



How to Build Relationships? A Book Review on Ferrazzi's *Never Eat Alone*

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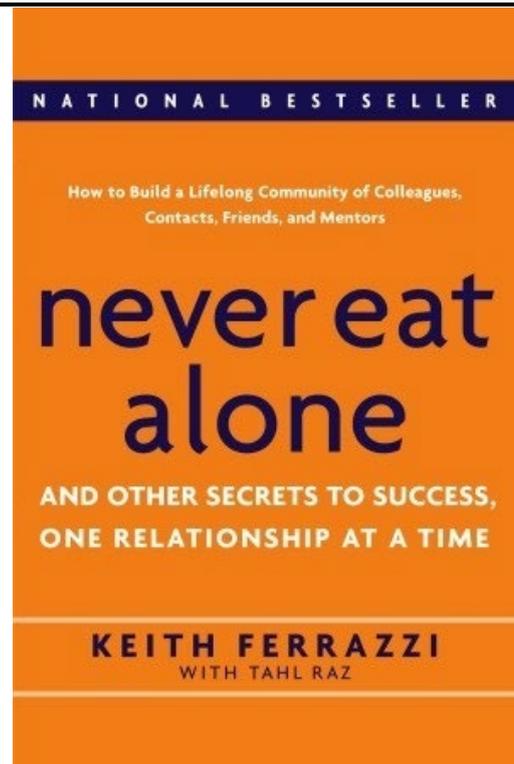
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Abstract: With an interesting title, *Never Eat Alone*. has been bought by millions of people, making its way as a New York bestseller and Wall Street Journal bestseller. Composed of four sections, this book talks about concepts that relate to improving relationships and cultivating networks, mainly in the professional arena. Unlike other theoretical books, this book is based on the real-life experience of Keith Ferrazzi, the author. He is the founder-CEO of Ferrazzi Greenlight and is recognized as a thought leader in the field of business and networking. Awarded with several accolades, he has been guiding several global brands and businesses. This book is recommended to students who are undertaking courses under business, management, and administration. College teachers may utilize this as a resource because the practical insights in dealing with professional relationships are worthwhile.



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Introduction

Have you ever thought about why some people are impressive in establishing relationships? What are their secrets? How can you become effective in networking? Why do relationships help us to be successful? These are some of the many questions that can be answered through this book, *Never Eat Alone*. With an interesting title, this book has been bought by millions of people, making its way as a New York bestseller and Wall Street Journal bestseller. This proves that many are still searching for ways to develop networks and relationships.

Unlike other theoretical books, this book is based on the real-life experience of Keith Ferrazzi, the author. He is the founder-CEO of Ferrazzi Greenlight and is recognized as a thought leader in the field of business and networking. With an MBA degree from Harvard Business School, he is active in the community and charitable organizations. But before he has achieved success in the professional arena, he was raised in a working-class background. His life is indeed a rags-to-riches story. Awarded with several accolades, he has been guiding several global brands and businesses. Many magazines named him as one of the “most connected” people in the world.



Content

In section 1, *The Mind-Set*, Ferrazzi credits his networking skills from his father who taught him about its value and personally exemplified it; the author narrates his various experiences on how he has developed such a capacity and emphasizes that socio-economic background did not deter him to connect with people. In this section, the thesis is anyone can be a connector—one just needs to be persistent and committed to building a network of relationships. Ferrazzi assumes that networking is not boring and is a good venue to develop personally and professionally.

To be a networker, he pinpoints one must be generous in helping people with their needs (e.g., internship, jobs, marketing, mentoring, etc.). He adds that one must have a mission which can be done through: (1) finding passion through self-assessment and feedback from others; (2) putting goals into paper to translate them into action; and (2) creating a personal board of advisors. The author highlights that focusing on immediate networks, like friends of friends and old acquaintances, can lead us to a new set of people. Being audacious in social situations, he remarks, is a requirement also to become good in relationships and us to do that we must immerse ourselves in communities and clubs where can speak. Interestingly, he also includes getting therapy and taking action to become excellent in networking. However, he warns us not to be a networking jerk—someone who does networking for networking sake only and treats others poorly.

In section 2, *The Skill Set*, Ferrazzi advises the readers to research first about the person before meeting him; it is a good idea so that he gets to know how to get along with the other party like he can navigate conversations related to the latter's interests and past accomplishments which can be a bridge to establish rapport. This also may be a starting point to a meaningful relationship. The author shares his rules in *warm calling*, a technique in business: (1) express credibility by indicating a familiar figure; (2) put forward the value proposition; (3) share urgency and convenience; and (4) be prepared for a compromise. He reminds that *gatekeepers* should be managed.

In this context, the *gatekeepers*, referring to the executive assistants or secretaries, should be treated as allies. To be a networker, Ferrazzi says he should plan on taking a colleague to lunch or he can organize a worthwhile gathering. The author later emphasizes that a good network or friendship is created not in quantity but on the quality of time spent. He adds that if one wants to meet somebody, she must initiate and if the person does not respond she must just follow up. Being angry would just repel them. Ferrazzi recommends meeting *people collectors* like restaurateurs, headhunters, journalists, and politicians because they can help in expanding networks. Lastly, the author stresses that when meeting people, it is pivotal to develop *conversational currency*, learn nonverbal cues, and be more open to the development of the conversation.

Section 3, *Turning Connections Into Compatriots*, reiterates that in connecting, one must truly care about the people and the other one should see it as if it is an opportunity to help and be helped. This is different from the usage of manipulation and intimidation. Ferrazzi says that to truly move people, one must care—it may be in the form of helping people regarding their children, wealth, or health. This can be a starting point of a strong relationship. Moreover, he points out that real power comes from making oneself indispensable to other people. If people get what they want first, then it could return in several folds. Networking is not narcissistically about getting all that one wants because of connection; it must never be one-sided.

Plus, the author believes that the best type of connection is when one can bring two parties from different worlds; this puts forward diversity in the network. To build and maintain a relationship, Ferrazzi suggests one must undertake the *pinging*, which he refers to as the immediate and casual greeting; this can be done creatively like through sending greeting cards, email, or phone calls. The key, he says, is repetition but not to the extent that one hurts his schedule. The author also suggests for networkers to find *anchor tenants*, people who are part of a clique who can become a bridge to someone outside; after finding them, inviting them to a gathering like a dinner party with an average of 14 people



is recommended. The author says one can ask them to bring foods and invite *light attractors*, people who are energetic, vocal, and interesting; setting a theme and a relaxed atmosphere are also advisable.

Section 4, *Trading Up and Giving Back*, pinpoints that to be interesting, one is required to have good content—since it's not only about being a good conversationalist but also about expertise. To be an expert, Ferrazzi writes, one must continually read, write, and speak about certain content. That is what he did in his life, and it worked well. Also, he advises that one must ask questions and translate content into money. Moreover, he shares that each person is a brand and hence one must develop his personal branding message. This means that one's name should be distinct and can easily be collocated with a concept. A networker, then, must be knowledgeable, versatile in dealing with the public, understands how to create a buzz in the media. A caveat must be put forward—he should not become annoying. He accentuates that being close to people of power such as being mixed with powerful and famous individuals (e.g., being part of conferences, nonprofit boards, and community organizations) can lead to reinforcing networking.

Moreover, Ferrazzi shares that starting a club can be a good way to help congregate people, but it must have a distinctive proposition—this association of people can lead to friendship and the group will evolve. However, a reminder is stated: a networker should not fall into hubris; arrogance is a disease that can rot relationships. Indeed, being humble even one is in a high position can fortify the network. One must not forget the people who helped him before. Ferrazzi shares that mentoring can help expand the network and in developing oneself. He says that a mentor must not be counting; the help given should not be used as an advantage to gain favors. When a mentee succeeds, he believes, that it is enough pay already. He reiterates that, in the end, everyone becomes successful because of networks, ideas, and connections of people. This reinforces the adage that “no one is a self-made man.”

Conclusion

Admittedly, this book has not presented new concepts. The book mainly resolves revolves around the lessons like “relationships are important to success” and “we are not self-made individuals.” These concepts have been presented in different manners in self-help and professional books. However, what makes this one unique is the incorporation of personal narratives from the author which represent testifies his advice. His life story fleshes out the suggestions in the book. Such a technique is cogent and puts forward credibility in his work. Meanwhile, readers can notice the several suggestions which are emphasized through numerical or bullet indention. In various parts, they are present. The problem here is this tends to overwhelm the readers with prescriptions, and it seems that the author is just spoon-feeding everything to the reader, not making them think critically about the situations presented. Therefore, lessening the number of rules or suggestions, by putting forward brevity, is recommended. An average of five is preferable. Combining two or more related ideas is helpful. On the other hand, the usage of mnemonics and acronyms is advised because these can be helpful in the retention of the lessons; the author may also incorporate pictures to further vivify the narrative. He may also use concept maps or graphs to bolster comprehension and digestion of knowledge. All these recommendations may be taken once the book is revised or updated.

Overall, this book, with its unique stance, is recommended to those who want to improve their relationships, most especially in the professional arena. The salient points on warming the commonly conceived cold and distant professional relationships are truly helpful. Hence, students who are undertaking courses under business, management, and administration are encouraged to read this so they can go beyond the theoretical concepts in higher education. Also, college teachers may utilize this as a resource because the practical insights in dealing with professional relationships are genuinely valuable.

Reference

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