

Introduction

What Is INTRIGUE and Why Is It Important?

I think the one lesson I have learned is that there is no substitute for paying attention.

TV ANCHOR DIANE SAWYER

Did you know goldfish, yes, goldfish, have longer attention spans than we humans do?

Nine seconds to our eight. At least that's what Harvard Business School researcher Nancy F. Koehn reported in a February 2014 *Marketplace Business* article.¹

It gets worse. *Fast Company* reported in March 15, 2012, that one in four people abandon a website if it takes longer than *four seconds* to load. And Drs. Jacqueline Olds and Richard Schwartz reported in the *Utne Reader*, "Two recent studies suggest our society is in the midst of a dramatic and progressive slide toward disconnection."²

Clearly, we have an impatience epidemic, and we're suffering from alienation and attention bankruptcy, all at the same time.

That's a problem because if you can't get people's attention, you'll never get their connection. The good news is, there are ways to overcome people's impatience, alienation, and chronic distraction, and this book teaches them.

If You Can't Get People's Attention, You'll Never Get Their Connection

I have found if you love life, life will love you back.

MUSICIAN ARTHUR RUBENSTEIN

I love this topic and want you to love it back, so, I'm going to follow Carrie Fisher's advice. Remember her? Princess Leia in *Star Wars*? Cinnamon-bun ears? Yes, that Carrie. She said, "Instant gratification takes too long."

Carrie's right. We don't want more information. We want to be intrigued . . . and we want to be intrigued *fast*. That is why I'm going to share a quick backstory as to how and why I discovered and developed the INTRIGUE approach, then we'll jump into the how-to's. Sound good? Great. Here's the backstory.

I had the privilege of emceeding the Maui Writers Conference for seventeen years. We did something unprecedented at that time, which was to give authors an opportunity to jump the chain of command and connect face to face with publishing insiders. What we didn't anticipate was that these authors didn't know how to connect with these decision-makers. In fact, one woman exited her meeting with tears in her eyes. I asked, "Are you okay?"

She said, "No, I'm not okay. I just saw my dream go down the drain."

"Ouch. What happened?"

"I've been working on my book for three years. I put it on the table, the editor took one look at it, and said, 'I don't have time to read all that. Tell me in sixty seconds what your book is about and why someone would want to read it.'"

"My mind went blank. I thought it was my job to write it. I thought it was his job to sell it. The more I tried to explain it, the more confused he became. My big chance, and I blew it."

I told her, “You still have an opportunity to connect with agents and editors. Many of them will be at our reception tonight, and you can meet them there.”

The next day, I saw her in the halls and asked, “Did you have a chance to connect with some agents and editors last night?”

She wouldn’t look at me. I thought maybe she hadn’t heard me so I asked again.

With her head down, she said in a soft voice, “I didn’t go.”

Inside I’m thinking, *You worked on your book for years, spent thousands of dollars, flew across a continent and an ocean to get here, had a chance to meet decision-makers who had the power to make your dreams come true, and you didn’t go?*

She said, “I was so intimidated. I didn’t know what to say. I hid out in my hotel room.”

Wow. She wasn’t the only one who didn’t get a deal that first year. Many other authors failed to get interest in their projects. The more I thought about it, the more I realized it wasn’t that their projects didn’t have value; it was because they didn’t know how to connect with decision-makers and quickly and compellingly communicate that value so they got it and wanted it.

I thought, *Somebody’s got to do something about this.* I realized, *I’m as much a somebody as anybody; I’ll do something about this.*

So, I wrote POP! *Create the Perfect Pitch, Title, and Tagline for Anything.* That book has been featured on MSNBC, in the *New York Times* and *Fast Company*, and has helped people create successful brand names, best-selling titles, and innovative marketing slogans.

I’m proud of the difference that book’s made; however, I’ve realized in the past few years that it takes more than a clever title and tagline to connect with people. Titles and taglines can *catch* people’s favorable attention; they can’t *hold* it. If you really want to connect with people, you need to be able to *keep* their favorable attention and *gift* them with yours.

There Is NO Connection without Quality Attention

Only connect.

NOVELIST E. M. FORSTER

I believe, at my core, that Forster's advice to "only connect" is true. When we look back, at the end of our life, what will matter is: Did we genuinely connect with the people important to us?

Yet so often, despite our best intentions and efforts, we *don't* connect. It's not that we don't want to; it's that we're not taught to. We're taught math, science, and history, yet we're not taught how to create mutually rewarding connections. As a result, we don't do it well or we don't do it at all.

The result? A profound sense of disconnection. Our ideas go unheard. Our projects go unfunded. Our programs go unattended. Our dreams go unfulfilled. Our relationships go . . . nowhere.

As Stephen Marche said in an April 2012 *Atlantic* article titled *Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?* "We suffer from unprecedented alienation. We have never been more detached from one another."

I asked myself, *What does it take to really connect with people in a culture of impatience and alienation?* Well, there has to be *two-way* attention for our interactions to be mutually rewarding. How do we do that? We stop trying to *get* attention and start *giving* attention.

It makes sense, doesn't it? If we want people to give us their precious time and attention, we must first give them ours. We go first. We set the precedent. Being intrigued *in* others makes us intriguing *to* others. Mutual INTRIGUE is the key to turning frustrating, waste-of-time, one-way communications into productive, rewarding two-way connections.

How to Make the Most of This Book

What did we go back to before there were drawing boards?

COMEDIAN GEORGE CARLIN

I've distilled everything I've learned about this topic into an easy-to-apply INTRIGUE acronym. Think of it as a recipe for connection. Each letter of INTRIGUE represents an ingredient that can help you create reciprocated favorable attention, which *is* the core of connection. As with any recipe, adapt it to your taste and situation.

I imagine you're busy, so I've kept the chapters under ten pages so you can dip in and derive value even when you have only a few minutes to spare. The Action Questions at the end of each chapter can help you and your team discuss how to customize these ideas to your priorities.

Speaking of priorities—the best way to benefit from this book is to fill out the WS Form on the next page. Keeping your WS Form, the INTRIGUE version of a “drawing board,” in front of you while you work through the chapters switches you from *observer* mode (“That’s a good idea”) to *activator* mode (“Here’s how I’ll apply that idea”) so you reap real-world results.

The WS Form is a tangible way to focus your attention on who you want to connect with, beforehand. It helps you imagine: What will make this communication intriguing, useful, and relevant? What are the current problems, needs? How can I quickly address those and add value from the beginning so people are motivated to give me their valuable time and attention? Filling out your WS Form is one of the single best things you can do to prepare for interactions that benefit all involved.