

Who is in Your “Inner Circle”

From “A Smarter Way to Network” by Rob Cross and Robert Thomas:
<http://hbr.org/2011/07/managing-yourself-a-smarter-way-to-network>

The most successful, satisfied leaders have built up strong networks of these types of people:

1. People who offer new information or expertise, including internal/external clients who increase market awareness; peers in other functions, divisions or geographies who share best practices, and contacts in other industries who inspire innovation. ***Who plays this role in your life?***

2. Formally powerful people who provide mentoring, sense-making, political support and resources; and informally powerful people who offer influence, help coordinating projects and support among the “rank and file.” ***Who plays this role in your life?***

3. People who give developmental feedback, challenge your decisions and push you to be better. ***Who plays this role in your life?***

4. People who provide personal support such as colleagues who help you get back on track when you're having a bad day or friends with whom you can just relax and be yourself. ***Who plays this role in your life?***

5. People who add a sense of purpose or worth, such as bosses and customers who validate your work, and family members and others who show you your work has a broader meaning. ***Who plays this role in your life?***

6. People who promote work/life balance, holding you accountable for activities that improve your physical health, mental engagement or spiritual well-being. ***Who plays this role in your life?***

Developing Your Inner Circle

1. Strengthen the beneficial relationships.

- With whom do you have the most beneficial interactions and relationships?
- With whom do you have the most energizing relationships?
- What can you do to strengthen these relationships?

2. Weed out the negative relationships.

- Who saps your energy or promotes unhealthy behaviors?
- How can you:
 - Re-shape your role to avoid them?
 - Devote less time to being with them?
 - Work to change their behavior?
 - Reframe your reactions so you don't dwell on them?

3. Where do you need to build new relationships?

- Looking at each category of relationship above, where do you see holes or gaps? Where do you need to find new people or different kinds of people?
- Considering your personal/professional goals, which new people or new categories of people do you need to develop relationships with?
- How could you go about meeting these people and building relationships with them?

4. Is your network too inbred? Are you connected to people from different occupations, industries, walks of life? How could you benefit from diversifying your network? In what ways do you want to diversify your network?