CAPTIVATE

The Science of Succeeding With People



Vanessa Van Edwards

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# CAPTIVATE INTRO

Let’s start with a quick overview of what you’ll learn from this book.

## Quick Summary

* Learn the 5 personality types and tailor your communication to them
* Learn simple hacks to take your confidence and communication to the next level
* Learn to connect deeply with people and thrive in social settings
* Learn how to reduce your social anxiety and feel more confident
* Learn how to read people so you can connect and lead them
* Learn how to make a great first impression every time
* Learn how to become unforgettable in your interactions

## CHAPTER 1.

### Play to Your Strengths & Create Your Unique Social Game Plan

Vanessa says that “always say yes” is terrible advice and that you will not be successful following the “fake it until you make it” mantra.

People can tell if your smile is fake, and it’s a big social turn off. But if you show up ready to enjoy it, you will be more memorable.

She says instead you should develop your own social game plan. Take control by playing to your strengths by choosing environments that work for you, and make those your thriving locations.

Don’t try to be extraverted if you are an introvert. Be authentically yourself and socialise in environments that you feel comfortable in.

**Thrive Locations**

Pick your favourite 3 places to socialise and focus on meeting people in those ways.

**Social Zones**

Vanessa says social events will have zones highly conducive to positive interactions and other zones which should be avoided. Top 3 options:

The entrance should be avoided, for example, while a great spot is right at the exit of the buffet or the bar. Once people got their food or drink they are often desperate to speak to someone.

1. Near the bar
2. Meet host and stay in their line of sight so they think to intro you
3. Where people are sitting down to eat

Start with a simple conversation starters (different for each zone):

* How do you like the wine tonight? Here’s cheers, I’m Vanessa!
* I’m Vanessa, great party, is there anyone I should meet?
* Can I join you while you eat?

## CHAPTER 2.

### Make A Great First Impression

Vanessa says, we decide whether we like someone long before we first hear them speak. We quickly try to answer three questions about people we meet.

Are you:

* friend or foe (you answer it with hands gesture);
* winner or loser (you answer with body language and posture);
* ally or enemy (you answer it with eye contact)?

**Become a Triple Threat**

Become a social “triple threat” when you master these three social skills:

**Hand Gestures:**

Vanessa says pockets are “murderers of rapport” and you should use hand gestures and show your hands as much as possible. (400-600 hand gestures in 18 minutes will make you more likeable). Hands show intentions, and when we can see them, we instinctively feel trust. (Shake hands when greeting. Hands up when Police chase you)

Great handshake: - dry hands; keep hand vertical, thumb to sky; firm handshake

**Body Language:**

Winners take up space (high power poses), and Vanessa says you should always keep a good posture and open body language.

Also, she reminds us that power poses gives us confidence and weaker poses make us feel unconfident. So when checking our phone we should raise it up. Being confident is the biggest predictor of success. Launch stance.

**Eye Contact:**

Looking at someone a lot says to that person “I like you”. Hold eye contact to produce trust and gaze to build connection.

Vanessa van Edwards mentions Brene Brown’s TedTalk and how she used eye contact to build connection with the audience.

Speak directly to people in the audience. Eye contact produces oxytocin (60-70% is good).

## CHAPTER 3.

### Create Sparks

Create sparks with people. Generate peaks, hooks, interest, emotional stimulation.

Big talk (vs small talk). Create anticipation. Laughing. Highs. Exhilaration. Small talk is boring, no highs, no sparks.

Creating sparks requires effort. Challenge status quo.

**1. Conversational Sparks**

Use unique talking points to create interesting conversation. Fresh questions.

They create dopamine (happy drug)

How do you spark dopamine during conversation?

* Novelty. Oddball. Hippocampus. Makes brain perk up. Retain chat.
* Pleasure. Dopamine. New Ideas.
* Interest. Dopamine encourages you to seek more, go deeper.

**Best conversation starters…**

*1. What was the highlight of your day?*

*2. What personal passion project are you working on?*

*3. Have anything exciting coming up in your life?*

*4. What’s your story?*

*5. What brings you here?*

*6. What do you do to unwind?*

*7. Have any vacations coming up?*

How you say hello makes a huge difference

Be more creative, add some interest and create those sparks when you start with non-traditional (and non-boring) starters…

* How’s it going?
* What’s up…?
* Howdy! - 40% higher success rate
* Hola
* Yo!

**2. Push Hot Buttons**

Topics, hobbies, activities. Lots of nodding, leaning in, responds lengthier. Fascinating. Interesting. Raises eyebrows. Dopamine.

Be more specific. Look for dopamine worthy conversation topics.

* You mention that…
* You have great taste in…
* I noticed that…
* You asked for…
* I’m curious about…
* Your name…

Be interesting. Unique stories. Own weirdness.

**Business Cards**

3 versions of what you do. Creative interesting title.

Unique images.

3 different email addresses. See which gets more hits.

**SHARK TANK: Successful entrepreneurs had pitches that:**

* Unique request
* Interactivity
* Interesting content
* Create sparks/high points

Make yourself memorable in customer’s eyes!

## CHAPTER 4.

### Be Interested to Be Interesting!

Captivate says that talking about ourselves releases dopamine and makes us feel good.

Hence, quoting Carnegie with “to be interesting be interested”, the gist is that you should talk less and listen more.

Listening also takes the focus of you and places it on the other person, which will reduce any anxiety you may feel in social settings.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Highlighting

Part of highlighting is:

* celebrating other people’s successes.
* introducing people with a big explanatory compliment
* let people impress you rather than trying to impress them

## CHAPTER 6.

### How to Be Likeable

Vanessa says we like people who are like us, because it’s more likely we’ll get along well with each other (similarity principle of liking). We like people who are dressed like us and think like us.

Captivate righteously reminds us that one of the biggest mistakes people do is to highlight differences rather than similarities.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Crack Someone’s Personality

Vanessa delves into the Big Five personality traits: Openness, consciousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (OCEAN).

* Openness: how open you are to new ideas and trying new things (Variety seeker or routine person).
* Consciousness measures your self-discipline. High tend to have to do lists, low ones find strict schedules constrictive.
* Extroversion: high get energy from being with people and tend to be cheerful and talkative; low drain energy from being with people and crave being alone;
* Agreeableness: how you work with other, empathy and forgiveness. High are empathetic and easy to get along with; low are more analytical, like to take decisions without emotions and tend to be more sceptical.
* Neuroticism’s: how much of a worrier you are

Vanessa says that when she started understanding people through the lenses of the Big Five personality traits, her conversation and human interactions started flowing much more smoothly.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Appreciate

Vanessa quotes Gary Chapman’s 5 Love Languages to explain the different ways people show appreciation for one another:

* Words of Affirmation: Show love with words
* Gifts: Show love with gifts or with tokens
* Physical Touch: Show love with physical touch such as hugs, caressing, cuddling
* Service: Show love by helping someone out
* Quality Time: Show love by spending time with the people they love

Many issues in a relationship can be explained by the couple having different ways of expressing their love. If you’re curious about your love language you can take the test here.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Values

Vanessa van Edwards says all interactions are transactions (see the law of social exchange).

The major resources being traded are:

* Love: gaining acceptance, affection and likability;
* Service: support and care;
* Status: responsibility, praise and titles to evoke pride;
* Money: currency;
* Goods: tangible products;
* Information: advice, ideas and teaching.

We need all 6 but we take what we need most and give what we have in abundance. For example people low in self esteem look for likes on their Facebook pages.

**How To Find Out People’s Values**

Captivate explains that a great way to find out people’s values is to look at what they complain about or what they brag about.

## CHAPTER 10.

### How to Lead People

If you want to get “buy in” from others, you have to explain your why, and she mentions Simon Sinek’s “Start With Why” (I recommend you watch his YouTube video).

And to give control and ownership, avoid micromanaging and let people own their tasks.

What I loved most about this chapter is Vanessa’s great advice on how to best give tasks: you don’t just assign them, but give it to the people with the right skill.

And then… ? Then tell them they are the best for it because they are the most talented for it.

## CHAPTER 11.

### How To Deal With Difficult People

Vanessa speaks a bit about low road and high road and “emotional hijacking” - when our fears or other emotions take us over.

She then goes on with a brilliant dialogue between a man and a woman to point out that when someone complains to us we should resist the urge of going into solution mode and listen longer instead.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Engage: How to Turn People On

Popular people are more attuned to other people’s popularity.

They are more attuned to social signals, social hierarchy, and relationships. Popular people also care more about these topics.

So if you want to be popular, I’m afraid that means you need to be attuned to the game of popularity.

Same for office politics: to be good at office politics, you need to learn the game of office politics.

Seeing it as a game, and therefore a skill you can master, is a great way to approach it. If you practice any skill with focus, you will improve over time.