



“Talk to Strangers”

How Everyday Random Encounters
Can Expand Your Business, Career, Income,
and Life

David Topus
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Introduction

Take this little One Question quiz:

Which statement is most applicable to your typical behavior:

If you are in a long line of almost any kind, with someone in front of you and with someone behind you, which answer most clearly represents what you would do:

- 1) Definitely strike up a conversation with **both** the person in front of you and probably the person behind you as well and continue that conversation until you both (all 3 of you) reached the end of the line - the purpose for which you were standing in line in the first place?
- 2) Strike up a conversation with the person in front **or** in back of you, turning it into an extended conversation that would last until you both reached the end of the line that is the purpose for which you were standing in line in the first place?
- 3) Watch the TV screen positioned up high on a wall showing a program of some kind intended to entertain you while you are waiting in line?
- 4) Catch up on emails, facebook, twitter, google, etc. via your cell phone?

If your answer was either number 3 or 4, our author, **David Topus**, would suggest that you are passing up tremendous opportunities to “**enhance your business, career, and personal life**”.

But does David do this because it’s just his nature? Partly that’s true, but what he has discovered, which you can also find from reading this summary and getting his book, there’s a more important reason:

"I do this because it transforms my everyday world into one big untapped opportunity to expand and enrich virtually every aspect of my life, while simultaneously providing value to those I meet in return. . . . I realized over these years that just by sparking a conversation with someone, I would learn all kinds of things about the person – and concurrently discover ways that I could be of service. I found that the more I made myself available to people, the more opportunities came my way."

Now you might not want to carry it to the extreme that David does, and to support that, here's one way he achieved his Andy Warhol's "**15 minutes of Fame**". He became famous when **Joe Sharkey**, the business travel columnist for the *New York Times* wrote about the unusual way David generates business. He gets on airplanes and flies around the country, and sometimes around the world, for no particular reason other than with the expectation that he will be meeting interesting and successful people - some who eventually will turn out to be consulting and/or training prospects and clients:

"There was nothing waiting for me any of these places; all the action was in the airport, on the plane, on the train in the taxi, and in the hotel lobby."

Furthermore, David says this about making a habit of 'talking to strangers':

"It's closely connected to the broader issue of personal branding or self-marketing, where you take control of your success by managing who you know and who knows you – except in this case, you will be going beyond your typical and somewhat predictable networking venue. You will discover how you can easily and naturally connect with the people with whom you come in contact throughout your daily life."

And one final important thing you'll discover by reading this summary as well as buying his book:

*"Whether you're a salesperson, job candidate, small-business owner, independent consultant, recent college grad, or new to your community, you'll doubtlessly find that the more widely you reach out to people, the more likely you will be to discover new possibilities. In fact, expanding your network of contacts is one of the few activities you can control to put the odds of success in your favor. And the best part? **These leads don't cost you anything**, and they're open to you every day. You just have to know how to recognize, cultivate, and optimize them."*

So now that we have your attention, let's explore some of the insights David has gained over the years, and that he's willing to share, about how to maximize the opportunities that will be opened up by '**talking to strangers**'. One of the things you will really like when you buy his book is that all the chapters are VERY short. That makes it what I call a great 'bathroom' book meaning that it can be picked up, and a chapter or two can be easily read, in just a short period of time.

The book contains 29 chapters divided into 3 sections. Then at the end of the book are two additional sections: **Section IV** – "*Gender-Neutral Random Connecting*" and **Section V** – "*Mastery Insights*" and the "*Talk to Strangers Mastery Program*". Both of these sections really help summarize and focus on the key strategies and techniques to implement a "talk to strangers" lifestyle that anyone can adopt. Another thing I love about the book is that David 'bullet-points' a summary of the key points at the end of every chapter making a quick review from time to time very easy and fast

SECTION I – Creating Your Future Through the People You Haven’t Even Met. . .Yet

These first 10 chapters cover WHY ‘talking with strangers’ works regardless of who you are. Anyone can learn to do it so long as you have the right attitude and if you are willing to step outside your own comfort zone.

And as David says, “*You never know who is at the table across the room from you, standing in the line behind you, or sitting in the seat next to you. . . Sometimes the most valuable encounters occur in the most unlikely unexpected places. You can’t predict them. But you can create them. You just don’t know what’s possible; that is, you don’t know until you ask.*”

Chapter 1 – The Untapped Potential in Your Everyday Encounters

Do you want more business? Do you want to meet more interesting and successful people? Do you want to create new friendships and business relationships? Do you want to learn more about industries which you currently know very little? Do want to continue to grow and expand your information knowledge base? Are you looking to land a job or to change your career?

If your answer to any or all of the above questions was in the affirmative, your road map for achieving any, or all of these, is contained in this book.

As the author points out with examples and case studies throughout his book, “***The people you meet in random encounters represent endless possibilities.***”

Chapter 2 – New Faces in New Places

As David has learned from experience, “*Keep in mind that although you can meet someone new everywhere you go, some places are more conducive than others for striking up relationships.*”

On pages 11-14 of the book, he presents a great chart that breaks out “The Pluses and Minuses of Various Random Connecting Venues”. He then offers the “pros and cons”, “the likelihood of finding qualified leads”, “the availability factor – how available people are to connect”, “the skill level required”, and the “Best Meeting Place(s)”.

Here are two examples from the chart with one of them requiring a “low skill level” to make a connection, and a second one requiring a much “higher skill level”:

Venue	Pros	Cons	Likelihood of Finding Qualified Leads	Availability Factor (how available people are to connect)	Skill Level Required	Best Meeting Place(s)
Coffee Shops	Wide cross Section of People; many Professional-minded	Many unemployed or trying to sell something	Medium	High	Low	In line; seating area

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Likelihood of Finding Qualified Leads</u>	<u>Availability Factor (how available people are to connect)</u>	<u>Skill Level Required</u>	<u>Best Meeting Place(s)</u>
Office building Elevators	Contained environment; business-oriented	Limited time, depending on floor on which people enter/ depart; works best if you and one other person are present	Medium to high	Low	Very High	Anywhere between lobby and top floor

Chapter 3 – Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

Staying only in our own world is safe, non-threatening, and as creatures of habit, that’s what most of us choose to do. But as Topus says: *“Successful networkers constantly step out of their venue comfort zones, even – maybe **especially** – when it doesn’t come naturally.”*

One of the ways that NetWeaving (i.e. being connector OF others and gratuitous resource FOR others) can help those who may be more introverted is that when your focus is on helping someone else, rather than yourself, it gives you the courage to be more outgoing and extraverted.

And David reminds us of the line from the great poem by Robert Frost – **“The Road Not Taken”**:

*Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Chapter 4 – Schmooze or Lose

Some people believe, as Topus starts out:

*“. . .that success in life is about focus, discipline, and goal attainment. Although these formulas are valid to a degree, there is an overarching ingredient that trumps all others; it’s called **people**. If you want to be successful in business or in life, you have to be successful with people . . . You have to be able to connect with people from different walks of life, and with all kinds of personalities and communication styles. You have to know how to build relationships. You must share a little bit of yourself in exchange for others sharing a little bit of themselves. This builds relationship equity – trust, mutual respect, likability. And it created access to unlimited opportunity.”*

Another very important point the author makes is that your opening sentence or question in starting a conversation *“. . . doesn’t have to be declaration of deep and lasting consequence; it be a comment about what’s happening around you , a question, or even a statement that welcomes a response.”*

It can be as simple as something about what the person is wearing (e.g. “**Love your shirt. Love your shoes**”) or a question about how well they like the ‘cell phone’ they’re using:

*“Then it’s simply a matter of listening, watching, asking, responding, sharing, nodding, expounding, laughing, and talking – in a word, **schmoozing**.”*

Chapter 5 – The Limits of Online Connections

To give a good example of how Topus provides a “**Chapter at a Glance**” at the end of each chapter, below are the bullet points he makes at the end of this one. I have found this very valuable in reinforcing the key points he makes and they will make it very easy for you to pick up the book later and re-review his nuggets of wisdom:

Chapter at a Glance

- *The internet has redefined the concepts of connection and friend.*
- *Online personas are easy to fake.*
- *Online connections don’t necessarily translate into productive or profitable relationships.*
- *Shaking a hand and looking someone in the eye is one of the highest quality forms of communication.*

Chapter 6 – When Traditional Networking is *Not* Working

David provides some ‘**facts of networking life**’ that many people who attend networking meetings of all kinds don’t necessarily understand or want to admit:

*“. . .while community and industry gatherings can attract a lot of people, they don’t necessarily attract the right people, that is, the ones who’ll do you the most good. Buyers, or those in positions of influence don’t always attend. In fact they occasionally make a point of **purposely** staying away. Networking events attract **sellers**, and there is only one thing worse than a room full of sellers with no buyers, and that’s a room full of sellers with only a handful of buyers.”*

That’s why he explains that meeting people, “*in coffee shops, at restaurants, in bars, at airports, on airplanes, at sporting events, and at social gatherings represent even more potential, because you are more than likely meeting them when they are most relaxed, accessible, and most available – in short, when they are most themselves.*”

One exception to the author’s point about key people not being there, are conventions and industry conferences. And he also is careful to point out that “*there is value in getting to know your fellow sellers. You can share company names, discuss insights on marketplace activity, exchange business cards, and talk about each other’s work. And even sellers are sometimes buyers.*”

Nevertheless his point is clear and it’s why you won’t typically find ‘**qualified leads**’ at networking events. “*. . .people in positions of influence tend to stay away from places where they are going to be captured, bound, and pitched. People with money, influence, access, and power know that they’re targets for those who want some or all of those things.*”

That conclusion should be enough for anyone in sales, marketing, consulting, coaching, or just who is trying to locate persons in need of their products or services. That’s why learning where to ‘approach’ and ‘talk to strangers’ is a key to connecting with the right kinds of prospects.

Chapter 7 – Face It: Nothing Beats the Chemistry of In-Person Communication

So if you're a Boomer and you're thinking that these Millennials are going to take over the world by converting all forms of conversation and communications to the digital form – whether that be text, emails, webinars, and Skype, think again.

As David points out:

“We’ve all had the experience of communicating with someone via e-mail, text, or phone, sometimes even over an extended period of time, where we create a visual picture of the person and their personality. Sometimes we even have a picture of them. We might think we really know them. Then we meet in person, and WOW – we get a whole new perspective when we’re finally in their physical presence. . . . Just seeing the person is not enough, as anyone who has video-conferenced or used Skype can attest. Admittedly, seeing someone via video is better than only hearing the person’s voice, and generally better than interacting in writing. However, if you’ve ever met someone in person after having a video or Skype exchange, you realize the power of in-person chemistry.”

Think of the differences the author points out when you're there in person:

“You can witness the other person’s body language and reactions to what you say. You can discern subtle changes in skin tone and breathing patterns, as only in face-to-face communication can. You can more easily discern the impact that your communication is having when the party’s eyes dart away based on something you just said.”

Chapter 8 – Anonymity – A Random Connector’s Greatest Advantage

Here is something you have perhaps never thought about concerning a ‘stranger’s willingness to share information at a very first encounter:

“They’re very often more forthright, as counterintuitive as this may seem. Anonymity actually works to your advantage during a random encounter, because people are surprisingly more eager to share facts about themselves with someone they don’t know than with people they do. They simply assume they’ll never see or hear from you again, and until names are exchanged, you’re still a complete stranger. And that means you’re safe.”

And in that moment (“My name is. . .”) the conversation shifts to another plane. By this point, you have already shared information in both directions and established trust, and the possibilities for the relationship begin to come into view.

Chapter 9 – We’re All Connected

According to David synchronicity is really what makes ‘talking to strangers’ (i.e. random networking) work. It’s the fact of life that , “We need each other to achieve our goals, and

dreams.” Therefore it just makes common sense that the more we are able to reach out to other people for help, the more likely we will be able to fulfill those goals and dreams. David reminds us, *“We are far more dependent on each other than we even realize”*. . . *“Go so far as to think back to your childhood; didn’t your teachers, friends, friends’ parents, coaches, or maybe a boss or mentor help you in some way?”*. . . *“When we help one another, we tap into the magic of synchronicity.”*

Chapter 10 – the Four Beliefs of Successful Random Connectors

If you can’t buy into these four beliefs that the author proposes, chances are that you will never be very effective ‘approaching’, let alone, ‘talking with strangers’. But don’t worry, even if that is the case, time can help you overcome and eventually master ‘talking to strangers’ if you simply start with a ‘leap of faith’ that these are true and that you can change.

As David points out, *“So nothing is more important than your state of mind and belief system about the world around you and your place in it. Our beliefs drive our behavior; when you truly believe something is possible – and that you can make it happen – you are far more likely to prove yourself right.”*

1. The World Is a Friendly Place

David has traveled all over the world he has found that, *“Wherever you travel – across nations, cultures, societies, races, creeds and colors – you find that everyone has a common set of desires: to be acknowledged, understood, respected and appreciated. Almost everyone around the globe appreciates a hot meal, a good night’s sleep, the innocence of a child, a funny joke, or a good story. And right below the surface, just about everyone has a smile, a chuckle, a willingness to meet you halfway, and a desire to help a fellow human being.”*

David includes a list of other things people of all cultures, ages, races and income levels have in common. Some of my favorites include: *“Likes ice cream and chocolate chip cookies”*. . . *“Loves a good story (especially when the underdog comes out on top”*. . . *“Is looking for human connections”*.

2. Everyone Can Be Met

If as David says, *“. you believe that people aren’t really available, don’t want to be bothered, and are shut down, shut off, and inaccessible”*. . . You will probably find that to be true since, *“What you believe is possible has everything to do with what you make happen.”*” Through personal experience, David and other successful random connectors he has known, *“firmly believe that just about anyone can be met – that if approached appropriately and respectfully, most people are willing to connect with others.”* And I personally completely fall into line with that belief.

3. Almost Everyone You Meet Can Enhance Your Life in Some Way

If you start with the assumption that everyone you could ever meet has ‘something of value’ they can offer you. Topus has this to say about that: ***“The entire planet is one big people portal.”*** There are of course major differences in the degree to which someone with whom you connect can be of direct benefit to you, but:

“Your ability to uncover opportunities by making new and chance connections depends on the way in which you think about the world around you. The world will manifest opportunities to you in direct proportion to how much opportunity you believe is there for the taking. So believe that a world of possibility awaits you every day - and it will.

4. You Can Enhance the Life of Everyone You Meet

If you recall, at the beginning we said that when you focus on how you can be help to someone else, it gives you the courage and the confidence to step outside your comfort zone and be or become a random networker.

According to the author, *“The fourth and final belief of successful random networkers is the knowledge that you have value to others who will ultimately drive your success.” . . . “It can come from the company you represent, the products you sell, the services you provide, your subject matter knowledge in your area of expertise, your insights and all that you can offer others from your portfolio of professional and personal experiences.”*

There is a good table on pages 40-41 of the book that compares two different extremes reflecting how *“What You Believe”* will directly determine *“What You Achieve”*. At one extreme are ***“Beliefs That Will Limit You From Expanding Your Life”***. At the other extreme: ***“Beliefs That Will Enable You to Expand your Life”***. Here’s one example from the chart:

Limiting Belief: *“Others will think I’m weird if I just start talking to them”.*

Enabling Belief: *“People will open up and respond favorably if I approach them respectfully by showing curiosity and genuine interest.”*

SECTION II – Turning Random Encounters Into Mutually Beneficial Relationships

So far, Section I focused on reasons WHY you should work to become proficient at ‘talking to strangers’ and reasons why it works to create an ever-expanding network resulting in everything from business growth, to job creation and career enhancement, to knowledge expansion.. Now in Section II, David turns to the skills, strategies and tactics that have been proven to work: *“You probably already have some of the skills required to make productive face-to-face associations, whereas others might be new. In either case, this section will show you how to learn, build, and/or sharpen these proficiencies so that you can turn everyday random encounters into mutually profitable relationships.”*

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As is customary with every summary I write (hopefully so you will also want to buy and own the book), I will be covering key points and referencing pages where other key information is located.

Chapter 11 – Find Clues to Initiate Conversation

On page 54, Topus provides some of the most common clues that can help provide the basis for an initial conversation. Here are just a couple: *“The following are some ways people broadcast information about themselves that you can use to initiate and direct your conversations: Lapel pins with a logo, flag, or other insights” . . . “Magazine or book”.* You could have fun creating your own list of cues and clues.

Chapter 12 – Avoid Judging People From a Distance

You know the old saying, “*Don’t judge a book by its cover*”. That’s what David is reminding us in this chapter:

“. . .we as random connectors are seeking those who represent the greatest potential for having a mutually beneficial relationship. But just as a priceless piece of sterling silver may not appear so on the surface, a hugely valuable connection may be waiting for you at the bus stop, in the coach section of the airplane, or in the share-a-taxi line at the hotel.”

I’ve had some of those same kind of surprises and I’ll bet you have too.

Chapter 13 – Don’t Be Overeager

When you’re getting ready to reach out to a stranger, Topus reminds us that both the way we approach the person, as well as the venue (i.e. public, social, networking event, etc.) will influence the best way to handle the situation. He provides this as one example:

*“Trade shows, industry conferences, professional events, and parties are obviously networking bonanzas; most everyone is open and receptive to making new relationships. You might say they’re “**all-you-can-meet**” buffets. (very clever David)*

But he also reminds us to be aware of the ‘**creep factor**’, and he’s not talking about the person approaching you, but how you can unwittingly become the ‘creep’ by coming on too strong. He suggests you “***ease in to the interaction***”:

“The first thing to do when approaching a complete stranger with whom you want to connect is to simply assess the situation and persons. Does the person seem receptive? Has he or she smiled or somehow acknowledged you in a welcoming way? Did the person make a non-verbal gesture of receptivity?”

The author provides a great set of guidelines on pages 60 and 61 for when to:

“1) Approach freely; 2) Approach, but cautiously; 3) Avoid completely.”

The key: “*You want to come across as neutral when you’re connecting randomly. You must exude a non-threatening, friendly, and authentic air. You will want to be curious as well, first **in general**, then as a natural extension of the conversation, and ultimately about what the person does for a living.*”

Chapter 14 – Seize the Moment

It’s show-time now and in this critically important chapter, David sets the stage this way:

“Based on your assessment of the other person’s level of availability combined with your degree of readiness, there is that split second during which you initiate contact. This is that instant when you transition from complete stranger into a potential relationship. . .”The key is choosing a phrase or greeting that will engage and resonate with the other person. . . .
“It is difficult to proscribe an opening line; the best ones capture something about what

is happening in the moment, making them almost impossible to script ahead of time.”

Having said that, the author provides a wonderful grid on pages 71-73 that offers topics and some suggested “**Opening Statements**” that can fit in various situations such as those that fit “**Anywhere**” . . . “**Someone in an airport or travel-related venue**” . . . “**Someone in a clothing store**” . . . “**Someone in a coffee shop**” . . . and so on. But he not only provides suggestions on ‘**what to say**’, Topus contrasts those with “**Opening Statements or Questions That Make the Person Want to Call Security or Run Screaming From You**”.

One of my favorites when approaching someone at a wedding:

Suggested Opening Statements to Use

*“Beautiful setting for a wedding.”
“Are you with the bride or the groom side?”
“I understand they’re going to (place) for their honeymoon.”*

Opening Statements NOT to use

*“This is her second and his third. You’d think by now they’d give up on it.”
“I think she’s pregnant”*

This chart, by itself, should make you want to own this book.

Chapter 15 – Get on Their Wavelength

Much of this is common sense but Topus offers this reminder:

“. . . people like people who are like them. It’s just a fact of human nature, and one that’s been proven in studies by social scientists. . . . And because people like people who like them, or at least who are like them, it’s essential to align yourself with your new acquaintances from the start. That means getting on their wave-length, being curious about them, and showing interest in what they’re interested in.”

Once again, David provides a great chart on page 79 that offers “**A Sampling of Things to Match About Others to Create Rapport, Comfort, and Trust**”. He covers topics such as “**Body posture, Voice Speed, Voice style, Voice Volume, Topics, Emotional State, and Communication Style.**”

For example under “**Topics**”, he breaks out: “**What’s happening at the moment**” . . . “**Sports**” . . . “**Current events**” . . . “**Politics**” (I’d avoid this one right now). . . . “**Hobbies**” . . . “**Technology**” . . . “**Line of work**” . . . “**Family**” . . . “**Travel destination**” . . . “**Early life places or experiences**” . . . “**Profession or career**”.

One of his **Chapter at a Glance** points at the end of this chapter reads:

“Others will respond best to you when you mirror their voice style, body language, interests and values.”

Chapter 16 – The Importance of Authenticity and Curiosity

David begins this chapter with what I would consider to be one of his most critically important points:

*“Showing interest in another person – interest that’s wrapped in a genuine desire to discover more about him or her; to get to **know** that person – without judgment, is perhaps the single most critical ingredient in successful relationship building, and certainly in random connecting.”*

Once again, David supplies some great opening questions that reflect genuine curiosity. Some of my favorites include:

“Was there a specific turning point in your life when you realized this was the profession for you or where you got a big break that created the path for your success?”

“What was the secret to your success?”

“Who were your role models?”

“If you could do anything else, what would it be?”

On pages 86 and 87, there is a list of “*Things About People to Be Curious Of*” such as “*The time in their life when they learned the most*” or “*The time of their life they’d go back to if they could*”.

Chapter 17 – Focus on Your New Connection

On a chart on page 90, Topus shows the contradiction between “**being fully present**” and “**genuinely interested**” in the other person when you communicate and interact, versus “**pretending to be interested**” or only being “**moderately**” interested.

It’s what the author describes as being “**other-centric**”:

“Your ability to listen, focus, track, and respond appropriately will build the credibility and mutual respect that paves the way for a meaningful – and hopefully mutually rewarding – interaction.”

Another great chart appears on page 92 points out the different behaviors exhibited when the person with whom you’re talking is an:

*“**Unfocused Communicator**” – Checks their smartphone in the middle of a conversation”*

*“**Semi-Focused Communicator**” - Allows the other person to lead the conversation”*

*“**Laser-Focused Communicator**” – Have nothing but the other person on their mind” or*

“Asks highly relevant questions that lead to high-quality information”

Chapter 18 – Discover the Buried Treasure

As David has said before, you can benefit in some sort way from ANYONE with whom you are able to connect randomly, but in reality, let’s face it, there will always be good, better, and best connections to be made.

Here’s one piece of the author’s advice in qualifying your new connection:

“. . .once you have initiated a conversation and proved you’re not going to steal the other person’s identity, you will want to determine whether that person is in fact, someone worth knowing. Sure everyone has something to offer; it could simply be good company for the ride (or the wait, or the party). And everyone knows someone who’s worth knowing. But if your long-term goal is to expand your business by expanding your network, your short-term goal is to determine whether this particular individual’s position, personal/professional network, or knowledge, can be useful to you.”

The key is to “**Assess whether the person you are talking to can be of value to you, while preserving the relationship.**”

Chapter 19 – Leave No Stone Unturned

When I used to have a paper route as a kid, people often paid their monthly subscription with coins – pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. I would often collect them in a big jar and when it was nearly full, I'd dump the jar onto the bed and start separating. I'd always start pulling out the Quarters first. But when I was sure I had discovered every quarter, there were always 5 or more hidden under those pesky pennies.

Much along the same lines, the author reminds us that the person with whom you may have just connected may not be in your targeted audience, but he or she probably knows someone who is. So digging deeper to find out their connections and circle of influence may lead you to your real treasure. On page 101, there's a "**Circle of Influence**" list that can trigger some connections this person might have that you might miss such as "**Co-workers at their current or past employer**". . . "**alumni**". . . "**friends or neighbors**".

Chapter 20 – Be Clear on Your Own Value Proposition

When I first met David, sitting in the Black Bear Pub up at Big Canoe where we both live, I could immediately tell I was in the presence of a natural NetWeaver – someone not only interested in how I might be of help to him, but what 'value' he could bring to our new relationship. That's how this summary came about.

As he opens this chapter:

*"A successful random encounter will benefit both parties. In fact, the more you demonstrate what (and sometimes who) you have offer, the more likely the other party will want to associate with you." . . . "You bring value, either through what you know, what you sell, what you do, or who you know. And understanding the value you offer is essential in creating credibility for yourself and direction for the conversation". . . "At the end of the day, your ability to help **the other person** is what makes the connection work."*

Another statement he makes, of which you must be aware as you attempt to make connections with persons in higher places:

". . . the higher up the influence ladder you go, the more important your knowledge and expertise will be in establishing your credibility and value to the other person. And while you surely don't want to be a show-off, you do want to make it clear to the CEO you just met that you know your stuff." . . . "How you describe your value proposition makes all the difference in how others perceive you."

Chapter 21 – Position Yourself as an Expert

The author begins this chapter with something that is truer today than I can ever remember: "*People are valued for their knowledge in today's marketplace. It's not just who you know nowadays, it's what you know. You have expertise in your field; maybe there's something you know how to do better than anyone else.*". . . "*People are looking for solutions to business, career, and even personal challenges.*".

But to be a problem solver, you have to know how to ask the right questions – digging deeper than most do: *“Make a point of asking as many questions as you can to learn as much as you can, and then be sure to keep in touch with your new connection as a subject matter expert.”*

Chapter 22 – If Nothing There, Catch and (Respectfully) Release

Everyone with whom you connect is not going to be someone who can help you, at least not right away, and possibly someone you can't currently help as well.

In his **“Chapter at a Glance”** section at the end of the chapter, two of David's bullet points include:

- *“You always have the option of establishing a friendship when there isn't something there to enhance your professional life.*
- *“Always be polite and respectful when parting ways.”*

SECTION III – Leveraging the Connection

This section is all about 'where the rubber meets the road'. Will you be able to turn your new random connection you've now made into something in the way of a tangible 'reward':

“Sometimes that reward comes in the form of money. Sometimes in the form of access to someone or something. Sometimes it's in information we glean from our new association. And sometimes it's all of these.”

But this is also the stage at which many random connections made die, because someone didn't follow up. . .or stay in touch. . .or do whatever it might take to keep the relationship fresh and growing: ***“But what has the potential to become a highly profitable connection is all too often left at merely a random exchange.”***

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For the balance of the summary, I'll just pick a point or two to emphasize but you will benefit greatly by using this summary up to this point, and then really digging into the balance of the book to hone your skills, strategies, and tactics for making 'random connections' a part of your everyday life.

Chapter 23 – Map the Road to Opportunity

- ***The ultimate value of a random encounter is directly related to how well you follow up.”***

Chapter 24 – Build Your Momentum and Credibility With a Follow-up

There's an excellent chart (Table 24.1) on pages 130 and 131 with suggestions of ways to follow up depending upon whether the conversation you had was: 1) ***Unstructured – with a specific focus or direction***; 2) ***Focused – and had a specific direction but didn't end with a clear next step***; 3) ***Very focused – with a specific direction and a clearly understood next step***.

For example several of the points under number 3 includes: ***“reinforcing your role and ability to deliver value”***. . . ***“restate key parts of his or her comments”***. . . ***“explain specifically how you will make a difference.”***

Chapter 25– From Unplanned Meeting to Monetized Connection: A Case Study

Think of the successful first conversation as the **‘kickoff’**: ***“The initial encounter is only a starting point; the follow-up is what leads to the payoff.”***. . . ***“A good first impression increases the chances that your follow-up will get results.”***

This chapter relates a real-life story of a random connection David made that paid off big-time.

Chapter 26 – Create a Basis for Continued Contact

Asking the right questions and then reinforcing the answers is what makes the follow-up most effective: ***“The more you glean about your new connection, the more you can appeal to that person and his or her personality when you follow up to reconnect.”***

Chapter 27 – Add Velocity to the Relationship

The author reminds us an important fact of life in today's **super speedway** environment in which we live. Sometimes your follow up gets no response: ***“Generally people don't reply because of one of two primary reasons; they're temporarily too busy, in which case it's just a timing issue, or they're not interested.”***

On pages 144 and 145, Topus provides three (3) great examples how to follow-up depending upon how 'focused' your conversation was initially and whether there were any specific action steps initially set out. This is very valuable advice.

Chapter 28 – Success – Desired Leverage Achieved!

So now you're inside the 'red zone' (in football terms you're inside the opponent's 20 yard line and preparing to hopefully score). In David's words: ***“This is where you materialize the connection. It's where you 'close the deal' “***. If you've earned it through your follow-up, as he says, ***“Ask for the order!”***

Chapter 29 – Be Google-Ready

According to the author, “. . . *managing one’s online presence has become an essential part of how we present ourselves to the world – and how others perceive us.*” How are you perceived in a “Google-ready” world? In a chart on pages 151 and 152, David offers some great suggestions for improving the way you present yourself online both Professionally and Socially.

SECTION IV – Gender Neutral Random Connecting

In this section, David shows some great sensitivity to differences he has seen in the way women approach ‘**random connecting**’. He does this by addressing a series of great questions. Here are few of my favorites:

Question- *“Why does it matter that women and men pay attention to their differences when attempting make random connections?”*

Question – *“So what are some those differences men and women need to keep in mind when random connecting?”*

Question – *“As a woman, what would you recommend that men do – or not do – when attempting to connect with you?”*

SECTION V – Mastery Insights and the *Talk to Strangers Mastery Program*

As with any skill set, there will be those who are below average, average, good, and those who have become “masters”. Some points Topus makes as to why you should strive to become a ‘master’ at random connecting include:

- *“A master random connector will get the name of a higher level influencer when seeking a contact from the new acquaintance.”*
- *“If attempting to sell, a product, the master connector is likely to make a bigger deal.”*
- *“If seeking an investor, the amount of the investment will be bigger.”*
- *“If selling consulting services, the scope of the engagement will be broader.”*
- *“A master random connector will achieve all these results faster than an average one.. .will identify the opportunity more quickly, . . . begin the conversation about it earlier. . . and seal the deal more often.”*

So the rest of this section covers what “mastery” of being or becoming a ‘random connector’ involves, and then the ten (10) steps for achieving ‘mastery’.

CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoy reading this summary nearly as much as I enjoyed writing it and hope it will provide you valuable information that will make you want to take the step – requiring courage and discipline – to begin your journey to master this skill of ‘random connecting with strangers’.

David concludes with this important point to remember:

“It always has been, always will be, through the people we meet and know that we achieve our goals and expand our lives. We can’t do it alone. So when we meet someone who can help us along in our journeys, if we can return some value in kind, it is more than likely a perfect chance to find the pearl that sits waiting inside the oyster that is your world.”