

"Care: You Have the Power!" Book Excerpt

By Ivan Temes

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Introduction

Introduction to Care

Care—a simple word, or so it seems. This book will dispel that notion very quickly. Care may well be the most powerful word in the English language, perhaps surpassing love. This book is about you and the magnificent care tools already at your disposal. Perhaps, you have felt there is something missing in what has become to many people an impersonalized world of communication. Oprah Winfrey noted in an October 2001 editorial in her magazine that all the electronic devices we use make it difficult to really connect with each other.

Although this book and the contribution it could make had been a dream of mine for many years, I had pretty much decided to give up late last year. The *dream* seemed too much trouble. Then I received a holiday greeting card from my daughter Kelly, who had recently gone off to her first year of college. Kelly said, "I look forward to shaking your hand when the book is finished."

What an incredible feeling I had—that a teenager cared enough to support me and take some action to show that she cared. I had to move forward quickly. That's the essence of what this book is about—the simple caring actions that we can perform, and how they affect those around us positively—no matter what the circumstances.

Care: You Have the Power!

In reality we truly are connected—all the time. The rediscovery of the skills imbedded in us at birth will very likely alter your life and relationships (business and personal) in ways you cannot yet even imagine.

My life's journey has taught me that this is possible. I had a strange experience when I was lying in the emergency room of Stanford Hospital on a Sunday morning in 2001, with a couple of IVs helping combat an infection. As I lay there, a bright light seemed to hover over me and a large, brown, rectangular medallion encompassed in flames appeared with the words *organizational healing* in the center. The picture is just as clear to me today as it was that Sunday morning. I imagined it meant I should embark on a path to train senior managers in how to build healthy organizations. However, my path since then has revealed a different message.

It's a direction which reinforces that a *star shines within each person*. When each of us feels cared for, our lives and our relationships with those around us are much more satisfying. We have much more control than we may realize. Where have some of these lessons come from? In my transition from the corporate world, I have led over 350 sessions related to *building confidence and marketing yourself* at homeless shelters, career centers and universities.

I was given the opportunity to work with homeless military veterans to assist them in gaining employment under difficult circumstances. I had what others called *an extraordinary success rate*. I knew it was much more about building caring relationships than simply job-hunting itself. I was right.

At the age of 60, I toiled as a janitor in the evenings, to help cover expenses for myself and my family. It's a story that I tell later in this book.

Previously, I had learned the ins and outs of the corporate world and all the fear and frustration that comes with the impersonal communication in many situations—having gone through several company closures myself.

I spent many years in international situations directing and managing groups for Levi's International and JBL International. I managed large teams at companies that included Apple Computer, Cisco, Oracle,

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Navigation Technologies and Grid Systems. I experienced the dotcom purge at organizations that included MyTeam (Little League affiliation) and Privada (American Express affiliation). I also interacted with thousands of customers in retail environments.

My early mentors got across to me the importance of caring. In a service arena that is known for high-turnover rates, the retention rate of those in my organizations was well above 95%—even when the company was laying off hordes of people. This led to the publishing of my national article on *Maintaining Service Loyalty During a Downsizing*. Truly, the successes revolved around personnel feeling cared for.

There's a rose that blossoms within others when they truly feel our care. We *can* each make such a difference, and the stories and vignettes in *Care*: You Have the Power depict that message very clearly. Care is much more than a soft skill. As my friend Lee Glickstein, President of Speaking Circles International says, "I love your care book. Many assume care is soft and takes too much time. You have made *care* clear, a tangible skill that can be relearned quickly and is a key to bottom line results." I would add that it's also a key in communication with our children and friends.

What astounds me is the ease by which we can simplify and improve relationships with those around us in virtually any scenario.

Please prepare to be surprised by the simplicity of the message about *care*. I'm averse to books that tell us what others do to be successful and yet leave us wondering *how* to do it ourselves. The examples in *Care: You Have the Power* will allow you to easily understand what actions and steps you can take in your own situation.

What would life be like if those you met quickly said, "You're someone I can really trust. I want to be around you." Is that the case now? The evidence—particularly in the business world—indicates that is most assuredly not our experience.

Does it appear that everyone around us *cares?* Do they take action to show it? Each of us has the power to show *I care* and to positively affect conditions around us.

These people know about care and results

William James, known as the father of American psychology, wrote that, "The deepest need of human beings is the desire to feel appreciated." I would add that it very much includes *care*. The individuals below represent a cross-section of people—CEO to Hall of Fame football player to homeless former journalist—who truly demonstrate how *care* fits in all areas of life.

- Steve Young, the Hall of Fame professional football quarterback from the San Francisco 49ers shares his eloquence on the topic—and an incredible result.
- A world-renowned chef from the San Francisco area gives his perspective on what creates exceptional loyalty and how it revolves around care and trust.
- Brian Biro, who travels nationally, inspiring audiences with his interactive sessions involving teamwork and growth, had a life-changing experience with his three-year-old daughter. Her astounding feedback symbolizes how care is such a critical factor in our relationships with children. The feedback from his daughter also enhanced Brian's ability to listen and impart messages to his audiences.
- A Silicon Valley CEO shares about committing small murders before discovering the care factor. She now spends five minutes a day that lead to her entire organization being more productive and loyal. Only five minutes does it.
- Mary, an award-winning national journalist, was temporarily living in a family shelter with her newborn baby when we met. Mary had the courage to speak out in caring ways that changed the lives of emigrants seeking new jobs. Mary took an extra step that is available to all of us.
- Bill Campbell, Chairman of the Board of Intuit Corporation and a former Apple Computer Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing and football coach at Columbia University, demonstrates the one-minute version of care that can shift our relationships with everyone around us.

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 Hal Rosenbluth, Chairman of Take Care Health Systems and who built Rosenbluth Travel from a \$20 million enterprise to \$5 billion, shares about the incredible value of a foundation of care and trust.

Webster's Dictionary even defines *spirit* in a way that shows care can be a key factor in areas of growth and development—*the animating life-force believed to be within living beings*. We can easily use the care factor to truly nurture and support those around us—and watch the positive results. More than the giving of care is that the receiver *feels* the care. That's when the growth sets in, personally or organizationally.

Could it be this simple? Emerson, Confucius and Buffett agree!

"Society is always taken by surprise by any new example of common sense."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Life is really simple and we insist on making it complex." Confucius

"The business schools reward complex behavior more than simple behavior; simple behavior is more effective."

Warren Buffett

Care: You Have the Power!

^{1.} http://tinyurl.com/5wgtb9

Chapter

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Care and Loyalty

Whole Foods—Wow, do they care!

Many years ago my wife Naomi was getting ready to attend a sold-out play in which her daughter Cara had a key role. As Naomi was getting ready to leave, she could not find her tickets—anywhere!! Panic began to set in.

I suggested that she go to the play since sometimes tickets become available. She reluctantly agreed that was the best option.

Naomi decided to check with the ticket office, just in case there were tickets. She explained her dilemma to the young lady in the box office.

"Just a minute," responded the theater employee. She returned with a white envelope and handed it to Naomi. "Might this be yours?" she asked. Puzzled at receiving what appeared to be a greeting card, Naomi opened the envelope.

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Inside was a personalized card with two tickets to the play enclosed. The note said, "I hope whoever lost these tickets still gets to see the play." Signed by Alli Christian at Whole Foods Market in Palo Alto, California.

I had to know what would cause a grocery clerk to take this extra step since many people possibly would have thrown out the tickets, which were apparently laying on the floor—or simply put them in the lost and found area. I found Alli at the grocery. She said she had children and was concerned about someone else missing out on a children's play. Alli purchased a card on her own, found the location of the box office and ensured the tickets were sent there.

Is that the norm for service at Whole Foods? Next came my call to John Mackey, Chairman of the company, based in Austin, Texas. I managed to get through to John who wondered who this mystery person could be. I explained how impressed I was with the customer care in his organization, gave John the details about the tickets and asked, "What are you doing that causes such a response from your people?"

John paused for a moment and then responded with a statement indicating that he loves and cares for his people.

Yes, John loves his employees. They know he *cares*. So does Naomi. The show was great.

The Customer Comes Second—Just Ask Hal Rosenbluth

Some businesses define *spirit* as embodying the values of honesty, integrity and high-quality work. Webster's dictionary defines it as: "The vital principle or animating force believed to be within living beings."

Animating force can be interpreted as the desire to grow.

Hal Rosenbluth, who built Rosenbluth Travel into a \$5 billion company, certainly ascribes to this definition.

Says Hal, "When people and ideas are guarded, their growth is stunted."

The Human Factors Organization in California agrees. When I participated in one of their seminars, the trainer compared the *human biological system* to the *organizational biological system*.

In either case, when natural growth is not supported and nurtured, disease can set in. Such is the state of so many of our organizations where fear and other factors have stunted the desire of employees to grow and contribute.

Hal focuses very much on the processes that create internal customer satisfaction and implements operational efficiencies in a way that the results translate into customer satisfaction and loyalty. Adds Hal:

The origin of a lack of motivation is a lack of happiness in the workplace. Profits are a natural extension of happiness in the workplace. Our true competitive measure is our **people**.

Unhappiness surfaces internally before there is client dissatisfaction.

Cross-pollination has brought us some of the most spectacular varieties of plants and flowers known to the world. The same works with people when you give them opportunities to develop themselves.

After all, when was the last time you excelled at something you disliked?

Hal's **people** excel at what they like. A little caring *can* equal a lot of revenue.

Add the words of Milton Chang, a California CEO and venture capitalist who has successfully built many companies.

Milton believes strongly that we must trust people implicitly until proven untrustworthy. It has really worked for me. People don't want to let other people down, so they perform to their maximum to make themselves deserving of that trust. It is a wondrously positive cycle.

Building Loyalty—Simply

The principles that James Autry describes worked extremely well for me in the role as Director of Customer Care at Myteam, a dotcom company which worked with Little League and other youth sports organizations.

Building an environment of employee loyalty and retention relies on a foundation of trust, caring and personalizing relationships when possible. Some of the opportunities which present themselves can have simple solutions.

Mike, one of our customer support representatives, sheepishly came to me with a request. He said, "Can I leave early on Thursdays?"

Of course I had to ask why. Mike responded with, "I'm coaching a girls' soccer team."

Wow! an opportunity to market to our own youth sports customers that we had a coach in our own department. Of course, my answer to Mike's request was a resounding yes. He was even more motivated in his daily interactions with hundreds of customers. Even customer comments about Mike's support increased.

If others on the team thought Mike was receiving special treatment (which they did not), I would have responded by putting this question to them: "What do you want so that you, too, can advance your personal interests and growth as part of the job?"

Personalize. Care. Positive results. A winning combination.

A Coffee Shop: What Happened When Nicholas Showed He Cared?

As I sat sipping my cup of coffee at the Lytton Roasting Company in Silicon Valley, a young lady ordered an assortment of coffees and pastries to take out.

As Nicholas, owner of the establishment, rang up the bill at the cash register, the lady sheepishly acknowledged that, "I forgot to bring my cash."

Nicholas did not hesitate. Although the patron was not a regular customer, Nicholas looked at her and said, "That's OK. You can pay me the next time you come in."

The astonished customer exclaimed, "Are you sure?"

Nicholas repeated what he had said earlier and the young lady's smile reflected that he had done the right thing.

I asked Nicholas about his philosophy and he said, "When you trust everyone you build partnerships with them. They understand that you care about them and will almost always come back."

What did I see the next day as I again sipped my coffee? The customer had returned—with two of her friends.

Caring in this Hospital Setting

Linda, a very experienced nurse, described the situation in her hospital ward.

"There's a waiting list to work here in neo-natal intensive although the job can be very challenging," said Linda.

What was their secret in a setting which can often be frustrating to nurses?

Joan, the head nurse, had been there almost 20 years and always ensured there were fresh flowers, coffee and tea available.

If the unit was short-staffed, other nurses volunteered to help.

Joan let the nurses run the ward using their own best judgment about what worked for the patients.

At Christmas there were always at least 50 presents sent to her from the grateful staff.

There's more. The renal transplant physician called the nurses early each morning to tell them, "Thank you for taking care of my patients."

More common sense in action. It works.

From Maverick to Caring Leader

Jim Waszak has had a number of senior management roles in manufacturing environments in the Midwest. He has a unique way of showing his employees that he *cares*. The positive results have manifested in increased productivity, teamwork and growth of employees.

Jim says, "A few years ago I was assigned the project of turning around a manufacturing operation. We had a guy named Roger who—as it turned out—was one of my problem children.

However at a company baseball game, I saw Roger show great leadership, enthusiasm and management skills.

I spoke with Roger about using the skills on the ball field in his day-to-day supervisory assignments. He allowed me to coach him and he turned into a real gem as a supervisor. He had previously been resistant to any feedback or coaching other than on the ball field.

The most touching moment occurred when I was leaving the organization. Roger gave me a big hug and said, 'I'm really going to miss you. You really changed my life.'"

His response was much more than I ever expected to hear.

Caring, trust and empowerment. Magical when used with love.

I Want to be in Your Line at the Bank

I always ensured I was in Edward's line when I went into my local bank branch in Palo Alto. Edward was like Manda, who was commended earlier for her ability with e-mail personalization. He personalized our interaction, no matter how busy he was.

Edward had the knack of using his role as a teller to ensure my transaction was completed swiftly, and he also took the time to ask about my family—with his big smile. I always felt a little better than when the interaction began when I left Edward's area.

He said he had worked at a major retailer previously. They too always pushed their employees to be friendly to the customers. However, Edward quit.

Why?

"My boss acted arrogant and never took the time to even say 'hi' to me," said Edward.

Retention of employees. It can be costly for the most ridiculous reasons. Don't ever ask employees to do something and not hold management accountable to the same standards. Employees need to see that management *cares* via their actions.

Listening in this Upscale Grocery = \$\$ and Loyalty

Sue has been employed in the upscale Piazza's Supermarket in Palo Alto for over 11 years and worked her way up to supervising the extensive cheese department.

Management decided to remodel the store, moving the cheese department away from its location in the center of the facility to a corner location. The new location would have less traffic and management felt it would still be a benefit to the store in the location.

Sue gave her input, preferring the old location, and ultimately accepted management's dictate regarding the change.

In the new location Sue discovered that the *regulars* come to the new location; however, we are missing all the impulse buyers.

Undaunted, Sue persisted with Gary Piazza, one of the three brothers who own the stores. She presented ideas that would be costly to once again remodel and move the cheese department to a more centralized location.

"I do know that Gary cares about our ideas," Sue stated, "and I was not willing to give up."

Management listened. The cheese department moved. Revenue increased.

Once again, a little *caring*, which allows ideas to be heard rather than squashed, paid off.

Ouch! Fix this Quickly with a Little Caring

In his book *Primal Leadership*³⁴ Daniel Goleman confirms what I have found to be absolutely true:

The number one reason people leave companies is dissatisfaction with the boss.

Two Suitcases, a Danish Accent and a Caring Customer Star

When I took on the role of Director of Customer Care for Privada, an Internet privacy company working with American Express, I quickly learned the value of Joel Peterson's advice to be willing to be everyone's assistant no matter what role you have.

^{34.} Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership* (Harvard Business School Press, 1992)

We were fortunate to have a young lady named Malene in the organization. She had come from Denmark to the United States three years earlier, with only her two suitcases and no computer experience. Through perseverance, a quick wit and her technical acumen, Malene had risen to the lead technical support role.

Malene loved her work, saying, "There is nothing more wonderful than the joy of a customer who calls in upset about a technical problem—and I solve it for them. That makes my day." Malene was truly caring in action.

What can deter Malene? "When management does not listen to my personal needs or if management does not care whether or not I grow in my job." My role was to show Malene I cared about her growth—that's all she needed to be a customer star.

It worked too. Soon afterward the young lady from Denmark was featured nationally as the star of the month by the Help Desk Institute based on a testimonial I wrote. A full page appeared on their web site about Malene's positive attitude and her accomplishments.

When we had to play *David* & *Goliath* with the large and complex American Express support organization, it was Malene who again led the way. Our product was to be integrated into one of the Amex offerings and they would be the first to receive problem calls. They were also supporting many other vendors and products.

How could our little group of *Davids* gain priority treatment from this large international organization? When I went over the opportunity with Malene, she adamantly said, "Let me see those guys in person. I'll show them what we can do together. I'll show them that we really care about their success too."

That's all I needed to hear. Malene was off to Florida where she ensured that we could quickly establish a relationship with American Express service that would be mutually beneficial to our customers.

Complicated? Heck no—again, some trust and relationship-building that started with *I care*.

Lands' End Keeps Its Word

In the days when Lands' End was an independent company I attended a national conference and listened to a talk by one of their marketing directors. The organization had a terrific reputation, and she expounded on their strong service philosophy—whereby they needed up to 1,000 representatives during peak holiday periods.

Being a bit skeptical about the marketing *hype*, I asked what criteria Lands' End used to measure the success of their representatives with customers—expecting the standard answer about how **quickly** they were able to take customer orders or solve issues.

The answer from marketing surprised me, "We measure our representatives on whether they spend *enough* time on the phones with customers. We want our customers to know that Lands' End is committed to the quality of its products and that we **care deeply** about our customer base."

That sounded good and I thought nothing more of it.

About two months later, my spouse was on the phone with a company and also speaking to our young daughter Kelly about the order. She set down the phone and began to measure Kelly to see if she was ordering the correct sizes.

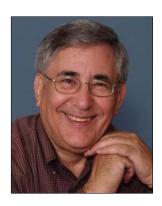
I had to find out what was happening. I said "hello" and was greeted by Steve from Lands' End. When I asked him how he could take the time to wait on the phone. He said it was his responsibility to do whatever was necessary to satisfy the customer. He was not under the time pressure implemented by far too many companies to complete the call.

The order was completed successfully—and my daughter enjoyed her new clothes when they arrived.

Did Lands' End live by its word? Obviously, they did. Caring internally and the trust it built led to caring externally—and customer loyalty and revenue.

Author

About the Author



Ivan Temes is the founder of Leadership and Loyalty, a Palo Alto, California, based company dedicated to working with employees, leaders and personnel in transition to build confidence and customer and relationship skills.

Ivan's focus on *bringing out the star* within each person has produced outstanding results in arenas ranging from worldwide customer care at Levi's International, Apple Computer and other major companies, dotcoms and retail to a variety of non-profit, veterans and community organizations.

He has a BS Degree in Human Relations and Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco.

Care: You Have the Power!

Ivan's unique perspective on care has also been gained from personal experiences associated with the downturns in life and a spiritual experience he had while in the emergency room at Stanford Hospital in 2001.

Ivan would like to hear from you and invites you to share your stories on the power of caring. Please send any Care stories you would like to share with him to: care@ivantemes.com.

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