WHY INFLUENCING REAL PEOPLE Is More Important Than Getting LIKES

BY PHIL COOKE

In the rush to grow your social media influence, don't forget that influencing the people you meet every day is far more helpful and important to your life and career. I'd rather have 10 people who really care about my message and ideas than 10,000 who just click a *"Like"* button. To that end, here are some key things to remember about extending your influence to the people you meet everyday:

1 **Put down the mobile device and actually be in the moment.** The most valuable commodity of the 21st century will be undivided attention. But most settle for what's been called "continuous partial attention." Conversations happen around glancing at email, texting a quick note, or glancing at your Twitter feed. Next time you meet someone for coffee try this: Give them your full attention, and see what difference it makes.

2 **Have something to contribute to the conversation.** What are you reading? What significant movies have you watched lately? Been to a museum in the last year? Be the type of person others want to be around because your interests are so fascinating. Remember the "Garbage in, garbage out" rule? If all you're consuming is People magazine or other people's Facebook updates, chances are, your conversation will be less than insightful.

3 **Learn to listen.** No matter how fascinating you may be, the best influencers are great listeners. Conversation is about listening – not just thinking of next thing you want to say.

4 **Finally, seek out opportunities for real, face to face contact.** You'll actually find that most people are starving for real contact. Invite people for coffee. Have them drop by your place after work. Invite them to lunch. You'll be grateful you did.

Becoming an influencer in the culture starts with influencing the people around you. Why wait? Start today...