

Take a Millionaire to Lunch

**** FAQ's – Frequently Asked Questions ****

Is the only requirement that the person I take to lunch be a millionaire?

No. I use the term "millionaire" figuratively. I'm referring to anyone who can leverage and develop as a center of interest for your business or career, anyone you know or like, someone who can help you and, possibly, someone you can help in return. There are plenty of non-millionaires you can take to lunch, and all kinds of people you speak with on the phone every day who you can get leads, prospects and referrals (start with your most satisfied clients and customers). What matters is their contact-ability and willingness to help, not their balance sheet or net worth.

Does it matter if he is in a different field than I am?

No. I suggest you meet with people in different fields. It will open up a whole new network of potential contacts for your products and services that you might take years to penetrate by yourself. By the way, when was the last time you got a lead, prospect or referral from someone in your field? If so, go back to that very person, and ask again.

What if I disagree with his basic philosophy?

So what? We can get locked in to our own thinking, almost to the point of myopia. It is very beneficial to open up to other views, ideas, beliefs and philosophies. You don't have to agree with someone for that person to be a great source of contacts, open up a network, or be center of influence. If you feel you cannot do business with that person because of philosophical differences, don't. Maybe an idea, suggestion or a contact that person has will be beneficial to you. I have gotten many leads and referrals from people who I would prefer not to do business with, but who connected me with people who turned out to be great clients and developed into wonderful friendships.

Do I have to know him?

No. There are many people who, when approached by a total stranger, will still be open to speaking if they feel a sense of give-back or a connection - or simply may like to help. Most of the people we know today, before we knew them, we didn't know them. That's why it's best to use someone you know to connect you with someone you don't know. It's much better if I say to you, "Paul suggested I call you."

How do I know she is a millionaire?

Doesn't matter. Again, I use the term millionaire figuratively - substitute leader, visionary, pioneer, well-connected person, friend, associate, someone you like, or someone you know who can help you.

What do I do if I don't like him?

Be open-minded enough to listen anyway. People who push our buttons, whom we "don't like" have something to teach us about ourselves. We cannot dislike something about another person without learning about what we dislike in ourselves. Besides, you don't have to like someone for her to assist you. You can politely thank them, and then break and move on (not every person you meet works out).

Why would a millionaire go to lunch with anyone he doesn't know?

People do lunch or speak on the phone with people they don't know every day - for lots of reasons. You never know unless you ask. Maybe it's altruistic, maybe it's self-interest, maybe a touch of both. Ask them, "Why would you do this?" Even better, ask them, "How might I help you in return, or reciprocate?" I don't believe in picking brains. Vultures pick brains. We all have something of value to offer; maybe a contact, idea, referral, lead, etc. Exchange value. It doesn't matter if they go to lunch or not. You want their contacts, not necessarily their company or companionship.

Do you have to offer him something?

If you want to offer, offer. Again, it's better to trade value for value, but not always necessary, and often not in kind. They may want something you have access to that they don't. Many successful people want to mentor, help, guide, share and give back to support others. That's one of the reasons they are successful, regardless of how you measure success. Truly "successful" people are not selfish; on the contrary, they are often selfless.

Do you have to compromise yourself?

You don't have to "compromise" yourself (I assume to mean your values, integrity, etc). You can always say, "Thank you for your time and willingness to help," and move on. Just because someone is "successful" doesn't mean they clawed their way to the "top" or climbed over someone to get there. Truly successful people buoy and boost others along the way, and usually, had lots of help from others. It's also likely that other people were helped by their ascent, so they are willing to help others. They'll appreciate your desire to learn and grow, and will be flattered by your interest in their success and their advice. After all, is there a better measure of true success than a willingness to help others be more successful?

A variation off this theme is to survey or "interview" them (tape record it if they agree), then share the tape with them, and give them credit for helping you. If you write articles, a newsletter or column, mention them and give them some notoriety and publicity and a pat on the back for their generosity.

Of course, I'd sit next to a billionaire at a leader's meeting, such as you describe. But the vast majority of us never get to such meetings. We don't know millionaires we could take to lunch every week.

You speak to and meet people every day, have dozens or hundreds in your address book and rolodex, and can reach anyone you want with a series of phone calls or emails. If you can't take them to lunch, speak to them on the phone. If you can't find one every week, find one THIS week.

The idea here is to leverage other networks who are ideal prospects for you, and get to them with the endorsement of a respected person in that network. Take a "millionaire" to lunch if for no other reason, than to dispel some pre-conceived notions you have about successful and wealthy people. Again, they don't have to be financially wealthy, just in a position to connect you with someone you're looking for.

More important, why should I take a rich guy out to lunch every week? Merely because he's rich does not mean he's smart. Merely because he's rich does not mean he can help me. Merely because he's rich does not mean that he's a success.

OK, so take a rich "gal" instead. Rich is not defined by money, but by a willingness to share, teach, help others, and give back. Rich has more to do with a person's spirit, than his pocketbook. There are many "poor" millionaires (for that matter, poor billionaires), and "rich" paupers. It's not about the money, balance sheet or net worth. It's about willingness, contact-ability, networking, building relationships, and furthering your opportunities.

I do not believe that a person is a success because he makes a lot of money, or is famous, or is a "winner."

Thanks for sharing. None of this matters. If you let definitions, biases, judgments or pre-conceived notions block you, you miss out on a world of possibility. These kinds of beliefs and this kind of thinking really gets in our way. Just as money, fame or being a "winner" does not necessarily make a person successful, it doesn't disqualify them, either. The issue is whether they are willing and able to help catapult you forward, and assist. Chances are, a successful, wealthy, or famous person is probably more likely to help you than a person who is struggling, broke or obscure - then again, not necessarily. Everybody knows somebody. Don't pre-judge (the root of the word, prejudice).

I believe in the old dictum, "Be yourself." Don't suck up to anyone. Of course, you need contacts, but YOU choose them for YOUR reasons, not someone else's.

I advocate being yourself, being authentic. Leveraging contacts doesn't require you to be "somebody else" or suck up to anyone. Asking for help, trading value for value, building relationships, seeking advice, getting other points of view or opinions, opening up to possibility, expanding your network and contacts does not require you to be anyone but YOU. If eliminating the word "millionaire" will make it easier for you, do so. The bottom line here is the "Take a Millionaire to Lunch" is my title for a process that can leverage your opportunities exponentially. What matters is the process, and your willingness to reach out to others for help.

Success is painting a vision to follow and then living according to your vision. Surround yourself with people whose visions are in harmony with yours.

This does not mean people with money, fame, prestige, success, contacts and reputations are NOT in harmony with you and your vision. Often, they are more harmonious, and because they have traveled the path, and been where you are now, they are more in tune with you and what you can do to move forward. If all we do is surround ourselves with people who agree with us, or are like us, we'll have a very narrow view of what's possible for us. We need people who have opposing views and see things differently than we do.

One of the benefits of getting out of our comfort zones and reaching beyond what we've always done in the past is expanding our horizons - and our thinking. We don't learn and grow by doing the same old things, in the same old ways. If you want to break loose of the binds that keep you where you are, try taking a "millionaire" to lunch this week.

One day someone will call and ask to take YOU to lunch. It just might be me.

Mitch Axelrod

P.S. Millionaire to Lunch™ applies to anyone and everyone you meet, in any situation or circumstance. It's a non-threatening, liberating, simple and effective way to tell people what you do, why you do it, and who you're looking for.

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