



**The Likeability Factor:
How to Boost Your L-Factor & Achieve Your Life's Dreams**

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Author's Bio: Tim Sanders is the author of New York Times and international bestseller Love is the Killer App. He is currently the leadership coach at Yahoo!

Author's big thought: Life is a series of popularity contests. The choices other people make about you determine your health, wealth, and happiness. Decades of research prove that people choose who they like. They vote for them, they buy from them, they marry them, and they spend precious time with them. The more you are liked - or the higher your likeability factor - the happier your life will be. This book will show you how to raise your likeability factor.

Introduction:

- One of the more stressful parts of modern life is dealing with all the unlikable people who populate it. Our nation is so focused on efficiency and productivity that we forget that likeability is truly our lifeline.
- People who are likeable, or who have what Tim calls a high L -factor, tend to land jobs more easily, find friends more quickly, and have happier relationships.
- People, who have a low L-factor, generally suffer from high job, friend, and spouse turnover.
- All of us are somewhat likable, but if we're able to make ourselves more so, if we're able to raise our L-factor by even one or two points, life will feel better.
- If you raise your L-factor, you will harness one of life's most powerful forces. Nothing feels better, and is better for everyone around you, than achieving the highest L-factor possible.

Part 1: the L-Factor

Chapter 1: Likeability

- Every person has an L-factor, which is the indicator of how likeable you are. Tim has created a Likeability scale which ranges from 1 -10, 1 representing very unlikable, while 10 represents very likeable.
- In general, if your L-factor is three or below, you need vast improvement. Four to six is average, while seven and above is good. Few people actually attain a ten.
- Keep in mind that most people's L-factors are not constant; they vary dramatically at different points in their lives.
- Likeability is an ability to create positive attitudes in other people through the delivery of emotional and physical benefits.
- Someone is likeable can give you a sense of joy, happiness, relaxation, or rejuvenation. He or she can bring you relief from depression, anxiety, or boredom.
- The quality of your life and the strength of your relationships are the product of choice - but not necessarily your choice. The more likeable you are the more likely you are to be on the receiving end of a positive choice from which you can profit.

Chapter 2: Unlikeability Doesn't Work

Being liked requires work. A high L-factor is a form of social fitness, and achieving it can be just as tough and time-consuming as developing physical fitness. For some, likeability comes naturally, but such people are rare, and even they can improve their L-factor. There are many people who don't believe in developing likeability, who don't want to change. They think that likeability is a sign of weakness.

Besides the choice factor, here are four additional reasons why unlikeability is no longer an option.

1. Short term thinking, or the belief that the moment is all that matters, is dying. We know that our actions have consequences over time.
2. Individualism is waning. "There is no *I* in the word team". Synergy occurs when two or more people produce more value together than they could produce individually; achieving it has become a quest for individuals, companies, and entire nations. To be synergistic requires that we become interdependent, a relationship in which, by relying on another, you become stronger.
3. Boundaries are dissolving. We are slowly becoming the same person 24/7 as boundaries between our personal and professional lives dissolve. The best solution for managing a boundary-less life is consistent living. The more you are required to live just one life, the more you will have to choose between unlikeability and likeability.
4. Success has been redefined. Today our goal isn't financial security - we want financial freedom. This means having a job we enjoy, coworkers we like, and a pleasant environment in which to work. The new success is about freedom, not

simply security. Negative people will find it increasingly difficult to motivate workers, players, and teammates.

Chapter 3: Likeability Works

Following are likeability's most important consequences:

- *Likeable People Bring Out the Best in Others* - they inspire others to give more. For example, the amount of time doctors spent with family at clinics was longer when the patient's parents were likeable. Likeable parents seemed to draw out more time, attention, and conscientious behavior from physicians and health-care workers alike. Similar studies show similar results in professional situations. Leadership is enhanced by the likeable personality type. Likeability gets results from the general store to the general practitioner to the general himself. Wherever you are and whatever you do, you'll get the best out of others when you present your most likeable self front and center.
- *Likeable People Get Recognized*. The vital need that people have to be recognized may be more controllable than you think. Your personality will have as much to do with your recognition as your results or even your luck. From the classroom to the living room to the boardroom, when you are likeable, you are praised. You are acknowledged.
- *Likeable People Outperform*. Performance improves in the positive environment created by the presence of a likeable personality. People respond with loyalty and that extra bit of effort. Not only do likeable people get the job done, they motivate others to get the same results.
- *Likeable People Overcome Life's Challenges*. Whoever you are and whatever you want, challenges will always stand between you and your goals. For example, millions of Americans suffer from disabilities and disadvantages. Their personalities can make a tremendous difference on their ability to succeed. While the complexity of challenges you face in life can be baffling, your likeability may get you through.
- *Likeable People Enjoy Better Health*. When we're likeable, we feel our likeability reciprocated, and that in turn increases our self-esteem. One of the benefits of this process is that it helps us withstand stress. Stress can cause, among other ailments, increased heart rate, which over time can lead to anything from high blood pressure to heart failure. One of the greatest benefits of likeability is a social support system that provides you with a lifeline to help you through tough times.

Chapter 4: Likeable people Win Life's Popularity Contests

- The principal benefit of likeability is *choice*. The choices *you* make don't shape your life as much as the choices *other people* make about you.
- If you understand and respect other people's decision-making processes, you can play to them. The good news is that most people make their choices in a predictable way.
- To make choices, we can go through a three-step sorting process. First we *listen* to something out of a field of opportunities. Then we either do or do not *believe* what we've heard. Finally we put a *value* on what we've heard. At the end of these three steps we make a choice.

Listen

- The first step is to get someone to listen to our case. By listening, it means giving people your attention and your best effort at understanding what you have to say. You're absorbing and processing, not just listening. When we really listen, we are working to connect with someone else. Entering someone's attention space is what really matters.
- Conservative estimates suggest that a person will receive up to 400 persuasive appeals, just from marketers alone, in the course of a single day. How do people deal with this information overload? They develop a filter and learn to ignore most of what they hear, and they remember even less. How important we find the content will determine whether we give it another thought.
- Being chosen in life requires showing up on other people's radar screens, getting them to hear what you say. And that happens when they choose to listen carefully.

Believe

- The second step is to undergo a judgment process in which he or she determines whether or not to believe your words. This stage is the battle for acceptance. The best way for you to achieve that acceptance is by being credible.
- Believing is a two-step process. Initially we comprehend some proposition about the world, and then we check it against other information and our beliefs. On the basis of comparison, we then decide to accept or reject the proposition.
- Sometimes people never accept messages or claims, regardless of how many times they hear them. The consulting firm *Towers Perrin* produced a 2003 study on whether employees believed what their bosses told them. 52 percent of the survey respondents believed claims about learning and development opportunities at the company; only 44 percent believed what they were told about their career opportunities; and only 39 percent believed their bosses' claims about what the company would do for them if they did a good job for the company.
- Over time, humans have learned what to believe or disbelieve through a combination of different variables. They first consider the source, then they consider the message; both processes are influenced by their own mood state.

Value

- The third step in the process occurs when you add up what a person has to offer. Then, based on its total value, you decide whether to choose that person and his or her proposition. If you don't value what a person has to say, it doesn't matter if you hear and believe them.
- In the value step, you compare the potential contributions and costs of one choice against those of other choices. You will usually select the people and propositions that add the most value to your life.
- Dr. Jillian Sweeney's research has found that people assign *functional, emotional, and social* benefits and costs to all of the options they consider during their lives, from products to people. Functional value is the pragmatic side - you are measured on your ability to perform and do something well. A functional cost, on the other hand, is your price. Emotional value is more subjective. Social value concerns how you will reflect on those who choose you. They consider how their choice will make others feel.
- This final step in the choice process can be a tough one. You must make sure you present a functional value proposition and that you are priced right for your market (personal or professional). You should be aware of your emotional appeal, which may require some observation on the part of your chooser. You too may have to consider how other people react to you and be aware of their feelings.
- At the conclusion of the choice process, people will place a value on you. If you manage to create a strong set of appropriate benefits while maintaining a low set of costs, you can emerge as the best deal and win the battle of choice.

How Likeability Makes a Difference

- It's possible to improve your L-factor. It is not static but is an ongoing process.
- At each step of the process, likeability can make a powerful difference. During the listening step, your L-factor helps you get your message across to other people. They hear you, they think it over, and they remember it later.
- In the belief phase the L-factor continues to give you an edge. Likeability has long been viewed as a necessity in developing the trust that determines your credibility as a source. Trust and belief are created out of a desire to form a relationship and facilitated by your likeable personality. When people are fond of you, they form a bias about you; basically they want to believe you're correct until proven incorrect.
- The L-factor also gives you a leg up in the final part of the choosing process: value. To be valued, you must offer something the other person needs. If you're likeable, you'll not only receive great information on functional needs, but you'll be able to detect other people's emotional needs as well. Your likeability can also convince others that, if they choose you, you can perform and deliver what they most desire.

Part 2: Raising Your L-Factor

Chapter 5: The Four Elements of Likeability

Now it's time to put likeability to work for you. The best way to start is by looking at its basic components.

Friendliness

- Friendliness is the first element we consider when we meet someone new. It's the threshold of likeability. Friendly means "expressing a liking for another person" or "communicating welcome" or "expressing a generally positive feeling". If you perceive that someone likes you, you're more willing to like them back. A friendship becomes possible.
- In contrast, unfriendliness is the communication of negative feelings through verbal and/or non-verbal methods.
- An unfriendly first encounter can create a long, long road to establishing likeability. Our first instinct when someone is friendly is to reciprocate. When someone behaves in an unfriendly manner toward you, your brain sends a signal to your body's command centers to react by deploying hormones. Two hormones are especially relevant to your emotional state: DHEA and cortisol. Think of DHEA as the feel-good hormone when you encounter friendliness, while cortisol makes you feel stressed out when you encounter unfriendliness.

Relevance

- You need to know how important the other person will be in your life. Your mind is making the transition from seeking safety to seeking significance. Even when people are friendly, you have little reason to care about them if they have little bearing on your life. Someone must be relevant to your life if your relationship is to pass through the next stoplight.
- Relevance is the extent to which the other person connects to your life's interests, wants, and needs. Some people will always be more relevant to you than others. The variable is the strength of the connection. When people connect with one of your high-level interests or needs, their relevance to you soars. Conversely when people connect with a trivial interest or need, they are less relevant.
- Relevance is strongest when a personal *value* proposition that you offer connects with a person's wants and needs. If you possess a skill that will help someone complete a task, you are relevant to that person. If you appeal to someone's need to laugh, your relevance is your sense of humor. Your value proposition produces positive attitudes in other people's minds about you and raises your L-factor.

Empathy

- Once you've decided that another person is friendly and relevant, you begin to wonder, consciously or unconsciously, if that person understands you.

- According to renowned psychologist Carl Rogers, empathy is the ability to perceive another person's internal frame of reference with accuracy.
- As defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, empathy represents an "identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives."
- The author adds that empathy is the ability to imagine one's self in the place of another and, from that vantage point to understand his or her feelings, desires, ideas, and/or actions, good or bad.
- Empathy is different from sympathy. If you are sympathetic to others, your heart goes out to them and you feel compassion, but these are your feelings. If you are empathetic to others, you are not merely feeling sorry for them but are projecting yourself into their hearts, as though you are sensing what it feels like to be in their shoes.
- Empathy enhances likeability because it delivers many psychological benefits, including a sense of personal worth, clarity, and relief. When someone takes the time to find out, and talk through, exactly how you feel, your self-esteem rises. You feel not only appreciated but validated and less alone. There's a sense of connection. When you show empathy you're like a human satellite dish, receiving information and decoding it.

Realness

- A real person is someone who is genuine, true, and authentic. Real people know their roots, their heritage, and their history. They remember where they came from and who brought them to the dance. And they retain that knowledge. They know their values, and they behave accordingly. Realness is something you simply feel when you're in its presence.
- Sometimes when we search for realness in another person, we recognize it by its absence.
- Three ways that someone's lack of realness can lower his or her L-factor is lying, hypocrisy and insincerity.

Chapter 6: How to Raise Your L-Factor

In this section the author takes us through a series of small steps that will gradually help you raise your L-factor. You will see results in small increments. Eventually they all add up to make a difference in your ability to generate positive thoughts, emotions and attitudes in other people.

You raise your L-factor by improving the four elements of likeability: friendliness, relevance, empathy and realness.

Friendliness

1. **Observe No Unfriendliness.** First practice the prevention of unfriendliness by adopting a new perspective which will yield new reactions and reflexes. Next is

intervention - intervene to catch yourself before you commit unfriendliness. Practice spotting unfriendliness bubbling up inside of you. When you sense yourself about to commit an unfriendly act, talk yourself out of it by asking yourself if this will fix anything, and if this is how you want to be remembered. Every time you catch yourself being unfriendly, write an account of it in your journal. The third thing you must do to eliminate unfriendliness is repair. Apologize. By telling others how you feel, you pen up the door to a constructive conversation that can enhance others' perspective of your friendliness.

2. ***Develop a Friendly Mindset.*** Here are ten ways to do so:
 - a. Like yourself - you have to believe you deserve a high L-factor in order to have one.
 - b. See yourself in others - when you spot your favorite traits in other people, you're likely to be friendly to them.
 - c. Review your role model's best features, and then spot those in strangers, coworkers and friends.
 - d. Recast everyone you meet as the solution to today's problem.
 - e. Apply your fundamental beliefs.
 - f. Play greeter for a day - take it upon yourself to instill a sense of welcome in others.
 - g. Top your very best service every week.
 - h. Study the helpful - find people in your life who are supportive.
 - i. Every morning repeat your friendliness mantra as you prepare for or drive to work.
 - j. Protect your friendly mindset - learn to weed out the unfriendly.
3. ***Communicate Friendliness.*** There is no such thing as a friendly person; there is only someone who is perceived as friendly. Friendliness is a communication event. If other people don't perceive you as friendly, you aren't friendly.
 - a. Your first and most important task is to send the right visual signals to others in order to communicate your friendly intentions and positive feelings.
 - b. Your eyes can communicate your attitude, your energy level, and much more. A smile is the most effective of all the visual cues - it is a substantial contributor to your friendliness factor.
 - c. You can also improve the sounds you make - not only your tone and voice but also the overall auditory experience you provide to others.
 - d. Use friendly words. A person's name is the friendliest word to his or her ears, but don't overuse it.

Relevance

1. ***Identify Your Frequent Contact Circle.*** List all the names of everyone you are in contact with on a monthly basis, without any order or priority. Rate each contact (on a scale of one to ten) for quality - identify the frequency and proximity of your

contact with each of them. You are highly relevant to those people because you are in close and frequent contact with them, making them likely to be receptive to your efforts to boost your L-factor. Your list represents those people who are most likely to respond to your friendliness, empathy, and realness. Increase the quality and quantity of your contacts. Keep in mind that the digital channel, e-mail, is the coldest form of communication. You will seldom be relevant to someone if all your contact is through e-mail. The telephone is a far better vehicle to create some warmth in your communication. The best relationship is a face-to-face one.

2. ***Connect with Others' Interests.*** When you share an interest with others, you develop a bond. This bond will boost your relevance factor, giving you a higher L-factor. Start by creating an inventory of your passions. You have to be aware of your interests in order to share them. People in your life will find you relevant once you start talking about your shared interests. Ask your best friend or significant other what he or she thinks you might enjoy. Identify the interests of your most frequent contacts. **Connect Now!**
3. ***Connect With Others' Wants and Needs.*** Pick someone from your top contact list. Volunteer to help someone. Don't make a fuss over what you've done. Don't wait for the perfect time to act. Remember to serve others' emotional needs too. Exceed expectations.

Empathy

1. ***Show an Interest in How Others Feel.*** Understanding how other people feel is the result of a process that includes recognizing their emotions, listening thoughtfully, and then demonstrating your understanding by responding to their feelings. If you are able to master emotion-reading listening, you will dramatically boost your empathy factor. People will find your instincts sharp and your listening skills soothing and generous. Here are some hints on reading emotions:
 - a. Watch and study faces
 - b. Realize the emotions that are conveyed through facial expressions.
 - c. Pay special attention to quick changes in expression.
 - d. Use the media to practice your ability to visually detect motions.
 - e. Notice all seven emotions, but especially watch for happiness.
 - f. Don't jump to conclusions.
 - g. Wear your listening cap.
 - h. Don't interrupt.
 - i. Provide a pregnant pause.
 - j. Think about what other people say and how they must feel.
 - k. Ask, don't tell.
 - l. Pay attention to what isn't said.
 - m. Commit yourself to being a better listener.
 - n. Test to see whether your instincts are correct by asking your conversational partners if you heard them correctly.

2. ***Experience Others' Feelings.*** When you listen to, and reflect back on, others' feelings, you raise your empathy factor. An even deeper level of empathy is achieved when you actually experience those feelings yourself; your connection moves from your head to your heart. Achieving this level of empathy will also help raise your L-factor because when you can see things from others' point of view, it will be easier to be friendly and relevant to them. The secret is developing your empathetic imagination. Here are some ways to do so.
 - a. Accept other people's feelings as legitimate. Don't judge or resist them.
 - b. Try on a new point of view.
 - c. Flex your imagination.
 - d. Ask for details.
 - e. Walk a day in someone's shoes.
 - f. Get in touch with your own emotions. Review and reflect on your feelings. Build your imagination skills by observing empathy - many empathy training courses use movies as a device to demonstrate feelings, vivid results, and resolutions.
3. ***Respond to Others' feelings.*** Most of the time empathy requires only the ability to understand how others feel. But if someone expects you to do something with this understanding, and you are unresponsive, he or she may doubt that you really know what's going on inside. The following are several tips on responding to someone's feelings to boost your empathy factor:
 - a. Remember conversations.
 - b. Make yourself available for a follow-up conversation.
 - c. Share feelings - in doing so you will build trust.
 - d. Validate feelings.

Realness

1. ***Be True to Yourself.*** You must know the real you. If you're unaware of your identity and your values, you'll have a very difficult time staying on course.
 - a. State your manifesto - your purpose or intentions.
 - b. Identify the 31 words that describe the real you.
 - c. Create your own personal history chart - a graphic which represents you.
 - d. Let your values be your compass as you navigate life.
 - e. Spot check your behavior for consistency with your values.
 - f. Practice seeing yourself from an outsider's point of view.
 - g. Get feedback
 - h. Protect your realness with self-confidence.
 - i. Discount the reasons you have for disliking yourself.
 - j. Periodically revisit the real you - you will morph into a newer type of you, a version 2.0 or 3.0.

2. *Be True to Others.*

- a. *Don't forget your past.* When your life improves dramatically, remind yourself of your history, your friends, and your roots. By acknowledging the link between today's successes and yesterday's experience, you raise your realness factor with others.
 - b. *Share your glory* - every time you experience success of any type, make an effort to share it with everyone who contributed.
 - c. *Practice humility* - this requires both self-awareness and self-discipline.
 - d. *Watch out for exaggeration.* Realness means factual and actual. Exaggeration is one of the most common ways in which people hurt their realness factor.
 - e. *Learn to say "I don't know".* People who are honest about their lack of knowledge on a particular topic garner high realness factors from others.
 - f. *Be honest when you make a promise.* When you make a commitment, agree on a date or time and either make a note of it or ask someone to follow up with you. This proactive accountability will increase the perception that you are real and that others can take your promises to the bank. If you can't follow through on a promise, communicate that.
 - g. *Recruit a reality coach to get fast and honest feedback.*
3. **Share your realness.** Produce memorable experiences of realness. Techniques to do so include being present; admitting you are human; and being generous with your self, your emotions, and your feelings.

Recommendation: This is a very easy read. Tim Sanders himself is the poster child for likeability - he makes it very easy with numerous stories and anecdotes.



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