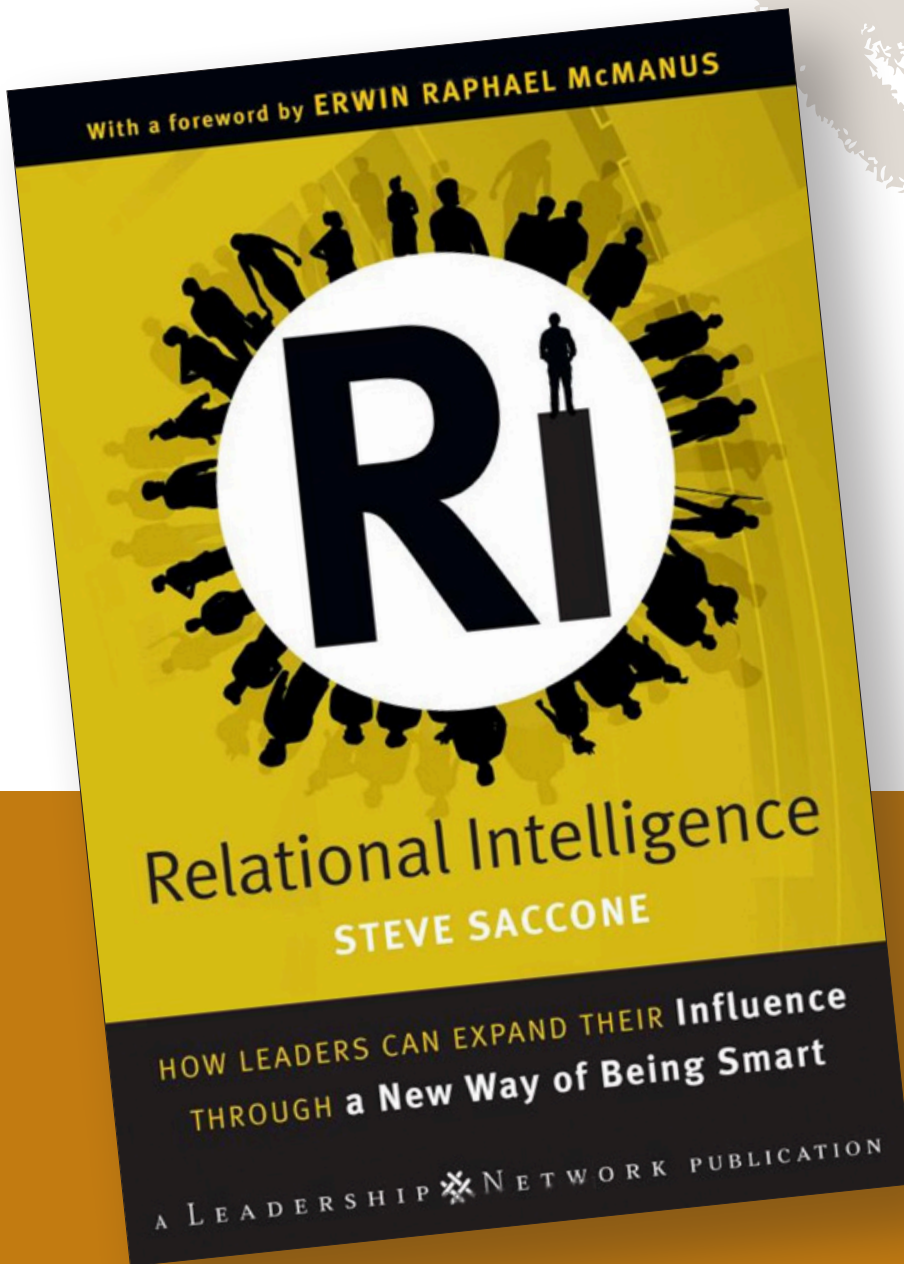


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## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone*

Relational Intelligence: How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence  
 Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, 2009. 200 pages.

In *Relational Intelligence*, author Steve Saccone presents a framework he defines as *relational leadership*, of whom Jesus Christ is the ultimate example. Saccone challenges us to become what he calls a “relational genius,” one who seeks to master the art of relationships.

The content of the book revolves around six defining roles that frame the conversation around the core idea of *relational intelligence (RI)*:

- **The Story Collector**, who listens actively, asks questions intentionally, and draws out uniqueness
- **The Energy Carrier**, who sparks people and situations with a positive emotional undercurrent and assertiveness
- **The Compelling Relator**, who communicates with passion, tact, honesty, humility and courage.
- **The Conversational Futurist**, who steers conversation toward a productive and meaningful outcome
- **The Likeable Hero**, who evokes favorable feelings, fosters relational trust, and expresses value to others
- **The Disproportionate Investor**, who chooses to invest in others with prayerful intention and learns to maximize their relational output

*Relational Intelligence entails both developing one’s interpersonal skills as well as learning to embody relational health and wholeness.*



### Part One: The Origins of Relational Intelligence

#### ***Relationships are the Human Economy***

Relationships define what it means to be human, which makes them both complicated and fragile. God didn’t create human beings because He somehow needed us; rather, He created human beings as relational because He exists as a relational being. What matters most to God is relationships, and that’s why they are the foundation of the human economy.

#### ***Relationships are the Virus of Influence***

When it comes to relational intelligence, we as human beings carry the virus of influence, which is called relationship. As carriers of the virus, we transmit our influence through our human-to-human interactions – for better or worse. The virus of influence encompasses many things, but its most potent effect is discovered in the spiritual realm. Without question, our own spiritual health will spread to those who choose to follow us.

#### ***Relationships are the Proof of God***

Through the life of Jesus, we can discover the undeniable reality of the primal essence of leadership and the most powerful force of influence: love. Jesus told us that love would be our unifying theme of humanity, and the powerful reflection of who He is. God will continue to push humanity toward the transformation of our relational worlds, toward expanding our capacity to internalize His love so that we can externalize it to others.

## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone (cont'd)*

### ***What is Relational Intelligence?***

Relational intelligence is the ability to learn, understand, and comprehend knowledge as it relates to interpersonal dynamics. The more relationally intelligent we become, the more we will demonstrate increased love, respect, and trust in every relationship in our lives, which will inevitably elevate our influence.

### ***Measuring Relational Intelligence***

Relational intelligence is a hybrid of developing social skills and cultivating relational health. All of us can continue to develop in relational intelligence as we learn from our experiences and interactions with people, as we improve social skills, and as we discover how to cultivate relational health.

### ***Changing the Future***

Relationally intelligent leaders understand at a deep level that they live in a world where relationships are the primary portal through which true change happens. RI leaders understand that, as much as anyone, leaders are primarily responsible for creating an environment that fosters change in our world, and that the best mode of influence comes when we recognize the intrinsic value of human beings who have been created in the image and likeness of God.



### **Part Two: The Hidden Power of a Relational Genius**

*Every one of us has the capacity to become a relational genius, someone who not only makes his or her greatest aim to be love, but hits the target.*

### ***The Story Collector***

*People feel most known when the story their life is telling gets heard and understood.*

One sign of success in a relationship is when a person feels known and valued for who they are. The path to ensuring someone feels known involves learning to become a *story collector*.

Two core competencies of story collectors are humility toward others and being genuinely interested in people. When it comes to being interested in people, the goal is not to be interested in every detail of their lives but rather to discover what is interesting about them and draw it out.

If we want to become great story collectors we must become great question askers, which begins with open-ended, thoughtful and intentional questions. True listening involves engaging people in conversation with anticipation to hear AND understand who they are and what they are trying to communicate.

*Everyone's life is a walking novel waiting to be read with anticipation.*

Story collectors seek to discover scenes from people's lives that are distinguishing components of their story. When it comes to being interested in someone's story, the goal is not to be interested in every detail of their life, rather to discover what's interesting about their story and draw it out.

## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone (cont'd)*

If we want to become relational geniuses we must learn to capitalize on moments we see people's values lived out. When we take time to get to know what's most sacred about another human being, people will invite us to have the most sacred kind of influence in their lives – that's when deep and spiritual influence takes root.

### ***The Energy Carrier***

*Be a tone setter, not a tone reader.*

Every one of us has an emotional undercurrent that exists within – often we're unaware of it, but it doesn't have to be that way. We must learn to recognize our emotional temperature and learn how to handle it with a spirit of love and a pursuit of emotional wholeness.

Our emotional energy determines what kind of *energy* we exude. The impact of our energy is directly affected by how internally alert we remain. Forgetfulness is one sign that reveals our internal alertness.

***Being present—and the biblical idea of all-ness—is absolutely essential for healthy and authentic relationships.***

Jesus understood that when we fail to integrate our true and complete self, we fragment the impact of our energy. Where you are, be all there.

Because they have mastered how to be present, and how to bring their *all-ness* into every moment, energy carriers bring a vibrant and powerful influence to relational contexts.

Energy carriers are keenly aware of their emotional undercurrent, understand the power of presence, and engage others with a deep sense of centeredness and authenticity. Energy carriers see the deficit in a given situation and instead of falling into it, they carry people out of it.

### ***The Compelling Relator***

*To be compelling, become the right kind of person.*

To become a compelling person in the way you relate to others, you must be in pursuit of becoming a person of integrity – that makes you the most interesting and compelling person you can be. The more interesting we become as people the more compelling we'll become as leaders.

There are 4 characteristics of compelling relators:

- Dare to be controversial
- Refuse to be irrelevant
- Change the way you communicate
- Activate your passion.

***There's something essential to communication that's easy to miss and rare to embody: begin with the other person.***

Compelling relators learn to discern when to be bold and when to speak with courage even it means being controversial. And, they never leave humility, tact and wisdom behind.

Passionless people are boring people. The more passionate you are about your mission the more compelling you'll become in your influence.

## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone (cont'd)*

### ***The Conversational Futurist***

*Every conversation has a life to it.*

Relational geniuses understand the dynamics around how conversations evolve.

Conversational futurists help conversations make forward progress – they have learned how to guide the conversation toward a productive and meaningful outcome.

*When we think before we speak, wisdom often follows.*

Conversational futurists know the art of deep listening – listening with one ear towards heaven as they discern what's being communicated even though it isn't being spoken in words.

Relational geniuses have learned how to listen to the questions people are asking even if they aren't being spoken in question form. Conversational futurists connect people to timeless truths that foster resonance and inspiration.

When we let the wrong assumptions drive a conversation forward, we are in effect putting our mind in neutral and remaining reactive rather than proactive.

### ***The Likeable Hero***

*Being likable requires work.*

Likeability is about the *power of trust, friendship, authenticity and optimism*. Likeability is one of the most underestimated characteristics of being human. Likeability can enhance effectiveness of our mission.

Five signs of likeability:

- Approachability
- Stickiness
- Trust formation
- Friendliness
- Flexible optimism

Approachable people are easy to meet, talk with, and get to know. They embody authenticity. There's a much stronger connection than most people think between approachability and success.

*Likeability alone doesn't ensure trust but it does open up the possibility wider for trust to develop.*

Friendliness describes how you choose to interact with others and reveals how much you really value people.

### ***The Disproportionate Investor***

*The spirit of investment is revealed most in the spirit of sacrifice.*

Consumers look for what they can take from others while investors look for what they can give to others. Investors realize that what they have to give to others is not dependent on what has been given to them.

If we want to become more relationally intelligent, we must minimize our investment in consumers and maximize our investment in investors.

## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone (cont'd)*

*Relational geniuses minimize the potentially wasted investments and maximize the potentially greatest investments, without devaluing anyone in the process.*

Prayerful discernment guided our Savior to select a few to invest in because he knew how important intentional, strategic, Spirit-guided investment could be. 2,000 plus years later this has changed everything.

It's better to invest in a few who will reinvest in others than to invest in many who may never reinvest in anyone. Then people around you will do the same as they emulate your leadership example.

*Relational Intelligence is about living our love with one keen eye on influence but always remembering to keep it in the right order – love first, influence second. It's the way we as leaders serve humanity and God Himself, while also creating a distinct and better world.*

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## Relational Intelligence | *Steve Saccone (cont'd)*

### Recommended Resources

1. **Read** about 4 internal barriers that hold leaders back in their relationships with team members by Auxano Founder and Team Leader Will Mancini.
2. **Watch** *Relational Intelligence* author Steve Saccone in a brief video as he discusses what our conversations reveal about the health of our relationships, and challenges people to move from being a victim of our own words to a creating a healthy relational culture around us.
3. **Read** additional thoughts by Steve Saccone on specific topics from his book *Relational Intelligence*.
4. **View** an amazing interactive highlight of *Relational Intelligence* by LifeWay's Scott Pryjmak.

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## Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Clint Grider, Ph.D., CFRE

### Vision Clarity Connection

C.S. Lewis once commented: "Affection is responsible for nine-tenths of whatever solid and durable happiness there is in our lives."

In *Relational Intelligence: How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence Through a New Way of Being Smart*, Steve Saccone suggests that the nuances of our relational skills directly correlate to what we value most deeply. In describing this, the author deftly distinguishes between valuing others well and applying effective interpersonal skills to expand our influence and impact.

Appreciation of this dynamic can be transformational in the life of a leader who desires to understand more deeply the intrinsic value of human beings who have been created in the very image of God. This kind of exploration takes commitment, honesty, and ruthless introspection to become more aware of our blind spots and more disciplined to develop the six defining roles of "relational genius."

With Christ as our example, these roles are genius indeed.

### Go Ahead

- Ask your team to read the definitions of the *Six Defining Roles of a Relational Genius* on page 1 of this SUMS and to write down the name of any staff member, family member, or other person they've known who displays the qualities of any of the roles.
- Share stories and experiences of how those people make others feel as well as the degree of their influence.
- Discuss what it could look like if your leadership team actively and intentionally grew in each of these areas.



## More About Clint Grider

Highly regarded as a “vision optimizer,” Clint can keenly identify the key people and strengths that are at the core of an organization’s culture. With this discernment, he guides leaders through vision clarity processes leading to meaningful results and sustainable momentum. Bringing the gifts of encouragement and creativity to the process, he helps teams advance vision through increased passion and ownership. Blending these abilities with years of experience building healthy organizations, Clint guides churches and non-profits to realize big dreams.

A Certified Fund Raising Executive, Dr. Grider has an additional ability to serve organizations in developing and aligning resources to achieve their goals. Clint has served in leadership roles for successful campaigns ranging from \$2 million to \$637 million. He also has served as a strategic planning consultant for universities, schools, churches, and other non-profits, with a particular emphasis on helping organizations improve their systems and capacity. This unique combination of skills and experience have enabled him to effectively serve ministries and organizations like America’s Family Coaches, the Texas A&M Foundation, Sky Ranch, Houston Baptist University, and Baylor College of Medicine.

Clint received his bachelor’s in business administration and marketing from Baylor University, master’s in educational psychology from Baylor, and Ph.D. in educational administration with specializations in process improvement and strategic planning from Texas A&M University.

He and his wife Kindra have been married 23 years and live near Dallas, Texas with their two daughters.

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