

# Rule #1: Surround Yourself with Passionate People

By Scott | April 13, 2011

*"I am what I am because of who we all are."*

*~Definition of Ubuntu, a Bantu concept popularized by Nelson Mandela*

Think of the five or ten people you spend most time with. What are these people doing? How passionate are they? Do they inspire you?

If the answer is no, then it's time to find new friends.

The biggest single predictor of success (however you want to define it) is the people who surround you. The world influences us more than we realize (and more than we'd like to believe).

## Everything starts with passionate people

Summit Series is not the point of this article. It's just an example. There are thousands more – as long as you're keen to do the looking.

I prioritize my life around spending time with passionate people. It started with my mother and father (thanks guys!) and has continued with friends, classmates and colleagues. I spend time around passionate folks I don't even know, almost daily, because I seek out environments where they'll be. That's how I realized I wanted to speak, write and coach through this site, it's how I realized I wanted to run the investment partnership I do and it's how I crossed paths with my wife.

**It all begins and ends with passion.**

## Relationships are a choice

Anyone who doesn't have them, doesn't care enough. It can be scary to meet new people, but there's nothing more worth it. Our biggest fundamental need as humans is to love and be loved. We are all seeking out connection. But it's not always going to find you. You have to go out and find it. Make it a priority to drown yourself with passionate people, and they'll come out of the wood work.

## Surround yourself with passionate people – some things to keep in mind:

- 1. Relationships give you permission to tell your story and have your dreams come alive.** The more people you meet, the more you can change the world, both through helping others and spreading your big ideas.
- 2. Ask someone to tell their story.** Everyone is dying to get their message out to the world, they just might not know it. Give them permission, get present and simply listen.
- 3. Be genuine and vulnerable – Get deep.** When meeting someone, lead with intimacy. Humanize it! Don't rattle off how great you are and all the things you've done. Bragging will only distance yourself. Be humble. Tell them the scary story of what shaped your life and what got you here. Were you abused as a child, grew up without a mother or witness a debilitating disease in a loved one? We all have defining personal moments in our life. Connect with people on that level.
- 4. Walk into a room and see friends not strangers.** I don't care if you don't recognize a single face in the room. Adopt the belief that these people all want to connect as much as you do. Because it's true. Walk up and see how you can help. See friends, and friends they will become.
- 5. Be a host at your own party.** My wife, Chelsea, and I host dinner parties every month for between two and 10+ of our friends. We try to invite groups who don't know one another so we can create new

connections. When you're a host you do everything you can to make them feel welcome. Do this with those close to you and those you want to be close. Make it fun and sit strangers next to each other.

**6. Be a host at everyone else's party.** Being a host at your own home is a given. What about every other party you go to? The job of a host is to make others feel welcome and accommodated. Why only do this in your own home? Look at every interaction as a chance to be a host. Ask "how can I help you?" Have fun with it.

**7. Fire people who don't contribute to the dream.** Our peer group is our choice. Choose wisely. We all have people who put us down or don't believe in our ideas. They suck energy and diminish our potential. Who says you have to be around them? You don't, so stop acting like you do. Take the 80/20 Rule to your relationships. Passion is too fragile and much too valuable. Increase your odds of finding it and remove the chance of losing it.

**8. Repair bad connections.** For whatever reason there are people in our lives we cannot get away from, who seem to be out to get us. Kill them with kindness. Sack up, be the bigger person and do the following. First, feel their pain—try to empathize and somehow see their side. Second, be complementary—tell them what you respect about them. You can always find something. Relate to them. Do this often enough and most people will stop treating you like sh\*t. Often they'll actually become extremely close to you because you're the first one who helped them through their insecurity.

**9. Choose to care about someone.** The easiest way to get you to care about me is for me to care about you. The golden rule in reverse as laid out this weekend by Blake Mycoskie of Toms Shoes. Bust your ass to help those around you. Simple enough.

**10. Spend routine quality time.** Notice the life-changers you come across. It may be the shop owner down the street, your mother, long lost friend or your favorite author. Write them into your story. Set up group dinners, cook for them, plan a trip to the amusement park or rent out a paintball field (we just did this for a whopping \$45/person for four hours of unreal primal fun!).

Get lost in conversation for hours. Make these interactions a weekly routine. There's nothing more important. When you find someone new and interesting, see what you can invite them to right away that will make them feel a part of your life. They won't forget it.

**11. Find your things in town – Your 'tribe'.** Make this a priority. Some huge blowout on a boat is just one of unlimited options. There are like-minded folks like you all over your town. I don't care what you're into or where you live. This is the Internet's best use case. Search out those groups. Check Craig's List, MeetUp, coffee shop bulletin boards, Chamber of Commerce, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. If you overhear someone at lunch mention something interesting, don't be afraid to ask what's up. It's worth it, for both of you.

"You are the average of the five people closest to you."

~Jim Rohn

## Life sucks alone...

Experiences, accomplishments and success don't mean much of anything if you're alone at home with no one to celebrate. They are also much less likely to happen. What makes going to a restaurant, bar or new place so much fun? For the most part it's the people – either the ones you know or the ones you meet. Be intentional about nurturing these relationships. Stay genuine. We all could use the extra passion.

What these guys are doing with Summit Series is literally changing the world. If you don't currently have a resource full of passionate inspiring people, then create it. It starts with the people you spend most your time with, then move outwards.

Without this support you'll likely never do the ground-breaking things you're here to do. It's the biggest reason people don't leap. People around them think they're crazy and before you know it, you think you're crazy too. All of a sudden you're back to doing what everyone else is doing.

The hell with them!

## **Brainwash the impossible**

Those who think something's impossible generally don't spend enough time around crazy people who know it can be done.

We should all be insane enough to think things can be different. That things can be better. Put all those crazy people together and suddenly everyone's doing impossible things.

Most people I came across this weeked were on their first, second or third startup (often after selling the ones prior). For them business and passion-work is not a means for making a living but simply a way of life. These people thrive off the impossible.

I used to think entrepreneurship was unattainable. It was too hard to start a business. That's what authority always told me. Then I started hanging out with entrepreneurs. Being well into my third successful business, I now see no other way.

## **Create a network people dream of...**

Welcome the challenge.

You can have it. You just have to cultivate it. Surround yourself with people who light you on fire. You will fuel one another and the world will be better.

## **Passionate People change your reality**

"Everyone of you is Clark Kent. You're Superman and don't even know it. You all have at least 5 or 10 companies in you. Do the world justice. Be ready when you sell your business or decide it's time to move on. Go up a very tall building and jump. It's easy—just miss the ground."

The world is run off personal relationships. They fuel our passion and make the unthinkable possible. I don't care what business you're in or what problem you're trying to solve. It can only happen by surrounding yourself with the right people who believe insane things can be done. Without that support, we're nowhere.

Whether you know it or not, you all hold me to a higher standard. I plan to live up to it. What about you?