



It's time for positive CHANGE

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Building Community

UXL, December 2014



The last chapter in my book, [The Ten Minute Leadership Challenge](#), is all about building community. I chose to conclude with this chapter because it is one of the most important aspects of leadership, and one that is often overlooked. As you grow as a leader, do you take the time to think about others? Do you remember to keep in touch with your community? Do you reach out to new people and see how you might be able to help them?

With the holiday season fast approaching, it is a good idea to hit the brakes, take a look around you, and reflect on your community. As much as the holidays *should* be about other people, they are too often about ourselves (when does *my* holiday break start? When do I



from the
UXL BLOG

get *my* end-of-year bonus? I hope people appreciate all the effort *I* took in preparing *my* home for the holiday party).

Make a genuine effort to stop looking constantly inward and start looking outward. Here are a few great ways to build a **genuine, sustainable community** with your co-workers:

Get Outside Your Bubble

You might go to networking events or office parties or happy hours, but how often do you talk to others outside of your small bubble of friends? It is easy to chat with those we are comfortable with or have known for a long time, but staying within the confines of your friend group will not necessarily help you grow professionally or expand your network.

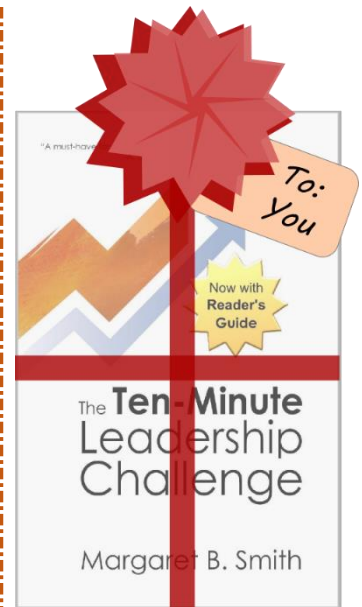
As a leader, it is beneficial to reach out to others and attempt to make a connection—not only will you feel the benefit (there are lots of people out there who could potentially help you in some way), but they could potentially benefit from your skill set as well. You'll find that the leaders at the top of the corporate ladder usually have dozens (if not hundreds) of meaningful connections because it truly takes a village to build a leader.

Actually Care

Have you ever been in a situation where you knew someone was only talking to you because they were trying to sell you something? Don't be that person! You should not approach networking with the cold attitude of someone hell bent on making the most connections possible. Sure, you might snag a couple dozen business cards, but is anyone *actually* going to want to speak with you again? Not if you're coming off as phony. Instead, work on building your community in an authentic, sustainable way. That means *actually* caring about the people you meet and taking a genuine interest in them. These kind of relationships can take years to build but, in my experience, they are worth it.

Ask Questions and Listen to the Answers

Part of creating a genuine relationship is asking good questions and *actually* listening to the answers. It is very easy to talk about ourselves, but oftentimes it is best to put our egos aside and listen to what others have to say. Ask your new connections about their background, their family, their interests, etc. and pay attention to what they have to say. This is not only part of being a good friend, it is also a useful leadership practice. If you take a sincere interest in the people around you and get to know their personalities and capabilities, it is easier for you, as a leader, to figure out their "sweet



Happy Holidays!
[Available on Amazon.](#)

How to Befriend Your Boss



Befriending your boss can be a tricky endeavor. You don't want to seem like a brown-noser or disingenuous. So [how do you make friends with your boss](#) (the gatekeeper to your next promotion)?

Happiness and Goldie Hawn

spots” and give them assignments that are suited to their abilities. Besides, everyone appreciates a good listener!

Keep it Positive

Practice keeping a positive tone with everyone you meet. I cannot emphasize enough how much of a difference this can make in your professional *and* personal life. If others see you as a positive, encouraging presence, they will be more likely to recommend you to others, more likely to trust and confide in you, and more likely to root for you as you climb the company ladder. Your positive attitude should be part of your psychological brand (that overarching impression you give to others *and* to those whom you haven’t even met). When people say “your reputation precedes you,” you should be confident that that is a good thing.

This month, make an extra effort to get out there and network with your officemates. When you see someone looking bored or lonely, step away from your old pals and engage her in conversation. And remember: don’t make any pre-judgments about people before you truly get to know them. Just because you don’t think you will get along, share the same interests, or have anything useful to offer one another, doesn’t mean that’s the case. People can be surprising and you never know what wonderful ideas, stories, skills, or insights they might have to offer.

Happy connecting,



Margaret Smith

Founder, [UXL: Creating Successful Leaders](#)
Author of [The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge](#)



What does Goldie Hawn know about happiness? More than you might think. Read about her [insights into happiness...](#)

Fear and Imagination



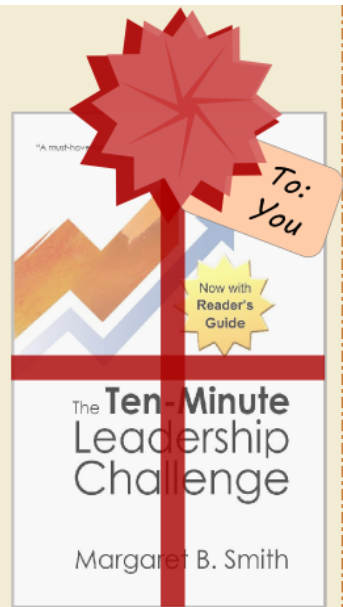
A big part of fear is the story we tell ourselves. [In her TED Talk](#), Karen Thompson Walker dives into our self-narratives and how to become masters of our own stories.

Happy Holidays from UXL!

Looking for a gift for a recent grad, an aspiring leader, or someone who is seeking positive change in their career?

How about a leadership book?

The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge is a user-friendly, practical guide designed to help you become the leader you know you can be.



Your
Arsenal
★ ★ ★

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Learn how Insights Discovery can reveal your strengths and put them to work!

[UXL Workshops](#)

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About
UXL

UXL's mission is to create leaders, promote positive change, and enable businesses and individuals to transform their dreams into reality.

Margaret Smith is a career coach, speaker, author, licensed Insights Discovery practitioner, and adjunct professor at St. Kate's University with 27 yrs experience as a Senior Leader for 3M.

[Learn More about Margaret](#)

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