

7 Ways to Use Social Media to Become a Connector

Our models, mentors and friends are hugely responsible for who we become in life. **God** graciously allows us to be influenced through our relationships, so it's vital for anyone in leadership who desires to influence people to connect with others who will sharpen us as iron sharpens iron.

One of the most vital skills for any leader to develop today is the ability to **connect** with new people. Enlarging our circle of meaningful relationships expands our capacity for learning and provides us with a **network** of mutual encouraging people.

Few eras in history have allowed us to connect as easily with others than the current digital, social age. So our connecting skills need to develop in a way that includes our approach to social media. Here are seven ways to forge better connections:

1. Learn about people. I've met some amazing people through **Twitter** and **Facebook**. You can learn a lot from someone just by getting to know who they are, what they do and what they're passionate about.

2. Reach out and say hello. Greet people the way normal people do offline and don't have an agenda or anything to sell. Something as simple as, "Looks like you're involved in some exciting stuff – keep up the good work" can be powerful in forming a friendship.

3. Take a real interest in people. With millions of status updates posted every day across social networks, it's easy to grow blind to connection and simply broadcast self-promoting news. But just as in real life, we need to tune in to what is happening in the lives of others. Read some **updates**, leave a comment and be genuinely interested in what other people are

doing.

4. Be a connector for others. I can't count the number of times I couldn't help someone with a problem but I knew someone who could. Making that connection is the essence of social media to begin with. **Social media** is powerful because of the overlapping circles of **relationships**.

5. Add value to the lives of others. The best minds in **leadership** give most of their great ideas away for free. Offering tips, advice and assistance while expecting nothing in return is not only a selfless way to live; it also encourages reciprocity and the concept of "paying it forward."

6. Keep the conversation going. People are talking all around us about all kinds of subjects. There have been eras in history when the church led the conversation about art and culture, but somewhere along the way we became afraid of losing, so we relegated ourselves to speaking only in the "religious" sense while avoiding all things "secular." This is tragic. By jumping into the conversations happening in the online world in appropriate ways, the church can step up to lead and influence the culture again.

7. Be available in moments of need. Someone needs you today. And someone else will need you next week. They may need your services, your advice or your gospel. And being a connector on a day-to-day basis means we will at some point be someone's go-to source for help. That's when influence really happens.

If you're going to **influence** people in today's world, you must be a connector, but have the proper grounding of a strong sense of who you are in Christ so that you can rise with confidence and stay humble at the same time.

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America's largest and most influential churches. He is an editor, mentor and community facilitator for and Rick Warren's Pastor's Toolbox, one of the world's largest online communities of church leaders. He's an avid, top blogger and lives in Bentonville, Ark., with his wife, Angie, and their two awesome kids.