



Stanford eCorner

The Skills of High Self-Monitors

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Author Ori Brafman explains how certain individuals have an increased ability to form connections. According to Brafman, these "high self-monitors" exhibit characteristics that offer advantages for relationship building, the most prominent characteristic being a willingness to modulate behavior and actions "to meet others where they are." Brafman also describes how a high self-monitor's ability to "mirror into a situation" can pay major dividends in terms of network building and career development.



Transcript

So we can be vulnerable. We can try to literally stick ourselves next to each other. The last thing we're going to look at is people who have this is as a natural trait. They're called high self-monitors. I want you to meet Dina Caplin. Dina has a problem in her life. The biggest problem that Dina has in her life is that she gets invited to too many wedding invitations every year. And she gets invited to these invitations where people invite her that she's barely met. And she's natural when she goes into it. If she was in this room, if only Dina was in this room, people just naturally like her.

She's not just likeable by being very beautiful but she has that natural kind of personality and probably a lot of us have met someone like that. Some people probably in here are like that - people who can form this natural instant connections. A Stanford researcher try to figure out what is it about people like that, how is it that they're able to form these connections. What they did is they got a bunch of people to answer questions and whether they agree or disagree with these questions. And see whether you agree with this, "I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people." Ask yourself this question, "I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations." And lastly, "I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information." Dina would have answered no to the first three questions and yes to the last question. And it's not that Dina is fake, it's not that Dina is this ingenious in any ways. The thing about people like Dina is that they naturally meet us where we are, as opposed to trying for us to meet her where she is. She naturally mirrors us, and when people naturally mirror us, we naturally tend to like them. She's saying, "Well, it's great for Dina." It's fantastic for a cocktail party and maybe it's even fantastic if you want to get a lot of wedding invitations. What about when you guys graduate? A team looked at high self-monitors and low self-monitors and normal people after they graduate and they looked at their career fields.

And what they noticed was that high self-monitors tend to change jobs as much more frequently, but there's a difference. The high self-monitors were much more likely to be in the center of networks and the reason that they change job so frequently was because they were getting promoted so rapidly that they got different job offers. They are much more successful. They are making more money. They are able to have higher positions in less time and when you look at their position within the company, by any source of theories would say, who is the person you want to be in this equation, right? When do they get into the center? So for an average person, it takes 18 years to get into the center of the network. And guess how long it takes a high self monitor. Six months. Almost. Thirteen months. A high self-monitor can achieved within 13 months what it takes a normal person, someone like us, 18 years.

And it's not that they're natural schmoozers. It's not that they have the ability to pass more business cards. It's just that they mirror themselves into the situations. They're able to be more fluid.