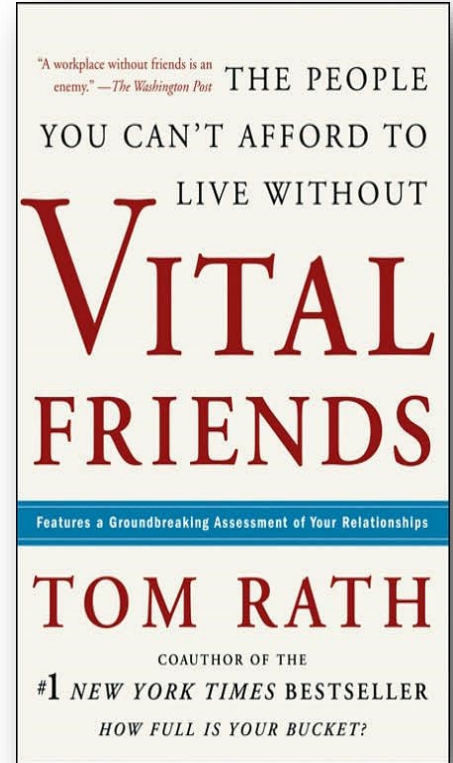


Executive Book Summary

Vital Friends- The People You Cant Live Without



“..friendships are among the most fundamental of human”

About the author- Tom Rath

Tom Rath, is an author and researcher who studies the role of human behavior, business, health, and well-being. Tom has written six #1 best sellers including the book *The people you cant live without- Vital Friends*. Rath is a researcher, writer, and speaker who is interested in employee engagement, strengths, leadership, and well-being.



Inside this issue

Friends in Life.....2
 Friends at Work.....3
 Developing Vital Friendships 4
 Building Vital Friendships at Work.....11
 Final thoughts11
 References12

- Who are the people you cannot live without?
- What does each person contribute to a friendship?



Part 1—Friends in Life

Friendships help to improve our emotional, mental, and physical health because they contribute to a general higher life satisfaction. In addition, a study revealed that during life's challenging and stressful times, friendships actually serve as a buffer to protect us. In 2001, researchers at Duke University Medical Center studied the protective quali-

ties of friendship on people with heart disease. The people who had few and poor quality friendships were twice as likely to die of heart disease. With 4 friendships, people benefited most. Why? It's not the number of friends that matter, it's the **quality** of friendship. Quality friendship lifts spirits and improves health.

"...friendships are among the most fundamental of human needs" p15

One person can't do it all

Too often in marriages, and very close friendships people expect one person to meet their every need.

When they are not able to, the person is left feeling disappointed or let down.

"83% of people bring different strengths to the relationship than their friend does" p37

We need to look at what someone can contribute rather than fixate on what they cannot

Work / Life Balance

Work life should not be a separate entity from the rest of your life. Your personal life does not stop when you get to work and you do not stop thinking about work when you are at home each night. If you don't think about work at night, it is likely an indicator about how little you care about your job.

Roth argues that balance is about having great relationships that extend through both work and personal life. One must be creative to balance not only time but relationships and emotions.





If you want to be happier and more engaged at work, consider developing a few strong friendships at the office, maybe even one with your boss” p63

The water cooler effect— the driving force when 2 employees have a face to face conversation



How can friendship provide value to an organization ?

If you have a best friend at work, you are significantly more likely to:

- ⇒ Engage your customers
- ⇒ Get more done in less time
- ⇒ Have fun on the job
- ⇒ Have a safe workplace with fewer accidents
- ⇒ Innovate and share new ideas
- ⇒ Feel informed and know that your opinions count
- ⇒ Have the opportunity to focus your on your strengths each day

“30% of employees report having a best friend at work”

“ people with at least 3 close friends at work were 96% more likely to be extremely satisfied with their life”

Part 2—Friends at Work

Can you be friends with your boss?

When asked, to rank who they enjoy spending time with, people rank friends the highest. Alternatively, the bottom three on the list were customers, co-workers, and bosses.

There are countless managers in the workplace who are inept. They are energy drainers that make you miserable, less productive, and can even influence you physical health. However, exceptional managers have the opposite effect. “Great managers care about each of their employees as a real human being, not just a means to an end”

A Gallup poll of 8 million people surveyed found that if people feel that a boss cares about them as a person they are more likely to stay with the organization, have more engaged customers, be more productive.

If you are fortunate enough to have a boss that treated you like a friend and cared about your personal life, you probably understand the difference

Getting Engaged at Work



Want a quick way to create friendships at work? Start discussing friendships with employees on a regular basis. It will nearly triple the chances of employees having a best friend at work.

“Best friendships are good for business. Companies are coming to discover that, yet are at a loss at what to do about it” USA today p65

8 Vital Roles

1. Builder
2. Champion
3. Collaborator
4. Companion
5. Connector
6. Energizer
7. Mind opener
8. Navigator

Part 3 Developing Vital Friendships

People have better friendships when they know and can easily describe what each friendship contributes to the relationship.

A Vital friend needed to fit two qualities: 1) If this person was no longer around, would your overall satisfaction with life decrease? 2) If this person was no longer a part of your life would your achievement or engagement at work decrease? Through this research, a pattern emerged— people described friends who were **very good at a few things**.

An assessment was created that explored the basic needs that friends meet in in our lives. 66 items and 8 vital roles were identified that differentiated positive and productive friendships from the rest. In vital friendships, we usually give different things that we receive. The number of vital roles for friendships will vary. Some friends will play a few roles while others will play one. Complete a vital friendship report on your friends

www.vitalfriends.com

Use this website to catalogue your friends and develop stronger relationships.



“The better a builder knows you, the more they will understand your strengths and what makes you successful “ p90

The Builder

Builders are great motivators. They genuinely want you to succeed and will take chances to support you. Builders will invest the time to help you see and use your strengths. When you want to think about how you can do more of what you already do, ask a builder. Essentially, builders build you up. Great builders will not compete with you. Rather, they figure out how their talents can complement yours. Builders see the best in you!

Who are your builders?

You can strengthen your builders by:

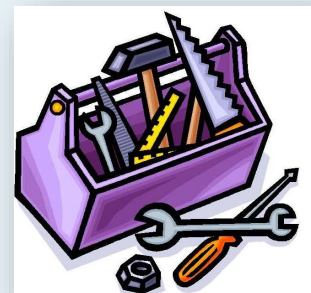
- ⇒ Help your builder understand exactly where and when you could use a little push
- ⇒ Share your success with your builders

Create new builders in your life by:

- ⇒ Ask people for day to day advice
- ⇒ Get to know people who seem to care about the success of others
- ⇒ Make appointments with your boss to touch base and discuss success and goals

If you are a builder:

- ◆ Notice and comment when your friends learn and grow
- ◆ Ask your friends about a success they recently had
- ◆ Help your friends take pride in themselves by owning what makes them unique
- ◆ Think about ways that your friends abilities complete yours
- ◆ Talk to others about your friends and what they bring to the table
- ◆ Help your friends expand their ideas about what influences growth. Consider work, school, and volunteer organizations.



Who are your
Champion
friends?



The Champion

The champion is a friend that stands up for you and what you believe in. A champion has your back and will stand up for you always. Champions are loyal friends who have your confidence. This friend is your best advocate. When you succeed they share their pride in your accomplishments. When you need someone to promote your cause look to a Champion



Champions in your Life

How to create new champions in your life:

- ⇒ Notice people who are always standing up for others and get to know them
- ⇒ Confide your dreams and fears to potential champions
- ⇒ Quietly let others know about your accomplishments. Champions are attracted to humbleness
- ⇒ Ask for people's contributions and show appreciation for their input

How to build your own Champion skills

- ◆ Ask friends about their accomplishments. Stay up-to-date about what they know and have achieved.
- ◆ Consider your spheres of influence. Coaching, teaching, mentoring, and volunteering are additional avenues
- ◆ Check in regularly with your friends and ask them their successes at work and at home
- ◆ Ask your friends what they need from you to help set them up for success
- ◆ Understand that your friends value your loyalty and may confide in you more deeply than others
- ◆ Notice when your friends have successes and congratulate

The Collaborator

The basis for a great friendship— a friend with similar interests. In conversation, you and the collaborator are on common ground. This can serve as a foundation for a lasting friendship. You and your collaborator often have similar ambitions at work and life. Collaborators share your passion.

Strengthening your collaborators.

- ⇒ Share books and articles of interest and then discuss
- ⇒ Brainstorm ways to spend time with your collaborator— a group at work, neighborhood, or church.
- ⇒ Be aware of new opportunities that might interest your friends
- ⇒ Acknowledge that you may not be able to connect frequently, you appreciate someone who shares your passions.

“During our teenage year, we spend nearly one-third of our time with friends. The rest of our lives, the average time spent with friends is less than 10% p22

Creating new collaborators in your life:

- ◆ Let coworkers know your interest and hobbies
- ◆ Attend lectures, forums or gatherings of interest
- ◆ Make a list of your hobbies and passion and share with others
- ◆ Volunteer for a club or organization with a mission or purpose that you strongly believe in

Only 18% of people work for organizations that provide opportunities to develop friendships on the job p55



Who are your Collaborators?



If you are a Collaborator

- ◇ Take time to share stories and reminisce
- ◇ Surprise your friends with things that you know would interest them
- ◇ Think of ways to create traditions with your friend based on your shared interest
- ◇ Invite others who have similar interests to join you in activities

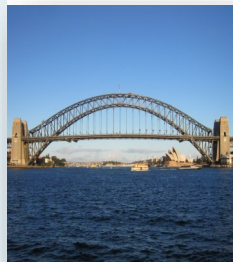
Companion

If you are a Companion

- ◆ Be there for your friends in hard times
- ◆ Try not to keep secrets from your friends
- ◆ Create a safe environment for your friends to boost compassion and understanding
- ◆ Work through conflicts quickly
- ◆ Remember to tell your friends how much they mean to you
- ◆ Do something special to honor the bonds you have with friends

Your companion friend is always there for you regardless of the circumstance. You share an unbreakable bond and want to share life events with you. Companions take pride in your relationship and they will sacrifice for your benefit

*“Companions are the friends for whom you might literally put your life on the line”
p105*



Creating new companions in your life

- ⇒ Relationships develop through shared experiences, trust, and a deep bond. Look to friends to strengthen and deepen friendships
- ⇒ To enhance your sharing skills, start small and work to deeper things
- ⇒ Remember that a companion is often a mutual role. A companion is someone who sees you in the same light
- ⇒ Spend time getting to know relatives. You have a shared bond. They have potential to be true companions.

The Connector

A connector is a bridge builder. They get to know you and then introduce you to others. These people are very sociable. The connector extends your network dramatically and give you access to newfound resources. When you need something, a connector points you in the right direction. If you want to get out more or simply want to widen your circle of friends or business associates, a connector can help.

Strengthening your connectors

- ◆ Tell the connector connections you need to make.
- ◆ Ask Connectors for advice about restaurants, car dealerships etc
- ◆ Let Connectors know your interests and future plans
- ◆ Remember to thank your Connector

Who are your connectors?

Creating new connectors in your life

- ◆ If your friend invites you to an event that you will meet new people, accept
- ◆ If you are in a new job, get to know the person who seems to know everyone
- ◆ Invite people who are sociable and enjoy meeting strangers
- ◆ If you are outgoing seek out others who are



The Energizer

Energizers are the fun friends. These friends give you energy through positive experiences. Energizers are in tune to how you are feeling and help to make your day better. They are always saying and doing things to make you feel better. When you are around these friends, you are happier, laughing, and smiling. If you want to relax and have a good time, call your Energizer

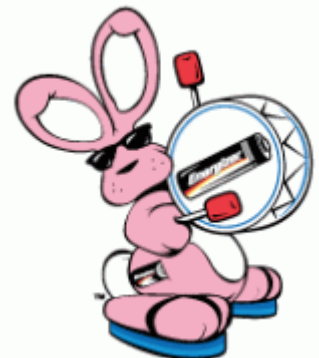
Strengthening your Energizers:

- ⇒ Encourage Energizer friends to tell stories and reminisce
- ⇒ Focus on the positive aspect of those around you
- ⇒ When you go through a period of stress, let your Energizer lift you up to see the bright side
- ⇒ Help your Energizer see the small things they do on a daily basis to add to your overall happiness

If you are an Energizer:

- ◆ Call or email your friends with funny jokes
- ◆ Encourage your friends to see the things that are going well
- ◆ Have contagious energy
- ◆ Give your friends positive feedback
- ◆ Take your friends on a mini in town vacation

WHO ARE YOUR ENERGIZERS?



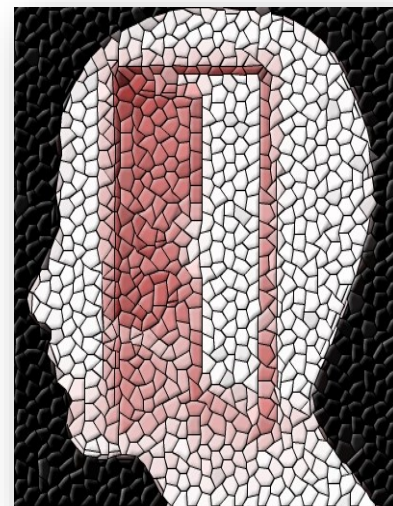
Create new Energizers in your life by allowing yourself to be drawn to people with positive energy

Creating new Mind Openers in your life.

- ◇ At work share new ideas through brainstorming. Mind openers will surface
- ◇ Seek out people who have different opinions
- ◇ Put yourself in a new environment such as a different cultural experience and reach out to people.
- ◇ Say yes when a friend asks you to do something out of your comfort zone.

The Mind Opener

These friends encourage you to take on new ideas and expand your horizons. They challenge you to think of new innovative ways. Mind openers know how to ask good questions. They will broaden your perspective on life by asking you to challenge your ideals and conventional wisdom.



Who are your Mind Openers?

Strengthening your mind openers

- ◆ They will help you see another person perspective
- ◆ Think about your conversations. Try not to react or counter right away
- ◆ Before you act on a plan, ask your Mind Opener. They may make your plan better

If you are a mind opener, listen for extremes in the language of your friends and colleagues. This may give you the opportunity to challenge conventional wisdom



The Navigator

These are the friends that give you advice and keep you headed in the right direction. You will go to them for guidance. A navigator will talk you through your problem until you have a clear answer. Anytime you are at a crossroads and need help making a decision, go to your Navigator.

Strengthen your Navigators by letting them help you make big decisions. Discuss your options with your navigator friend.

Part 4—Building Vital Friendships at Work

Workplaces where people can meet and socialize is advantageous. Research indicates that workplaces with common areas where people can dine and congregate are twice as likely to have best friends at work. Thus creating a greater opportunity for the “water cooler effect”. If your workplace has a layout that promotes socialization, you are three times more likely to have a close knit friendship group at work. Encouraging social gatherings of employees outside of work also develops friendships and boosts work moral.



The Google headquarters was designed to build to promote social interaction of employees

“Just 1 in 4 employees had someone help them make new friends when they started their last job” p150

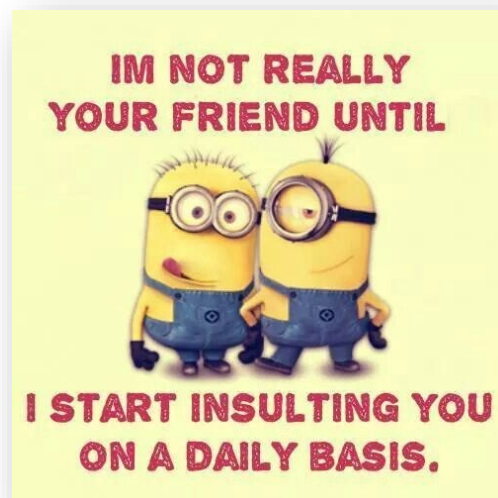
Final Thoughts

Building on your vital friendship can improve your life in all areas if you focus on the positive contributions friends have to offer. “This one key will help you unlock the potential within each friendship”.

Focus your attention on what you can contribute to the friendship. Although Vital Friends is written about what different friends bring to your life. It is also important to focus on what you contribute to

other people.

Whether you want to build more friendships or create stronger friendships, it is essential to look to yourself first. Every friendship requires give and take. You must examine both what you give and what you take !



References

Rath, Tom. (2006). Vital friends, the people you cant afford to live without. Gallup Press New York: NY



Allison Hughes

EdAdmin 826.3
University of
Saskatchewan
November 7, 2015

