



Capturing Opportunities: Cultivating "Big Future" Relationships

Inviting more people with bigger futures into your life makes progress easier and more enjoyable.

As an entrepreneur, you have the freedom to create a future full of endless growth.

The size of the future you actually experience will largely be determined by one factor: the people you choose to connect with.

The bigger future of your business lies in the bigger futures of your clients and customers and also in the bigger futures of your team members and all the other relationships you depend on to help you grow.

Gas in the tank.

People with bigger futures come with a full tank of gas: They have a positive outlook, they have goals, they have their act together, they're inspiring to be around, and they're going places. If you can find a place where your goals and theirs align, your combined energy will help you both get where you're going faster with greater ease and enjoyment. The common denominator in any relationship like this is that each person is making a *contribution* to the other.

By making a conscious effort to have more people in your life whose bigger futures align with your own, you can turn what may seem like a serendipitous meeting of "just the right person" into a proactive strategy for growth.

Fewer, better relationships.

If you were to make a list of the relationships in your life

that have this quality of mutual contribution, you might notice that some people are conspicuously absent. This brings about the opportunity to make some conscious decisions. Perhaps there are some relationships you're currently in that you would like to change or transform. In business, it is often thought that a bigger network or client base is always better. However, sometimes having fewer, more strategic relationships allows you to be more productive and focused. Managing relationships with people whose futures don't align with your own can be extremely draining and time consuming. Worse, we often don't recognize the true costs, especially the opportunity costs, of just getting by in these situations.

The pressures and complexity of running an entrepreneurial business day to day can be all-consuming. If you're able to take time out to get clear about your goals and what contributions from others are needed to achieve them, it's much easier to make clear decisions and to partner with the right people. However, when you're just struggling to get things done and keep it all together, it's easy to feel that simply anyone is better than nobody. It can seem easier to just work with what you've got than to have to worry about replacing staff or clients with people who might be a better fit.

As a result, you may have a client who demands a lot of time but isn't generating the revenue to justify it, or a team member who seems to be going through the motions but not creating the results you want. You know you need to do something, yet you don't.

In The Strategic Coach® Program, participants sometimes receive "tough love" challenges from one another, such as, "You've been complaining about this person for a while now. When are you going to do something about

it?" Often, when the entrepreneur finally has that conversation they've been avoiding, they come back to report, "Why didn't I do that ages ago? I feel so much better! I got so much energy back."

Your Big Future Network as a strategic tool.

Entrepreneurs can support themselves in focusing on the right relationships by looking at their best relationships and using them as models. Start by reflecting on who these people are and how you support each other's bigger futures. The insight you receive from looking at your network of relationships this way can have an impact across your whole business. Here are a few possibilities:

- **Clone the best.** You can tailor your marketing and prospecting efforts to generate more relationships like your best ones.
- **Clean up messes.** You may see some relationships that you want to end, delegate, or transform in some way in order to align them with your bigger future.
- **Strengthen existing relationships.** When you see how you contribute to your best relationships, you have an opportunity to do more. You can also take the opportunity to express your gratitude: By acknowledging a relationship as special, you *make* it special and stand apart from those whose interest is solely in transactions.

A big future together.

By focusing on growing and nurturing quality relationships, you can build a network of future-focused, aligned growth partners in all areas of your life. How do you see your future together with the people in your best relationships? All the money you're going to get paid, all the extra demand for what you do and for the innovations you'll create — it all lies out in that future. When you invite people who are truly committed to growth into every aspect of your life, your own potential for growth becomes truly unlimited.★

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