

THE BIG IDEA

Every conversation you have is either building a relationship or costing you one. **Riaz Meghji spent seventeen years interviewing the most powerful people in the world — and every habit he identified maps, chapter by chapter, to the 1st 5 Minutes framework.** This isn't coincidence. This is confirmation. What you're doing in those first five minutes isn't optional — it's the whole game.

THE GOLDEN RULE

"Look at You" must always be greater than "Look at Me."

When someone meets you for the first time, they're unconsciously running three questions: Do you care about me? Are you listening to me? Can I trust you? Every tool in the 1st 5 Minutes exists to answer all three — in five minutes or less.

FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT: RIAZ'S HABITS + THE 1ST 5 MINUTES

RIAZ'S HABITS	1ST 5 MINUTES FRAMEWORK
Listen Without Distraction You're not really listening if you're busy predicting what someone will say next. Most people are loading their next line — not actually hearing.	Locked-In Listening + OQ Locked-In Listening is giving someone your complete, undivided physical and mental attention. OQ means listening with your eyes for cues and emotional signals.
Make Your Small Talk Bigger Genuine curiosity transforms surface-level filler into real connection. The tool is better questions — especially the follow-up.	2QM + Pre-Game ("5 Before the 5") The Two Question Minimum ensures you never stay at the surface. The Pre-Game means arriving with connection points already identified — so the first minute feels like it was made for them.
Put Aside Your Perfect Persona The polished mask costs you connection. People sense performance. Vulnerability done right isn't weakness — it's the only thing that reads as real.	Connect Before You Sell The first five minutes isn't about impressing — it's about connecting. Bring your human self into the room before your business self arrives.
Be Assertively Empathetic Step toward discomfort rather than away from it. Acknowledge pain and emotion without fixing it — then keep moving toward the outcome.	The Last Minute + 2QM The Last Minute is where you earn the conversation. The second question is where assertive empathy lives — it shows you care what to do with the answer.
Make People Feel Famous Complete, undistracted presence makes every person feel like the most important one in the room. It's not performance — it's a discipline.	Full Framework Output OQ, LTP, 2QM, Locked-In Listening, Three-Peat Rule — every tool produces this single outcome: the person walks away feeling seen, heard, and valued.

■ **HABIT DEEP DIVES: THE ELITE APPLICATION**

01 STOP LOADING — START LISTENING

Loading isn't multitasking — it's a conversation killer. When you're mentally pre-loading your next question or pitch, the person in front of you can feel it. They feel like a stepping stone, not a human being. Locked-In Listening means your full presence — body, brain, and attention — is pointing in one direction: at them.

ELITE MOVE:

Before your next meeting, create a deliberate 60-second pause to clear your mental queue. Write down every pressing thought competing for your attention, then set it aside. Walk in empty. Your sole job in the first minute is to receive — not to respond.

"I want to make sure I'm fully here with you — tell me what's most important to you going into today."

02 LEAD BY YOU, NOT TO YOU

Outside-in is letting emails, junk mail, and other people's to-dos dictate your day. Inside-out is deciding how you'll use your time and energy. The tell is reactivity: if you're constantly reacting to what's happening to you, the outside is steering. The author writes the script.

ELITE MOVE:

When a client hands you action items mid-meeting, resist the urge to promise "within the hour." Give yourself breathing room so you control the pivot to your next call.

"These are great — I'll have them to you tomorrow so I can give them the attention they deserve."

03 THE MASK DOESN'T MAKE YOU TRUSTWORTHY

The polished professional persona isn't protection — it's a wall. Research confirms that people actually like individuals who show vulnerability better than those who don't. Your prospect can sense performance. They can sense the highlight reel. And when they sense it, they pull back. The goal isn't to perform humanity — it's to actually bring it.

ELITE MOVE:

Identify one real, relevant personal moment you can share in your next first conversation. Not a confessional — a connector. Something that says: "I'm a real person, and I understand the kind of challenge you're facing because I've been there too." Keep it brief, keep it genuine, and make it about them — not you.

"I'll be honest — I've been in that exact situation myself. Here's what I wish I had known..."

■ **HABIT DEEP DIVES: THE ELITE APPLICATION**

04 LEAN IN WHEN IT GETS HARD

Assertive empathy isn't passive listening and it isn't aggressive solving. It's the discipline of staying in the room when things get emotionally charged — acknowledging the discomfort without trying to fix it, and then continuing to move toward the outcome. This is OQ and EQ operating at the highest level.

ELITE MOVE:

When a conversation gets tense or emotional, resist the default to pivot or solve. Ask a neutral question: "Help me understand — what makes this particular issue so important to you?" Then stop. Let them articulate it fully. Most of the time, when people are fully heard, they begin to find their own answers.

"I hear you — and I want to understand this fully. What would the right outcome look like from your side?"

05 PRESENCE IS THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL YOU HAVE

Making people feel famous isn't about flattery or performance. It's the natural output of doing every other part of the 1st 5 Minutes right. When you pre-game, listen without loading, ask the second question, and stay authentically present — the person in front of you walks away feeling like the most important person in the room. Because to you, in that moment, they were.

ELITE MOVE:

Adopt Bryan's three-word power move: "Good for you!" — said with full sincerity when someone shares a win, a milestone, or a success. Then follow it with a specific compliment tied to what they just told you. Specific beats generic every time. You can't fake specificity — and they know it.

"Good for you! That took real persistence — and I can tell how much it means to you."



When you're focused on what you're going to say, you're in a doing mindset. You're focused on action. This can lead you into that common conversational trap—offering advice when a person really just wants to be heard. If you're truly listening, you should be in a more **reflective thinking mindset.**

Riaz Meghji



3 ACTION ITEMS

1 Set Your "Look at You" Intention

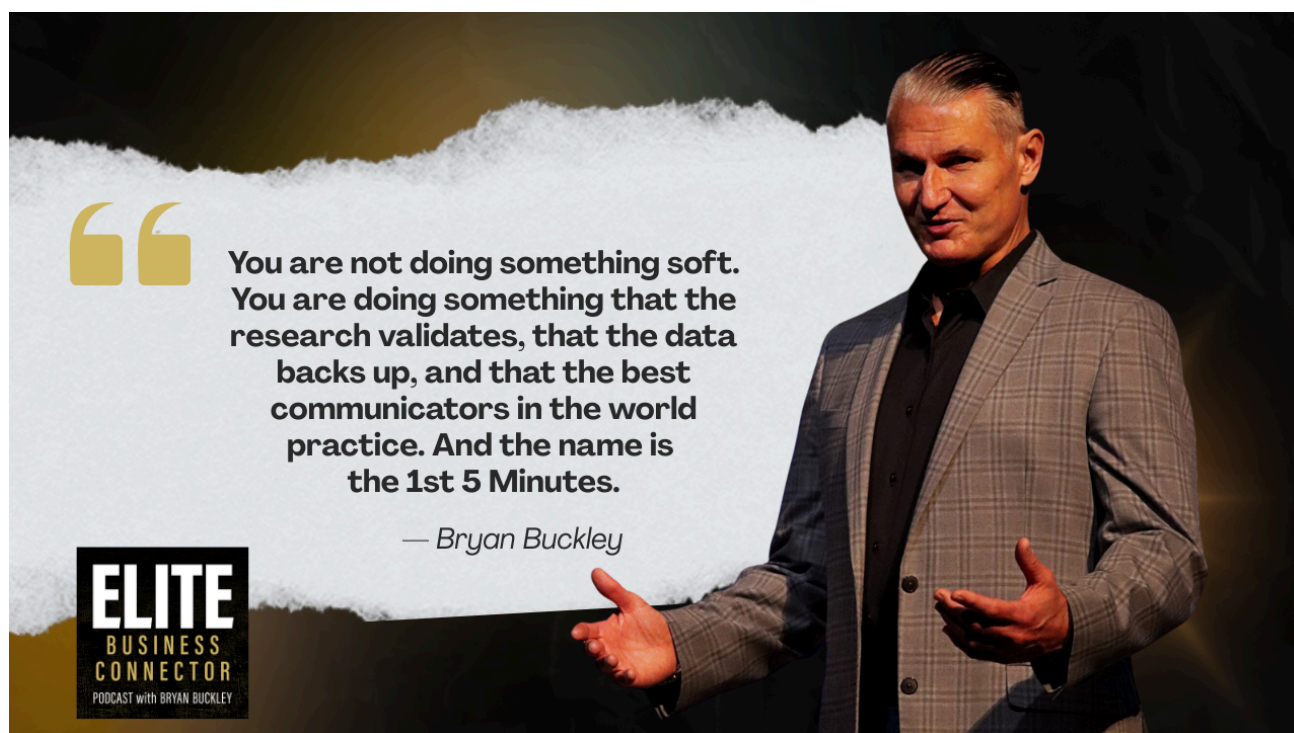
Before your next five business conversations, pause outside the door and ask yourself: "Am I walking in to impress or to connect?" Set your intention consciously before you say a word.

2 Ask Curious, Continuous Questions

Commit to the 2QM in your next conversation. When you get the first answer, don't move on. Ask a follow-up — even just "Tell me more" — and watch how quickly the real conversation starts.

3 Make Someone Feel Famous Today

Look for one moment to say "Good for you!" with genuine energy. Follow it immediately with a specific observation about what they shared. Three words. One moment. Lasting impression.



CARRY FORWARD QUESTIONS

1. Before I walk into this conversation — am I showing up to impress or to connect?
2. What is the one thing I can do in the next five minutes to make this person feel seen, heard, and valued?

■ **BONUS DEEP DIVE • The Science Behind Asking Better Questions**

Riaz Meghji's Habit 2 — *Make Your Small Talk Bigger* — builds on a simple truth: curious questions aren't just conversation lubricant, they are a scientifically validated mechanism for building trust and liking. Bryan's 2QM (Two Question Minimum) operationalizes exactly what the research describes as the most powerful move available in any first conversation. Here's what the data shows.

1 Follow-Up Questions Increase Liking. Harvard researchers Huang, Yeomans, Brooks, Minson, and Gino conducted three studies of live dyadic conversations and found that people who ask more questions — particularly follow-up questions — are consistently better liked by their conversation partners. Follow-up questions signal responsiveness: the listener heard you, processed you, and wants more. That's exactly what Bryan's 2QM delivers.

[View Source →](#)

2 Interpersonal Curiosity Builds Trust and Closeness. A 2024 narrative literature review published in *Frontiers in Psychology* analyzed 23 peer-reviewed studies on interpersonal curiosity and found that expressing genuine curiosity about others — through questions, attention, and authentic interest — promotes feelings of closeness, trust, and camaraderie. The researchers identified curiosity as a core mechanism for human connection, confirming Riaz's claim that curiosity is the thing that transforms small talk from surface to substance.

[View Source →](#)

3 Curiosity Signals That You Actually Care. Research on perceived partner responsiveness — documented by Reis, Itzchakov, and colleagues — shows that when people feel their conversation partner is genuinely listening and interested (demonstrated through follow-up questions), they report higher satisfaction, greater connection, and stronger trust. Responsiveness is the bridge between listening and belonging. The 2QM is how you make responsiveness visible.

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FEATURED RESOURCE

Every Conversation Counts: The 5 Habits of Human Connection That Build Extraordinary Relationships

17 years. Thousands of interviews. 5 habits. Riaz Meghji distilled what the world's best connectors actually do and every one of those habits maps directly to what Bryan teaches in the 1st 5 Minutes. This is the book that backs up the frame work.

[Buy on Amazon →](#)



■ Additional References

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HABIT 2 — CURIOSITY & QUESTIONS

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HABIT 5 — MAKING PEOPLE FEEL FAMOUS

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- [11] Kashdan, T. B., McKnight, P. E., Fincham, F. D., & Rose, P. (2011). *When curiosity breeds intimacy: Taking advantage of intimacy opportunities and transforming boring conversations*. *Journal of Personality*, 79(6), 1369–1395. [View Source →](#)

BY BRYAN BUCKLEY

THE 1ST 5 MINUTES

Knowing Riaz's five habits is a start. Doing them consistently in every business conversation is the work. The 1st 5 Minutes gives you a step-by-step framework to make that happen — whether you're an extrovert who talks too much or an introvert who freezes up. It's the system that turns great conversations from occasional wins into a repeatable competitive advantage.

[Get the Book → bryanbuckleyspeaks.com](https://bryanbuckleyspeaks.com)



TURN YOUR 1ST 5 MINUTES INTO YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE — LEVERAGE OR LOSE IT.

Bryan Buckley is the leading authority on the 1st 5 Minutes of a business conversation — 5X author, speaker, corporate trainer, and podcast host. He helps sales professionals and leaders develop, deepen, and master their business communication skills so every conversation counts.

✉ Bryan@BryanBuckleySpeaks.com / 630-689-7606

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