers. Are they embarrassed into doing it? Learn on page 245 why Adam says, “It doesn’t matter what their motives are.”

As usual, Adam has great research to back up the various answers to great questions.

If you’re inside a company, you should take special notice of the power of “Reciprocity Rings” (pages 239-245) and how it help create a collaborative atmosphere even in an environment with a mix of givers, matchers, and takers.

Chapter 9 – Out of the Shadows

“Some people, when they do someone a favor, are always looking for a chance to call it in. And some aren’t, but they’re still aware of it – still regard it as a debt. But others don’t even do that. They’re like a vine that produces grapes without looking for anything in return. . .after helping. . .they just go on to something else. . .We should be like that.”

Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor

In this final chapter, Adam explores the ‘**journey**’ of Derek – not his real name – from being voted the “Most Ruthless” negotiator – to someone who had ‘givers’ values as a foundation. When he finally woke up to his label as a ‘taker’, he decided to “*take a step backward to express core values that he had embraced for years away from the bargaining table.*”

. Whether you think you trend more as a ‘taker’ or ‘matcher’. or a ‘selfless giver’, if you want to move toward becoming more ‘otherish’, I hope you can recognize how this book can provide you with a roadmap for getting there.

Why not move from being a ‘taker’ to at least becoming more a ‘matcher’, or maybe even a total transformation to becoming a ‘successful giver’. It’s a wonderful way to live your life.

And don't believe that it can't be done. I've been amazed at some transitions I've seen. And if it's any reinforcement of that possibility, I paint myself as a TOTAL 'taker' in my high school years – 'low self-esteem' and constantly striving to be included in the 'in-group'. . .without much success.

Then in my first management position, I was a 'pathological giver' spending more of my time trying to help persons who reported to me with marital and personal issues, than trying to help them be more successful in selling – which I wasn't very good at to begin with.

Then, in a more senior position, I was a poor 'manager' – too upwardly mobile focused – without looking for ways to grow those under me as my primary focus. Luckily they were talented enough on their own that they succeeded anyway.

I'm not saying I've completely succeeded in the transformation, but it has been through self-evaluation, input from others, speeches and books – particularly like Adam's - that have helped me understand that your life is truly a **journey**. And there are a constant number of '**crossroads**' you will face – some that you recognize, but most which are just '**road signs**' which can direct you in one direction or the other.

This book should become your 'instruction manual' for hopefully choosing not only the right '**direction**'. . .but 'eventually the right '**journey**' to take.