

Never Eat Alone Summary (5 Minutes): 20 Lessons Learned

Never Eat Alone is a 2005 book by entrepreneur and New York Times bestselling author Keith Ferrazzi. In the book, Ferrazzi outlines his method of networking and building connections through generosity, serving others, and surrounding yourself with the right people of which we will share examples in this Never Eat Alone summary.

Pennsylvania native Keith Ferrazzi's brilliant and unique perspective is a fresh approach to something that can often be intimidating to those new to the scene. With degrees from Yale and Harvard business school, he has the credentials to come across as pompous and condescending. But rather than placing himself on a pedestal, Ferrazzi writes with unpretentiousness and a genuinely humble quality.

Here are 20 lessons learned in Never Eat Alone:

#1 Never Eat Alone

To say Ferrazzi emphasized this lesson would be a gross understatement. Never Eat Alone explores the importance of keeping your social calendar full to build and maintain your network. Avoid being out of sight and out of mind, and grow your connections with breakfast, lunch, and dinner plans throughout the week.

#2 Generosity is the key

The backbone of Ferrazzi's networking method is to give openly and be of service to those around you, and in turn to be willing to accept the generosity and help from others. He expands on this concept with the idea that scorekeeping and "quid-pro-quo" arrangements do not work, but that everyone can achieve their goals when we help each other when needed and as needed through giving and taking.

#3 Accomplishments are important but mean nothing without people

Ferrazzi is clear that accomplishments and abilities such as one's education, talent, intelligence, life history, etc. are useless without the support of other people. The most successful companies are headed by people who have great relationships with other people around them. The best education cannot help someone who doesn't have a strong team behind them.

#4 The "Self-Made" man is a myth

According to Ferrazzi, no man is an island, and no one who has been successful has done so alone. A team of people who support and build each other up makes a successful venture. Recognizing this fact is why Ferrazzi has such a passion for networking and building connections with others.

#5 Networking takes time – but it’s not boring

Taking “never eat alone” to heart and filling your social calendar takes time and energy. But Ferrazzi explains that while you may be busy, you will never be bored. By networking with a variety of people, from all different levels of success, will lead you to learn more about yourself, those around you, and business in general. He rightfully points out that learning new things is never boring.

#6 Ask not what your friends can do for you, ask what you can do for your friends

Taking a page from JFK’s book on this point, Ferrazzi leads with generosity and offering help before asking for it. It is the best way to build good professional relationships. When making new connections with people it is most important to focus on discussing what the relationship could do for them, rather than what they can do for you.

#7 “A goal is a dream with a deadline”

Ferrazzi takes goal setting very seriously and believes your goals should be founded on your dreams, but that they need to be grounded, rational and realistic. Once your goals are clearly defined, you should pursue them with a set plan in mind – not the idea of “one day” achieving them.

#8 Find your passion

Setting goals without having a full, conscious understanding of what your dreams are, what you’re motivated by, and what you’re passionate about, will result in failure due to a lack of enthusiasm. If you are truly passionate about your goals and your mission, you will do anything to achieve them.

#9 Put your goals to paper – backward in time

Writing down and visualizing your goals is nothing new to the how-to book industry, but Ferrazzi takes a unique approach and recommends working backward in time to achieve your goals. Start with your writing down your goals over the next three years, then yearly, then monthly, etc. Doing this will help you develop reasonable short-term goals that will get you to your long-term goals step-by-step.

#10 Assign people to your goals

As you write your goals and plan out how to achieve them, connect them to members of your network and how they can help you achieve your goals. Map out who is going to help you, how they can help you, and make a plan for asking for their assistance in achieving your goal.

#11 Create a personal “Board of Advisors”

Curate a group of people close to you who you can count on to support you and keep you accountable for reaching your goals and your deadline. They do not dictate your actions or decisions, but they can be relied on to keep you true to your directives.

#12 Build your network before you need it

Your networking plan will not be successful if you start reaching out to grow connections and relationships with people *as* you need them. If you do not have an already established rapport, there will be limited motivation for those people to help you. You can appear disingenuous, “schmoozy”, and inconsiderate.

#13 Do your homework

Meeting all new people is paramount to networking, however, meeting powerful people is something that you should work to get the opportunity to do. The best thing you can do before meeting these types of people is to do your homework on them. Learn more about them, their business, and what is important to them. Google is a useful tool that can help you build a mutually beneficial relationship.

#14 Warm up the cold call

Cold calls are difficult, and Ferrazzi suggests warming them up. Rather than reaching out to an important contact you’ve never spoken to directly, establish some trustworthiness by finding a shared acquaintance so you don’t appear to be a complete stranger.

#15 Talk to people

Ferrazzi encourages engaging with at least 50 new people per day. Simply talking to people not only will build your network over time, but it will also make you a better conversationalist and keep your social skills sharp. You never know what a conversation with a stranger might lead to.

#16 Embrace small talk and become an expert

No one enjoys small talk, but Ferrazzi argues that it is the most important conversation that we have with another person. This is the conversation you have when you first meet someone. It is the period of time with which you are building rapport and growing your circle. You should remember to be yourself, be vulnerable, share information, and be conscious of non-verbal cues. Small talk should end with an invitation to continue building the relationship.

#17 Feed the fire of your network

If you ignore the people in your network, they will no longer be in your network. Ferrazzi points out the importance of keeping in touch genuinely and often, even if in small doses. He calls those

quick, casual points of contact “pinging”. Pinging can be a quick call or email, and they are important for maintaining the quality of the relationships in your network.

#18 Build your brand

Much like product marketing, a strong brand will work in your favor. Marketing yourself well and to the right people with your personal brand will keep you at the forefront of people’s minds. You need a reliable, dependable identity that your contacts universally recognize, and that makes you stand out and attract new people to you.

#19 Find a mentor

Reaching out to the right people, ones who have power, influence, and the ability to change your life is incredibly important for building your network. These people can teach you a lot and give you power by association. Entering into a mentorship with these people will be incredibly important for your success.

#20 Be a mentor

While Ferrazzi places importance on finding a mentor to learn from, his value of generosity and helpfulness drives the point that you should also be a mentor to those who need it. Every connection that you make is important. While your mentee is learning from you, you are just as likely to be learning from them. Networking with as many people as possible, from all levels of success creates a beautiful cycle of learning and support so that the group can be successful as a whole.