



THINK SMARTER  LEAD BETTER


Illinois Venture Capital Association

*Strategies for Survival:
Cultivating Mentors & Allies for Success*

Presentation Handout

Dr. Arin N. Reeves



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The Champion Continuum	The Role of Champions
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); margin-right: 10px;"> Private relationship ↑ ↓ Public relationship </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 5px;">1</div> <div> <p>Mentor Provide advice, support, or coaching.</p> </div> </div> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 5px;">2</div> <div> <p>Strategizer Share "insider information" about advancing; strategize getting ahead.</p> </div> </div> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 5px;">3</div> <div> <p>Connector Make introductions to influential people; talk her up with your peers.</p> </div> </div> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 5px;">4</div> <div> <p>Opportunity giver Provide a high-visibility opportunity.</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 5px;">5</div> <div> <p>Advocate Publicly advocate a promotion; fight for her in settings where she can't fight for herself.</p> </div> </div> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: Herminia Ibarra</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help you get and interpret the information you need to be successful Help you get, hone, and communicate the skills you need to be successful Help you get the resources and connections you need to be successful Help you get the opportunities you need to showcase your skills and talents for future success Help you be seen and valued when you are not in the room Help you grow in ways that benefit your present and your future Help your full potential be perceived accurately
<p><i>Board of Advisors ~ a deliberately curated group(s) of champions to meet your unique needs</i></p>	

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Deliberate Connections	Investment Language	Calibrating for Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The more you know about the person, the more they will be an individual to you and the more you will be an individual to them.</i> • <i>Create trust through commonalities and don't operate from fear of wasting someone's time or fear of awkwardness.</i> • <i>Ask for and share surprising personal information.</i> • <i>Learn something new about the person in every conversation. Ask questions about where they grew up, if they have siblings, etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Express "investment" frequently.</i> • <i>Focus on "how" and "when" questions instead of "if" questions.</i> • <i>Do some long-term planning in every conversation.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ask how words are being defined. "What do you mean by...?" "How have you seen...in the firm?" Share your definitions.</i> • <i>Same actions don't have same impact. Ask about different actions and what the outcomes have been.</i> • <i>Pay attention to non-verbal cues as to how something is being taken and calibrate for differences.</i>

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Plan the Conversations	Avoid the Discomfort	Have the Conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify champions. Create a separate “notebook” for each champion.</i> • <i>Make connecting with champions a habit. Integrate it into “end of project,” “end of week,” etc. checklists.</i> • <i>Make it easy for them to connect with you. The less decisions they have to make, the more likely they are to connect with you.</i> • <i>Do a self-evaluation and share it with champions (formally or informally) to get their perspectives.</i> • <i>Hold yourself accountable for having frequent and short feedback and guidance conversations.</i> • <i>Think of connecting with a champion as a necessary component to growing and developing as a professional.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Invest in building trust in the relationship when you are not asking for anything.</i> • <i>Account for differences in thinking about communication preferences, objectives, styles, etc.</i> • <i>Avoid having “negative” or “venting” conversations with others about people.</i> • <i>Focus on behaviors not your opinions.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify physical and mental vulnerabilities for relying on cognitive shortcuts.</i> • <i>Pay attention to “..., but...” signals.</i> • <i>Pay attention to “think,” “feel,” “in my opinion,” “seems,” “maybe,” “can’t imagine” type of signals.</i> • <i>Pay attention to lack of behavioral evidence for evaluative judgments.</i> • <i>Ask for more information with “what did you mean by,” “what are some examples of,” “how would you have liked it to look different” type of follow up information.</i>



Dr. Arin N. Reeves

A leading researcher, author, and advisor in the fields of leadership and inclusion, Arin studied business at DePaul University's College of Commerce, attended law school at University of Southern California, and received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Northwestern University.

Arin is a best-selling author of four books - *In Charge* (2022), *Smarter Than A Lie* (2019), *One Size Never Fits All* (2014), and *The Next IQ* (2012).

Arin has designed and led several comprehensive research projects on leadership and inclusion in various topics related to diversity, inclusion, and equity. Before Nextions, Arin practiced law for several years and served as an Adjunct Professor at Northwestern University where she taught classes on law and society.