

# Get Connected

Catalog legend and noted networker **Roger Horchow** knows how to make friends. You can too.

Introduction by **Jessica Jones**  
Book excerpt\* by **Roger and Sally Horchow**  
Portrait by **Allison V. Smith**

## » THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 Friendships take work to maintain, which is a good thing.
- 2 Be a friend first, business partner second.
- 3 Follow-up, and be creative if you can.

**ROGER HORCHOW** was an only child, so his first friendships—with two neighborhood kids in the new Cincinnati subdivision where he grew up—were born of necessity. Years later, when Horchow was in his 30s, he learned the value of camaraderie from his boss and mentor, Stanley Marcus. Even before “networking” was in vogue, Mr. Stanley taught Horchow how to turn acquaintances into contacts and, more important, friends. By the time Horchow started his luxury mail-order catalog, *The Horchow Collection*, his inner circle read like the White Pages.

Several years ago, Horchow became famous for his friendliness. In the bestselling book *The Tipping Point*, author—and friend of Horchow’s youngest daughter Sally—Malcolm Gladwell anointed Roger a “Connector”—one of those rare, magnetic personalities able to draw people in and quickly make friends out of strangers. Readers learned that the famed founder, author, and Tony Award-winning Broadway producer had, in reality, a fourth line of work. And, as Horchow points out, if you don’t think being a friend is work, you’re probably not a very good one. “Most people, including me, are lazy,” he says. “You think, ‘I’m going to call so and so,’ or, ‘I wonder how they are,’ but you don’t do anything about it. So I’ve just gotten in the habit of doing something about it.”

Horchow recently decided to share those habits. With Sally’s help, Horchow has written *The Art of Friendship: 70 Simple Rules for Making Meaningful Connections*. In this handbook, which Gladwell describes in its foreword as “an exercise in the demystification of friendship,” father and daughter Horchow offer strategies for making, maintaining, and, when necessary, breaking relationships, both business and personal. “Over the years,” Roger says, “I’ve found that friends and family are what it’s all about.” »

\*From *The Art of Friendship* by Roger Horchow and Sally Horchow. Copyright (c) 2006 by the authors and reprinted by permission of St. Martin’s Press, LLC. Available now wherever books are sold.



## RULE #15

### File Important Facts

Remembering details that you learn about people in early meetings can serve to be a great friendship-building tool. If you can recall a remark made during a previous conversation, then refer to it the next time you are chatting, your potential friend will know you were interested enough to remember what she said. Similarly, if a colleague happens to mention an upcoming birthday, surprise him with a card. If a new neighbor comments on how much she loves tiramisu, invite her for tea and serve that special treat. The recipient of such thoughtfulness is sure to be flattered that you remembered.

This kind of careful listening is also useful in maintaining or deepening existing friendships. Imagine your friend's happiness when you send him a new book by an author he mentioned liking, or the warm reaction of a childhood pal when you remind her of times gone by with a box of Girl Scout cookies.

You might wonder how such attentiveness is possible. How can you be expected to remember the details of every conversation at every party? Of course, you can't and we don't expect you to. We advise keeping a friendship journal or calendar to record important dates and make notes. If you're more technologically proficient, put your PDA or laptop to good use.

## RULE #30

### Change Your Day-to-Day Habits

We all have regular routines we follow and ingrained patterns of behavior. Here are some suggestions for changing your day-to-day habits to allow for more spontaneous (and fun) meetings:

- » Take time with breakfast instead of rushing. Stop at a different coffee shop. Instead of sitting hunched over your coffee reading the newspaper, make a point of saying hello to one person.
- » Lunch is the perfect time of day to take a break from your routine. Pack a lunch and go to a local park to eat it. Enjoy the noontime sun and be open to connections.
- » Dinner (or cocktail hour) is the most popular time to get together with friends. Shake up the routine and try a new restaurant or bar. Organize a cocktail party and invite a new acquaintance.
- » Although the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, it can also be the least interesting route. Try a different path or vary your mode of transportation.
- » If you might have fallen into the habit of watching television or reading a book to unwind, instead consider a visit to your local bookstore to browse, or find a comfortable park bench and watch the sunset instead of TV.
- » Answering your daily quota of e-mails can be more than simply routine. Take this opportunity to reconnect by sending a message to a friend with whom you've lost touch. Even better, handwrite a card and send it the old-fashioned way.
- » If you like to read, join a book club.
- » If you're normally a homebody who rents movies, invite some acquaintances over for a movie night.
- » The people who live in your neighborhood, condo, or building already share something in common with you. Introduce yourself.

Many lasting friendships have been formed over the backyard fence or in the apartment building foyer.

- » Your work brings you in contact with a multitude of people. Instead of a quick nod, take the time for an introduction that might lead to a meaningful connection.
- » Make a plan to meet in person a work colleague you know only through the phone or e-mail.

Stepping outside your comfortable boundaries might cause an edge of trepidation or nervousness. Accept the challenge! With each new encounter, the next becomes easier.

## RULE #37

### Follow-Up, Follow-Up, Follow-Up

For most people, the term "follow-up" is associated with business dealings. It's something to do after a job interview or an important meeting. Yet it should be an equally significant element of your personal life, for it is the single most important thing you can do to build friendships.

Applied to friendship, following up is not about making or breaking a deal. It is a way to show appreciation for another person, to express interest in getting to know them better, or simply to further a sense of connection. That's it. There is no obligation, no ulterior motive, no expectation of return on investment. Yet if you follow-up with friends as efficiently as you do in business, you will certainly reap countless benefits.

Following up in friendships requires that you get in touch with the person—by means of a phone call, note, or even a one-line e-mail—in order to let them know that the relationship is important to you. It feels good and is almost always deeply appreciated. After all, when was the last time you didn't like it when someone thanked you? There is almost nothing better in the world than to receive unsolicited appreciation, praise, or friendly contact—except perhaps to send it to someone you care about.

## RULE #48

### Be Creative with Your Follow-Up

You need not stick with the basic phone call, e-mail, note formula for follow-up—there are plenty of other creative ideas you can use to connect with someone! Just be sure that the method you choose is appropriate for the nature of the relationship. Here are some ideas:

**Clippings:** Sending magazine or newspaper clippings that refer to a conversation you had with someone or that just made you think of that person is a follow-up method used successfully by grandmothers and CEOs alike. An e-mail with a link in it is the high-tech version of this form of follow-up!

**Referrals:** These work for both purely personal contacts (put one friend newly arrived from Italy in contact with another Italian friend who has been here a long time) and for mixed personal-business relationships (refer a friend looking for a personal trainer to a trainer you know well).

**Events:** If you hear of an upcoming event that you know someone would like, send him the details. ("Did you know that author you mentioned is reading at the public library on Tuesday?")

## RULE #56 Manage Your Time Commitments

Sad but true, it's necessary to schedule—even in friendships. To get the most out of your day, not to mention your friendships, set aside blocks of time in your planner to see your friends. For example, every Saturday that they are both in Dallas, Roger has lunch with his friend Jacques Vroom. Although their friendship spans decades and originated in the workplace, it has been maintained through this regular catch-up.

We know, we know: you're wondering, "How can I possibly make all these dates when I barely have time for myself and my family? Or: How can I possibly make yet another commitment to yet another new friend?" (Never mind that she is wonderful and you have so much in common that you may as well have been twins separated at birth.) "My schedule is already too full," you're saying as you throw your hands into the air. "Pretty soon, I'll have to start scheduling my dream time while I sleep!" When you think about it, though, with 1,440 minutes in a day, surely you can find a few for a good friend? Here are a few possibilities to budget your time into a regular face-to-face meeting:

- » Meet for exercise or a walk one day a week.
- » Car pool, bus, or take a subway together to a meeting you both regularly attend.
- » Share a meal. (Everyone's got to eat!)
- » Watch your favorite TV program or sporting event together.
- » Catch up while you do your laundry.
- » Meet for an afternoon cup of coffee.
- » Make a side-by-side appointment to get your nails done.

It's also important to realize that different levels of friendship require different levels of time commitment. Strangely enough, as our friend Sara Mosle put it in a *New York Times Magazine* essay, "The Importance of Being Busy," your closest friends could also be the people you see the least. With more formal friends, she wrote, you make plans weeks in advance, and you stick with the plans no matter what. "The unstated rule is that you can cancel only on those whom you genuinely like," she contends. "Only a true friend would understand."

So cancel if you have to—but then be sure to reschedule.

## RULE #61 Don't Keep Score

Each of us, for better or worse, has the potential to be a "scorekeeper." The key is recognizing when or why you are prone to keeping score, and then avoiding doing so. If you fall in the category of someone who likes to entertain and be outgoing and is proactive about planmaking, you are at constant risk of not following the "Don't Keep Score" rule. Every once in a while, you may wonder when someone will reciprocate your invitation or why someone doesn't have you over more often. You might also "keep score on yourself" from time to time, agonizing about the way to properly reciprocate someone else's expression of friendship.

You may have a tendency to put more value on each interaction than other people do. But that is not a good enough reason to then evaluate, pass judgment on, or fuss about

others' actions in this way. Doing so is a common, but unacceptable trap that only leads to disappointment.

Some people keep score because they are guilt-ridden and assume that others are judging their contribution. Others feel they are "owed" in all aspects of their lives, and thus keep a constant tally of those who are indebted to them. Those are the people who might go out of their way to introduce you to someone new, but then expect you to be forever grateful for the introduction. They are the kind of people who need credit, who can't enjoy the simple joy of generosity alone.

So, how can you avoid being a person who keeps score? First of all, you must not let the idea of payback come into play at all, whether you are on the giving or receiving end of an expression of friendship. Get out of the "who owes me" way of thinking.

Next, you must recognize and appreciate the ways that people reach out to you; this will help you do the same. You should assume that others are not keeping score either. If you do something in order to get credit or receive something in return, you are doing it for the wrong reason. Stop measuring your relationships; relax, be kind, and the world will suddenly seem more generous.

## RULE #65 Be a Friend First and a Business Partner Second

Some friendships naturally transform into a working business partnership. If you value your friendship, you must remember that you are a friend first and a business partner second. That said, do not enter lightly into a business dealing with a friend.

Some people mask an interest in doing business with you with a friendly approach. These folks have the equation backward: they want you as a business partner first and a friend second. Nothing positive will come out of gambling on a business proposition that uses friendship as ante. If, however, you are friends first, you and your friend can engage in an honest dialogue about the possible risks and potential pitfalls (financial and otherwise) of doing business together.

If you are considering doing business with a friend, you must always ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that can happen?" If the risk is too great, find someone else to do business with and keep your friendship alive. **D**



### Friendly Technology

Computer technology offers a host of resources to help you find and manage friendships.

**SEARCH ENGINES:** These can help you locate people with whom you have lost touch but would like to reconnect. Three to try: Google.com, Yahoo.com, and AnyWho.com.

**SPECIAL-INTEREST SITES:** If you love origami and would like to connect with other paper-folders, search the Web for "origami group" and you'll soon be trading folds. Meetup.com is a site that helps people with shared interests form groups.

**BULLETIN BOARDS AND MESSAGE FORUMS:** There are many local web communities that list activities around town, including Craigslist.org and Citysearch.com.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:** These are Web sites that help you find new people who are also interested in expanding their social circles. Try Friendster.com.

**PARTY ORGANIZERS:** These are Web sites that make it easy to hold a gathering by sending invitations, organizing replies, and sending reminders. Evite.com is one to try.