

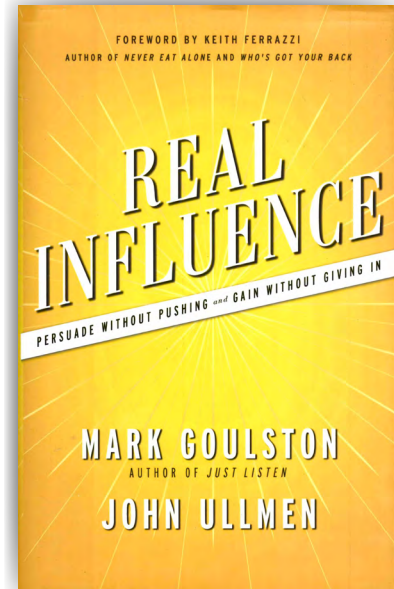


## Real Influence

*Persuade Without Pushing and Gain Without Giving In*

Mark Goulston and John B. Ullmen

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### KEY CONCEPTS

- “Disconnected” people struggle to influence others. Disconnected people use tricks and manipulation to ensure short-term compliance with their edicts. However, these tactics are not enough to connect with others. Connected people are the ones who can influence others into achieving truly great things.
- *Go for great outcomes.* The ambition a person has to make a difference is what leads to successful influence. Every great outcome consists of “three Rs”: results, reputation, and relationships.
- *Discover “their there.”* Mastering the art of connected influence involves consistently finding the “there” of others. Understanding the point of view of other people will reveal what they really think, want, and need in order to be influenced.
- *Engage others in “their there.”* Once a person understands where another person is coming from, the next step is to connect with them using the “three gets” of engage. The three gets

are situational awareness (understanding “it”), personal awareness (understanding “them”), and solution awareness (understanding their path to progress).

- *Do more.* Power influencers add value before, during, and after their interactions with others.
- *Take real influence to the next level.* Gratitude is one of the biggest keys to becoming a power influencer. Creating a lasting legacy is all about continuously striving for excellence.

### INTRODUCTION

In **Real Influence**, Mark Goulston and John Ullmen present an array of authentic techniques for influencing people. Rather than focus on manipulative tactics, Goulston and Ullmen encourage people to connect with others on a real level in order to build a lasting, influential bond. By focusing on real relationships, reputation building, and participating in listening to learn, influencers and influencees can work together

to achieve real goals. The authors firmly believe that authentic empathy and engagement lead to clear communication and long-term success. In addition, Goulston and Ullmen outline tactics for influencing across cultural borders and personal divides, as well as achieving next-level outcomes that further magnify people's influence.

### THE DANGERS OF "DISCONNECT"

Most people look at influence in the completely wrong way. The form of influence most people (and indeed, most business schools) espouse is "disconnected influence"—an attempt to influence others that is rooted in the question, "How can I get X to ...?"

This type of influence is a prescription for failure. This influencing mindset is indicative of people who fail to connect with the very person or group they are trying to influence. Disconnected influencers are stuck in "your here." They can see their own positions and intentions clearly, but not those of the person or people they wish to influence. To become truly influential, a person must change his focus to "their there": the point of view of the other party. Focusing solely on one's own message causes blind spots to the needs of others.

In order to move past these blind spots and find "their there," people must abandon the mindset of selling, pushing, tricking, or manipulating the other party. Instead, they should try to move the intended influencees through creating a genuine connection. It is important to understand their vision, and then find a way to link it to "your here."

Building long-term commitments and reaching big goals both begin with the same simple step: deciding to get connected, instead of being disconnected. However, most people have a number of bad habits that they must break before truly being able to use connected influence.

### FOUR TRAPS THAT DISCONNECT

There are four different human nature traps that people succumb to, and it is these traps that can disconnect influencers:

1. *Fight or flight response.* The reptile part of the human brain makes people act rashly. This part of the brain has been around for 245 million years, and

reduces people's ability to rationally assess situations. The fight or flight response boils down to two main reactions: escape or attack. Lashing out at others or retreating from them entirely simply do not work as influencing tactics.

2. *Habit handicap.* People have their own set of habits they retreat to in moments of conflict. For example, a peaceful person's default setting may consist of giving in to the demands of others, with no regard for their own needs. In contrast, a highly logical person may keep assaulting the very person they hope to influence with phrases like, "You don't understand!" or "You are just not getting it."
3. *Error blindness.* This occurs when a person is in the wrong, but simply does not realize it yet. This leads to a state of overconfidence that is truly misguided, and can alienate others who can see where an error has been made.
4. *Double curse of knowledge.* Knowledge is a powerful thing, but it is also dangerous. Too much knowledge can create a huge gap between "your here" and "their there."

The authors use the example of a person trying to tap out the rhythm of a popular song on a tabletop, while another person listens and tries to guess what song is being telegraphed. The tapper gets frustrated by the listener's inability to recognize the tune, forgetting that all the listener can hear are the taps. The best

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about the author and subject:

[www.getrealinfluence.com](http://www.getrealinfluence.com)

Information about this book and other business titles:

[www.amacombooks.org](http://www.amacombooks.org)

Related summaries in the BBS Library:

### Elements of Influence

*The Art of Getting Others to Follow Your Lead*

By Terry R. Bacon

### Influencing Up

By Allan R. Cohen and David L. Bradford

influencers realize they are both tappers and listeners themselves, and understand that being the listener is actually the more difficult role.

### THE FOUR STEPS TO CONNECTING AND INFLUENCING

In contrast to disconnected influence, connected influence is strikingly powerful and surprisingly subtle. Connected influence is all about fostering the growth of a network of people who want to work together towards a common goal. Engaging with the “their theres” of others will lead to open and transparent communication, which is superior to trying to use leverage against them.

Connected influence consists of a four-step process:

1. Go for great outcomes.
2. Listen past your blind spot.
3. Engage people in “their there.”

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Mark Goulston, MD**, is a business psychiatrist, consultant, chairman and cofounder of Heartfelt Leadership, and the author of *Just Listen*, *Get Out of Your Own Way*, and *Get Out of Your Own Way at Work*. He also writes a syndicated career column for Tribune Media Services; blogs for *Fast Company*, *Business Insider*, *Huffington Post*, and *Psychology Today*; and is featured frequently in major media, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, CNN, NPR, and Fox News. He lives in Los Angeles.

**John Ullmen, Ph.D.**, is an acclaimed executive coach whose clients include dozens of leading international firms. He oversees Motivation-Rules.com, conducts popular feedback-based seminars on influence in organizations, and teaches at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

4. When the perception is that enough has been done ... do more.

### THE FIRST “R”: GO FOR A GREAT RESULT

The commandment to “go for great outcomes” is composed of several, smaller steps. Every great outcome is built on the three Rs: results, reputation, and relationships.

*The Internet, television advertising, and wall-to-wall marketing have made us cynical about deceptive tricks and hard-sell approaches. Your customers, your coworkers, and even your kids can all recognize “pushy” influence ... and when you use it, they’ll push back twice as hard.*

The results portion of a great outcome is not just about achieving a large goal, but achieving a richly meaningful one. People need to consider what results would make them truly happy. At the end of the day, people working towards a big result should feel “that was a day worth giving my life to.” The first step towards becoming influential is finding a personal passion that aligns with the goals of an organization.

### THE SECOND “R”: GO FOR A GREAT REPUTATION

Connected influence requires an influencer to prove that they are worthy of long-term relationships. The authors argue that in their professional experience, people report that the individuals who influenced them most in life were not those who persuaded them to do things, but rather those who cared for them and supported them, ensuring they would not fail.

Whether a reputation is built with publicly visible gestures or a series of behind the scenes acts of kindness, building a reputation is often about encouraging others to pay it forward.

A strong reputation attracts people who want to work together towards a common cause. The best reputations can get potential partners excited about the potential of working with an organization or individual—even before the two parties have met with one another.

### THE THIRD “R”: GO FOR GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

Those who focus on getting results at the expense of

their relationships rarely achieve meaningful results or relationships. However, those who invest in great relationships attract others to be a part of their great outcomes.

In order to practice connected influence people can use the “R&R Test.” The test works as follows:

- BEFORE interacting with others, ask “How can I strive to build relationships and a positive reputation in this interaction?”
- DURING the interaction, try to showcase attributes like trustworthiness and credibility. Ask, “If I were being recorded during this meeting, would I later be embarrassed if someone I respect watched it?”
- AFTER the interaction, ask, “Did I behave with integrity, clarity, and respect?” Also ask, “Do I need to follow-up in order to cement future opportunities or correct any misunderstandings?”

*A strong reputation will make people want to work with you, want to deal with you, want to listen to you, and want to help you. Because of what they've heard and learned about you, they will anticipate that good things will happen, even before they meet you.*

### TO DISCOVER THEIR THERE, LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

The very nature of a blind spot means that the person with the blind spot cannot see it. However, people can become aware of their own blind spots and overcome them simply by listening. This is known as to this type of listening as “listening to learn,” and it can generate real alignment and commitment.

This kind of listening is not about hearing when another person has stopped talking to allow someone else to make their point. Listening to learn is about looking, hearing, and feeling from the perspective of another person, and then allaying their fears or concerns.

Each person involved in a meeting will have a different reaction to how the meeting went, simply based on their disparate backgrounds. Listening to learn is about hearing the music of another person's perspective, and taking the time to appreciate it.

### MASTER LEVEL-FOUR LISTENING

There are four different types of listening. Ranked from worst to best, the four types of listening are as follows:

- *Level One: Avoidance Listening.* Also referred to as “listening over” someone, avoidance listening annoys and exasperates the person who is talking. An avoidance listener is likely to be listening while they text.
- *Level Two: Defensive Listening.* Also referred to as “listening at,” this style of listening upsets and frustrates the person who is talking, because the person who is listening seems to take everything personally and takes issue with what is being said for that reason.
- *Level Three: Problem-Solving Listening.* Also referred to as “listening to,” this style of listening is purposeful, and appropriate for certain situations. However, level three listening is not enough for situations where the conversation is complex and/or emotionally charged.
  - *Level Four: Connective Listening.* Also referred to as “listening into,” this style of listening allows people to feel that they are developing a genuine rapport with the person that they are talking to. It is about listening without an agenda, saving that information for later, and being fully present when a person discusses their needs and concerns.

Level four listening is an art that requires practice. The four-part process for staying in this mindset is as follows:

1. Whenever possible, pick a time and place where the other person will feel comfortable speaking openly.
2. Pause often, and use that silence to give the person who is speaking room to think more and say more.
3. Eliminate distractions and give full attention to the person who is talking.
4. Resist the urge to problem solve or retreat into “your here.” Stay connected to “their there” by



asking questions such as “What does that mean for you?” or “What is your perspective on ...?”

### TO INFLUENCE, BE INFLUENCEABLE

The greatest tool for influencing others is to be “influenceable.” This does not mean becoming a pushover, however. Being influenceable is not about giving in or giving up. Rather, it is about going into every conversation with the mindset that one’s current position may not be totally or partially right. Those who are influenceable are seeking valuable interactions with others, and keep both their minds and their hearts open. Remaining both emotionally and intellectually open improves the likelihood of finding common ground. Being influenceable is about leaning into a project with others, rather than resisting the influence of others.

### USE THE THREE GETS OF ENGAGE

In order to best engage with people in “their there,” people should use the three gets of engage. There are three types of awareness that lead to connected influence and better engagement; they are:

1. *Situational Awareness.* In this get, a person gets “it,” whatever the “it” may be.
2. *Personal Awareness.* This get is about getting “them.” It is an understanding of a person’s strengths, weaknesses, hopes, fears, concerns, and priorities.
3. *Solution Awareness.* This get is about getting people on their own path to progress. This get shows people a positive path towards achieving their goals.

### PUSH THEIR BUTTONS—POSITIVELY

Pushing buttons is generally viewed as a bad thing. However, in some cases, intentionally provoking a response from a person can lead to great things. In some cases, real engagement is the result of provoking a response. In these cases, a person’s eyes are opened to a way to improve their situation in life.

This technique is not always successful, but intentional provocation is an excellent idea in one-on-one situations when it seems like the person on the other side of the table is unlikely to fully engage otherwise.

Asking bold, potentially loaded questions is a great way to get the other party’s attention. However, being provocative only works if the provocative questions are specifically tailored to “their there,” with an aim towards engagement, not confrontation.

### ENGAGE ACROSS CULTURES

Not every culture is influenced by the same things. While most Americans view business as a transaction, other cultures make business decisions based on relationships, rather than on transactional bottom lines.

The first step in bridging the gaps between cultures is simply taking the time to learn a few key phrases in the other party’s language, such as “hello,” “thank you,” and “I appreciate your time with me,” as well as greetings and farewells that show an appropriate level of respect. This simple effort can make the other party feel at ease and respected.

*[H]ere’s a secret. No matter how much you think you know about other people ... those people will surprise you if you make space for them to tell you what they really know and feel. And the information you find out can point the way to deeper understanding, creative solutions, and huge wins for everyone.*

While many people do not realize it, age can be another type of cultural barrier. Seeking out authentic, emotionally resonant points of conversation with people of different ages can smooth over these barriers. Making cross-cultural connections can enable organizations to find new ways of solving problems and reaching goals.

### DO MORE BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER

Real influence is about more than merely meeting expectations. The people and organizations that have the most influential pull are those who go above and beyond what was expected. True influence comes from delivering big results and impact not only during a partnership but also before and after. Over-delivering results ensures that people will remember everything that was done for them and makes them more likely to seek interactions in the future.

An example of a company that overdelivers in the before experience is the online shoe company Zappos. The company is famous for hiring only 1 percent of applicants and then offering new hires \$3,000 in cash

if they want to leave the company after their initial training period. What makes Zappos impressive is that virtually no one takes the \$3,000. Simply offering such a sum proves to employees that they are valued. As a result, Zappos has one of the most loyal, dedicated workforces in the country.

*Once you've used level four listening to find out where another person is coming from, your goal is to approach things from that person's perspective. When you do this, it becomes exponentially easier for the person to connect with you.*

Delivering more in the "after" is also important. While many people have a tendency to move on after an engagement, the work is not truly done. There is almost always a way to continue adding value to a deal, even after the partnership is at an end. Share ideas about how a similar partnership could be improved in the future, or offer to contribute to an organization's charitable works. Having a "zero sum" mentality in business is no longer enough to sustain an enterprise; it is important to think of partnerships as a way to build integrity-based relationships.

#### DO MORE IN ALL THREE VALUE CHANNELS

Doing more is not just about doing more in terms of finances. People can do more in three different value channels linked to the three gets. These channels are also linked to three tactics for influencing the hearts and minds of others. They are as follows:

1. Expand their thinking (the insight channel). Find ways to share new insights, gather new information, and find new meaning.
2. Make them feel better (the emotional channel). Help others to feel supported, empowered, and happier.
3. Take effective action (the practical channel). Find ways to resolve problems, tackle the issues, and accomplish tasks.

#### ASK OTHER PEOPLE TO DO MORE

While much of the advice Goulston and Ullmen give revolves around the maxim "do more," they also caution not to do too much. Those who insist that they can do it all on their own are not as likely to succeed

as those who embrace assistance with open arms.

In addition, asking others to do more opens up a whole world of possibilities that a single person could not realize on their own. Drawing on the strength of many, their new insights can lead to remarkable results.

#### LET ADVERSITY LEAD YOU TO GREAT OUTCOMES

The real reason so many people fail to achieve great outcomes is because of their own self-defeating attitudes. And yet, it is often

personal setbacks or tragedies that lead to the greatest outcomes of all. The Wounded Warrior Project, the Betty Ford Clinic, and the invention of Braille are just a few examples of these kinds of great outcomes. Triumphant over adversity is all about endurance, tenacity, and resilience. Under these circumstances, a person can be courageous, step up to the plate, and wield positive influence that will inspire many others.

#### INFLUENCE BY GETTING OUT OF THE WAY

It can be hard to let go of past accomplishments, because, in a way, it is like letting go of a part of oneself. However, getting out of the way is often the best way to ensure the continued success of a project or organization.

Getting out of the way can take many forms. A CEO might decide that in order to stay successful, he needs to select and groom a new leader to take over his role. Setting egos aside often means that a great outcome can stay great, even decades down the line. In addition, saying farewell to one's role in one great outcome is merely the first step towards achieving the next great outcome.

#### INFLUENCE POSITIVELY EVEN AFTER MAKING A BIG MISTAKE

Everyone screws up on occasion, and some screwups occur on a massive scale. But by facing those mistakes head-on and committing to learning from them, positive influence can still be achieved.

For example, a brusque manager with a tendency to belittle his subordinates can generate a great deal of resentment because of his management style. His

employees might avoid reporting his behavior to HR out of fear of seeming weak. However, by publicly asking his employees to call him out on his bad behavior and admitting his past mistakes, the manager can repair relationships and become a powerful influencer in his office. Reaching out and apologizing for past mistakes can be the first step towards finding connected influence once again.

One of the most powerful ways to right a wrong is a power apology. A power apology has four parts:

1. The offender should spell out what went wrong, and say, "I'm sorry, and I was wrong."
2. The offender should describe how the mistake harmed the other person or people. For instance, by saying, "I know that what I did frustrated you and made it difficult to trust and respect me. And it may take some time to earn back your trust and respect."
3. The offender should state his commitment to avoiding this same mistake in the future.
4. The offender should ask what he can do to make up for the mistake (beyond simply apologizing), and then do it.

Not only can the apology repair a damaged relationship, but it can offer the offender the opportunity to take a hard look at why the mistake was made and learn from it.

### GRATITUDE CAN MAGNIFY INFLUENCE

Expressing gratitude makes people feel more in control of their own lives. In addition, grateful people exert and spread their positive influence among others. Gratitude can be used to magnify influence in many ways. Reconnecting with former mentors and thanking them for their past help is one way to connect with gratitude.

It can be easy to get trapped in a cycle of negativity, and this can turn a person who is normally quite good at connected influence into a disconnected mess. By periodically recounting what they are grateful for, people can stay connected and break the cycle of negativity.

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The authors offer four case studies of connected influencers who went for great outcomes, listened past their blind spots, found the "there" of others, and stayed committed to doing more.

*To exert real influence, don't insist on doing more all on your own. Instead, open your arms to other people who want to help. Just as you've invited them to join in your great outcome, allow them to make it ever greater by adding value.*

The first case study is Stella Choi, founder of the non-profit organization The Fuzzy Pet Foundation, who made a commitment to never say no to an animal in need. Stella's organization focuses on caring for animals that might not otherwise be adopted. Stella listened past the blind spot of "just call animal control," and developed a reputation for taking matters into her own hands and rescuing animals on the free-way. She put herself in the mindset of a frightened, abandoned dog, and went the extra mile to save animals that even seasoned vets would not touch. By committing to doing more than the average pet shelter, Stella's organization has attracted hordes of volunteers and even some celebrities who support her cause.

The second case study revolves around Amir Rubin, president of Stanford Hospital and Clinics. Rubin's great outcome is treating one patient at a time, and letting that patient feel compassionately cared for. Seeing past the blind spot of "our reputation is good enough already," Rubin pushes his team to keep striving for excellence, and sends the message that Stanford is no place to coast or rest on one's laurels.

The third case study is of an unnamed couple hoping to give their marriage one last try after separating. The couple's blind spot was a hatred of people who acted infantile, and yet they both acted that way themselves. The couple came to realize that their unforgiving natures were caused by their genes and their upbringings. By committing to do more by sharing their lives together one day at a time, the couple was on the road to saving their marriage (and not passing their flawed conflict resolution habits onto their children).

The final case study concerns Ivan Misner of BNI, the largest business networking organization in the world. His great outcome was getting feuding people to reconcile and get back on the same page. The blind spot was that people who worked with Misner needed to get past focusing on what was wrong. He flipped this tendency on its head by introducing an exercise that was tailored to make people think about the positives in their situations. He also does more by letting others add value. Misner encourages the people he coaches to elaborate on their own ideas. When he does offer his own ideas, he does so with humility, allowing people to feel that they have been coached and guided without being ordered about.



## FEATURES OF THE BOOK

**Estimated Reading Time: 6–7 hours, 245 pages**

Designed to be read cover-to-cover, Mark Goulston and John B. Ullmen present an actionable, emotion-centered guide to influence and persuasion in **Real Influence**. Each chapter concludes with both a “usable insight” and “action steps” for readers to reflect upon. The book focuses on building relationships by carefully listening to others and offers many practical ideas and step-by-step procedures for doing so. Packed with real-world examples of their influence principles at work and easily digestible case studies, Goulston and Ullmen’s book is a must-read for leaders, managers, CEOs, and entrepreneurs.

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