The Power of the Other

Lighting up the leadership scoreboard once again, bestselling author Henry Cloud knocks it out of the park with *The Power of Other.* The book has the world's longest, yet most informative subtitle*: The startling effect other people have on you, from the boardroom to the bedroom and beyond—and what to do about it*. In his own words:

This book represents a major shift in the conversation on leadership, growth, and high performance. I want to shift the conversation from a focus only on you (i.e., here is how you can develop yourself) to a recognition that your own performance is either improved or diminished by the other people in your scenario.

From there he presents a very practical, and at times a very revealing construct of four different types of relationships in our lives—and how they affect us, positively or negatively.

Take a look at these Book Notes to whet your appetite for a book that you will probably want to add to your next-to-read list.

Title: **The Power of the Other:** *The startling effect other people have on you, from the boardroom to the bedroom and beyond—and what to do about it*

Author: **Henry Cloud**

Copyright Date: **2016**

Book Description:

An expert on the psychology of leadership and the bestselling author of *Integrity, Necessary Endings,* and *Boundaries For Leaders* identifies the critical ingredient for personal and professional wellbeing.

Most leadership coaching focuses on helping leaders build their skills and knowledge and close performance gaps. These are necessary, but not sufficient. Using evidence from neuroscience and his work with leaders, Dr. Henry Cloud shows that the best performers draw on another vital resource: personal and professional relationships that fuel growth and help them surpass current limits.

Popular wisdom suggests that we should not allow others to have power over us, but the reality is that they do, for better or for worse. Consider the boss who diminishes you through cutting remarks versus one who challenges you to get better. Or the colleague who always seeks the limelight versus the one who gives you the confidence to finish a difficult project. Or the spouse who is honest and supportive versus the one who resents your success. No matter how talented, intelligent, or experienced, the greatest leaders share one commonality: the power of the others in their lives.

Combining engaging case studies, persuasive findings from cutting-edge brain research, and examples from his consulting practice, Dr. Cloud argues that whether you're a Navy SEAL or a corporate executive, outstanding performance depends on having the right kind of connections to fuel personal growth and minimize toxic associations and their effects. Presenting a dynamic model of the impact these different kinds of connections produce, Dr. Cloud shows readers how to get more from themselves by drawing on the strength and expertise of others. You don't have a choice whether or not others have power in your life, but you can choose what kinds of relationships you want.

Book Quotes:

You may have already identified the issue keeping you from the next level of performance, or you just want to make sure you get as far as you can go. In either case, you want to surpass your current limit, your current reality. How that is actually done is the subject of this book: how we become better, how we become more…And here's the good news: it's not a mystery. We know how it happens. Better yet, you can learn how. LOCATION: 216

For centuries, philosophers, psychologists, theologians, and spiritual thinkers have struggled with something called the mind-body problem, the fact that the invisible has a real effect on the visible, and vice versa. But however we explain these mechanisms, the neglected truth is that the invisible attributes of relationship, the connection between people, have real, tangible, and measurable power. LOCATION: 272

But the need for connection begins even before birth. It goes literally from the womb to the tomb. Relationship affects our physical and mental functioning throughout life. This invisible power, the power of the other, builds both the hardware and the software that leads to healthy functioning and better performance. For example, research shows over and over again that people trying to reach goals succeed at a much greater rate if they are connected to a strong human support system. LOCATION: 284

Ask many people about their greatest accomplishments and challenges overcome, and you will find one thing in common: there was someone on the other end who made it possible. LOCATION: 305

This book represents a major shift in the conversation on leadership, growth, and high performance. I want to shift the conversation from a focus only on you (i.e., here is how you can develop yourself) to a recognition that your own performance is either improved or diminished by the other people in your scenario. LOCATION: 309

The undeniable reality is that how well you do in life and in business depends not only on what you do and how you do it, your skills and competencies, but also on who is doing it with you or to you. LOCATION: 314

You don't have a choice about whether or not others have power in your life. They do. But you do have a choice as to what kind of power others are going to have. LOCATION: 319

The three elements that form the triangle of well-being work together to build, drive, create, and regulate our functioning and performance. What are the three? They are our brain/body (the physical), our relational connections, and our minds, which regulate the energy and information needed to live and perform. LOCATION: 380

First, there is the brain and the nervous system considered as a whole, the physical organ that embodies all of these processes, drives them, and is affected by them…Second, there is relationship, our interpersonal connections and our experiences in those connections. By relationship we are talking not just about hanging out with your pals in a fraternity house. We are talking about specific qualitative relational connectedness…Third, there's the mind—and this is the biggest reason I believe my professor was wrong in implying therapy was only about relationship. The mind is the psychological equipment that regulates it all, the

essential software process that keeps it all flowing and working to win…or not. LOCATION: 433

Relationships, the "power of the other," cannot be neglected in the formula of getting to your next level. They are central to it all. The physical, the relational, and the mental, all working together but truly built in relationship. LOCATION: 448

To get to the next level of performance, you certainly do have to think differently, but to think differently, you have to have a different mind, and your brain has to fire differently. To develop these differences in your mind and brain, the equipment in which thoughts and feelings and behaviors are embodied, you need to connect in ways that rewire you. LOCATION: 455

That is what real growth is about—qualitative differences in our performance equipment, which spits out different performance. You will discover that that kind of growth happens in key relationships with key dynamics, and as they are present, you will grow, change, and increase your capacity. That is the result of the power of the other. LOCATION: 497

Whatever we hope to achieve, our success depends on relationships with others. Without the help of others or with negative dynamics from destructive others, we will usually fail. There is no standing still. We are either thriving in relational energy and growth or we are going backward, slowly or quickly. LOCATION: 526

As long as you are alive, your heart and mind and soul will be searching for a connection. An "other." Several others. A community that will bring life, all the ingredients of life that you need to get past the limit of your present existence and performance. LOCATION: 571

The need for connection begins before infancy and continues throughout life—from the womb to the tomb. If you are alive, you need it to thrive, period. LOCATION: 573

The reality is that you are always in one of four places of connection. No matter what life circumstances you are going through on the outside—victory or defeat, or somewhere in between—there are only four possibilities of connection that you can be in at any given time. It is the premise of this book, and science and experience agree, that figuring out where you are is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. LOCATION: 607

While there are four different kinds of connectedness—four possible corners of our relational space—only one of them will help you thrive. The other three corners will always diminish your performance and your well-being.

1. Disconnected, No Connection
2. The Bad Connection
3. The Pseudo-Good Connection
4. True Connection

LOCATION: 614

True connection always means being emotionally and functionally invested in other people, in a give-and-receive dynamic. Disconnection lacks something, in one direction or the other—either in the giving or the receiving. Truly connected people do both. They are emotionally present and able to give and to receive. LOCATION: 623

As leaders, people residing in Corner One tend not to build strong relational cultures. The culture might be high-performance and demanding, but people don't feel that their contributions are valued or that they are

truly cared about. LOCATION: 626

Under disconnected leaders, decision making tends to be done in isolation, either solely by the leaders or in organizational silos that they build or foster. LOCATION: 630

Leaders operating from Corner One are frustrating and confusing to be around, so imagine what it's like to be in a personal relationship with a disconnected person. LOCATION: 638

Many leaders do feel alone, but it doesn't have to be that way, and the best leaders create conditions that help them avoid being pulled into Corner One. Certainly some aspects of leadership require making tough decisions, being the one who owns it, the place where the buck stops. But leadership isn't supposed to be lonely or isolated. When it is, something is wrong, and it can be fixed. LOCATION: 665

At some point, for most people, Corner One gives way to Corner Number Two: the Bad Connection. It is as if the connecting chip makes a calculation that a bad relationship is better than no relationship at all. LOCATION: 734

Corner Number Two, the Bad Connection, is not necessarily a connection with a bad or abusive person, although it may be. Instead, it is a connection, preoccupation, or pull toward a person who has the effect of making you feel bad or "not good enough" in some way. Inferior. Defective perhaps. As though something is wrong with you. Somehow this person or persons have come to have the power in your life of making you feel bad. LOCATION: 737

Besides making you feel bad, probably the worst effect of Corner Number Two is what it does to your performance and your functioning. No one delivers a great performance while lost in negative self-evaluation. Corner Number Two annihilates high performance through self-doubt and self-deprecation. You become more concerned with gaining someone's approval than with the performance itself. Simply stated, when that is happening, you have become less of you. LOCATION: 761

Whereas a Corner Two connection leaves you feeling bad, or not good enough in some way, in Corner Three it's the opposite. You feel good! Sometimes really good. The positive feelings take a variety of forms: the affair, the addiction, the attachment to promotions, awards, or positive results, the next acquisition, the next big product launch, accolades from others. LOCATION: 806

Flattery is perhaps the worst drug of all for Corner Three leaders. They thrive on it, and unfortunately their position puts them in the exactly right circumstance for the pushers of this drug. LOCATION: 824

Corners One and Two are downers, but Corner Three lets the good times roll. It's fun. High energy. Electric at times. The person or leader who is experiencing Corner Three is on an endorphin high. Champagne is flowing; high fives rule the day. Sometimes entire companies can get caught up in the hype. Even Enron looked good for a moment. And a flattering affair can certainly feel good…for a while. LOCATION: 836

Need. On the one hand, it is literally the essence of what makes life work. At the same time, it is a state that we don't relish embracing. That is the ultimate paradox in every human's life. LOCATION: 888

The same is true with relationships. They are as essential as oxygen, water, and food, yet we often avoid taking them in, let alone asking for the critical fuel that relationships provide. Too often we get stuck in the Three Corners Roundabout, not being able to reach the very things that will help us thrive. We avoid embracing our needs for support and help from one another. LOCATION: 896

In the simplest terms, a real connection is one in which you can be your whole self, the real, authentic you, a

relationship to which you can bring your heart, mind, soul, and passion. Both parties to the relationship are wholly present, known, understood, and mutually invested. What each truly thinks, feels, believes, fears, and needs can be shared safely. LOCATION: 906

The concept of the true self versus the false self is an old construct in the field of psychology, meaning exactly what it says. The true self is who you really are, and the false self is the mask that we put on to protect ourselves. LOCATION: 923

All great leaders need to be able to address their constituents—whether voters, employees, or investors—with confidence and the courage of their convictions, but those same leaders need a safe place to nurse their wounds, to be restored, and to let down their guard and be real. LOCATION: 936

Corner Four is a place where people have true connection, where they can be authentic—not copied, not false or imitation, as Webster's defines authentic. When you can find a place to be authentic, you gain access to the resources that have been wanting. Finally, the fuel and fulfillment can get to the need. LOCATION: 1080

Whether in sports, business, or the military, it is the power of the other that always makes the difference. LOCATION: 1086

Research has shown that if you are in a community that is getting healthy or overcoming something difficult, your chances of success go way, way up. LOCATION: 1258

The pull to seek something that makes you feel "good"—that's Corner Three on the map—is another warning sign. If you find yourself itching for comfort in illicit relationships, addictive substances, or other compulsive behavior, you know you're risking stalemate at best, and eventually a big crash. Don't trust anything that feels good if it isn't something you'd want your spouse, partner, family, or your colleagues to know about. Or if it doesn't fulfill you in and of itself, meaning that if you just need more of it again soon afterward in order to be gratified, it is probably more addicting than it is nourishing. And if it doesn't require you to be your authentic self, then it's probably fake anyway. LOCATION: 1375

I have never seen great performers who felt themselves to be out of control of their own performance, emotions, direction, purpose, decisions, beliefs, choices, or any other human faculties. They don't blame others or external factors. The greats are not like lesser performers, who try to explain away their failure as being somehow caused, forced, or controlled by someone else. LOCATION: 1417

Corner Four accountability is a commitment to what is best at three levels: (1) both or all the individuals involved, (2) the relationship(s), and (3) the outcomes. LOCATION: 1670

Corner Four requires clarity in the expectations you have for each other, before it's time to deliver on those expectations, and it also requires staying in touch along the way, at the necessary intervals. Clarity and consistency, monitoring and adjusting, lead to real performance increase. LOCATION: 1686

Corner Four demands all three: caring, honesty, and results—caring enough about someone to not be hurtful in how we say things, the honesty to say them directly, and a focus on behavior change and better results. Remember these three accountability aspects: the individuals, the relationship, and the outcomes. LOCATION: 1746

Research into brain circuitry shows that new capacities grow when we have to grapple with a problem ourselves instead of hearing someone tell us how to fix it or watching someone fix it for us. We remember about 10 to 20 percent of what we read or hear or see, but 80 percent of what we experience in such a learning process. When someone provides feedback that leaves us in shape to grapple with the problem ourselves, we

learn. LOCATION: 1792

Healthy cultures need to make it safe for people, but they also need to make sure people don't get too comfortable. Healthy cultures embrace people where they are but they also nudge them and sometimes even push them to get better. LOCATION: 1970

As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes it, peak performance occurs when we are constantly challenged but not too much for our newly acquired skills. If we are put into challenging situations that surpass our newly acquired skill set and push us too far, we'll slip out of the sweet spot where learning and fulfillment—flow—occur. As we acquire new skills (and confidence), we can step up to more challenging goals, but the trick is to get the balance right between the amount of stretch and level of skill required to succeed. LOCATION: 2177

Give the brain a specific, but BIG problem to solve, and it will surprise you. Give people a chance and the tools to grow, and they will shine. But only if the problem is big enough. And then only if the process is fueled, monitored, and sustained by the other. LOCATION: 2247

What makes Corner Four relationships so powerful is that they don't end even after they end. The lessons we learn, the phrases that motivate us, are ours to keep forever. Psychologists refer to this process as internalization. It's bringing what was on the outside inside. It sounds a little mysterious, and it is. It's a gradual process by which the patterns, tones, fueling, and cadences of our relationships become embedded in the internal structure of our minds, our psyche. LOCATION: 2416

While I do not believe that one size fits all, there are a handful of universal concepts and principles that apply to every single individual or group performance challenge. Trust is one of those concepts, especially when it comes to tapping into the power of the other. To make an investment in anyone, trust is paramount. LOCATION: 2835

Whom should you trust? In research and experience, I have come to believe that there are five crucial ingredients to look for when you're ready to make such investments.

1. Understanding
2. Intent or Motive
3. Ability
4. Character
5. Track Record

LOCATION: 2844

We trust people who we know understand us, our context, our situation, our needs, what makes it work for us, and what makes it break down. When they truly understand, listen, and care, we are more than willing to open ourselves to them. LOCATION: 2853

I often say to leaders, "You don't understand your people or your customers when you understand them. You understand them when they understand that you understand." That's when you know you have trust. LOCATION: 2883

We trust people when we know that their motives are good, that they want good things for us, even if at times it might cost them. Good relationships are built on this bedrock of trust: I know that you want the best for me, so I trust you. LOCATION: 2935

At a certain level in leadership, everyone is smart, experienced, and highly capable; those traits are no longer the differentiators. Individual character is the big differentiator. It's leaders' emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal skills—not just what they can do, but how they do it. Character determines whether they inspire others to trust them. LOCATION: 2998

As research confirms, the qualities that lead to great performance are only enhanced in great relationships. The opposite is also true: great performance qualities are either limited or reduced by dysfunctional relationships. LOCATION: 3068

Being supported, challenged, and grown into your best person by great relationships will not undermine your success, only advance it. Being that kind of growth agent for others will only enhance their lives and yours. LOCATION: 3081

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.