Max Irzhak ([00:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1.86)):

My next guest has built a reputation for bringing people together. We'll explore the science behind influence and how we can learn to build trust, grow our careers and create meaningful relationships that benefit everyone around us. This is Motivational Mondays. I'm your host Max Irzhak, and joining us is John Levy. John, welcome to the show.

John Levy ([00:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=21.361)):

Thanks for having me on.

Max Irzhak ([00:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=32.21)):

Awesome. Let's kick things off. What is behavioral science? What's the root of what you're trying to get at?

John Levy ([00:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=32.21)):

Uh, so it's kind of funny. Uh, it used to be believed that human beings acted logically, that we make all the sense in the world that we make logical choices. And from that we do what's best for us. And then we realized that that's completely not true. Like we don't make any sense. And there's a whole collection of behaviors that we, uh, perform or that are affecting us, that we're mostly completely unaware of. And, um, my job is to kind of help reveal those so that way we can make better decisions or affect our life more positively. And if you want a really funny way of figuring this out or seeing one, uh, if you have your phone nearby, I want you to think for a second. And this is to you listeners. I want you without looking at your phone to guess what the app is on the bottom right of your screen.

John Levy ([01:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=86.85)):

Okay. Guess now check. If you were right now, put your phone face down and without looking, can you tell me what time it said on your screen when you just opened it? And the answer is there's no way. Most of you haven't paid any attention and that's called unintentional blindness. Essentially our brain will intentionally ignore information so that we don't have to be thinking constantly because if we needed to pay attention to everything, we'd need to eat so much, we probably would have gone extinct a long time ago. So that's one of over 180 well-known biases that are affecting us at any moment. We think we know what's going on around us, but mostly we don't have a clue. And my job is to reveal it in really kind of interesting ways.

Max Irzhak ([02:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=136.52)):

You're known for hosting these secret dining experiences known as the influencers. I find that absolutely fascinating. Can you briefly tell us what it is and how this got started?

John Levy ([02:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=149.75)):

Oh, sure. So this is completely ridiculous. I've mostly made a career out of, uh, convincing groups of 12 people to show up at my house, uh, and actually cook me dinner, but there's a catch: they're not allowed to talk about what they do or even give their last name. Then when we sit down to eat, they get to guess what everybody else does. And they find out that it's the editor in chief of a major magazine, a Nobel Laureate, an 8 time Olympic medalist, a celebrity Grammy award, winning musician, Oscar winner, whatever it is that you could imagine. I've hosted over 2000 people at 227 dinners in 10 cities in three countries. And here's the funniest part. I've gotten all these people to come to my home, cook my dinner, wash my dishes, clean my floors and overwhelmingly they thank me for it. Uh, so the 'Influencers Dinner' essentially turned into this community of thought leaders, but it was also a way to prove that we can connect with anyone regardless of status or wealth or whatever it is. And you don't need to spend a ton of money. Fundamentally human connection, the things that actually engage us can cost very little. And so I wanted to flip the entire script on its head, that most companies try to win you over with expensive dinners or swag bags at parties. I want it to do the exact opposite. And so it's able to prove it in the most ridiculous way possible.

Max Irzhak ([04:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=241.02)):

One of the things that I absolutely love about this concept is that it takes people away from their tribes and allows them to meet new people outside of their normal circles. How can people get better at expanding their own circles in their daily lives?

John Levy ([04:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=259.38)):

That's a great question. So the first thing is, uh, we have to acknowledge the fact that we mostly run in homogenous groups. Uh, most people say no, no, but my friends so-and-so is of a different race or religion. Yeah. But you probably all vote the same, workout at the same gyms. Like you probably have very similar lives. Uh, so if you wanna meet people outside of your social circle, the key is to realize that overwhelmingly people meet through activities, interests, or culture, meaning if you're of a specific religion or, uh, you might participate in cultural events. Like I grew up in a Jewish family, we celebrated Passover. If you want to connect with people, that means that you have a few options. Either you can go to some preexisting experiences that are activities like playing soccer or cultural events and things like that. And you'll meet people or you'll need to organize something.

John Levy ([05:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=323.07)):

And if you're going to organize something, let's say you're a college student. You could start approaching people who are the heads of the different, uh, groups or clubs throughout the school who have unique interests and invite them all to a single event. Now that could be a potluck dinner. It could be going on a hike together, but whatever you do, there's this kind of weird behavioral hack that you can use to connect with them better. And it's called the Ikea effect. And the Ikea effect states that we disproportionately care about our Ikea furniture because we had to assemble it. So anything we put effort into, we care about disproportionately. It's why at the dinners we cook together so that people put effort into each other and the activity. So whatever activity you create or cultural event, the key is let's find a way to get people to invest effort into one another. It could be painting a picture, a mural together, doing volunteer work. It could be going on a hike together, that exertion of effort actually bonds people. But that would be my biggest recommendation is don't try to win people over, figure out ways for them to invest effort into one another.

Max Irzhak ([06:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=396.02)):

In your life and especially at these dinner parties, you've met a lot of influential leaders, across many different industries. What are the characteristics of some of the best leaders that you've encountered?

John Levy ([06:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=410.46)):

Um, wow. That's an interesting question. Overwhelmingly, there's a curiosity and a willingness to be wrong, which means that they are not stuck on the idea that they're right about something. And they're really curious where they might not be right, because the best way to be right is to figure out very quickly when you're wrong. And if you want to do something extraordinary, it means that you're going to get it wrong a lot, but you want to get through those iterations as quickly as possible.

Max Irzhak ([07:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=444.8)):

You create deep, meaningful relationships. Does it just come down to genuine curiosity or is there a more scientific approach?

John Levy ([07:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=453.86)):

Uh, there's no one way, let's start with that. But there are a few things that really seem to trigger relationships. First is if you have some common grounds, like I mentioned, people connect over activities, interests, culture, right? And so you're more likely to connect with people when you have something in common. When you don't have something in common, an activity can actually serve that purpose. Right? So I might have nothing in common with an Iranian woman, for example, but if we both cooked dinner together, that activity in itself is the common ground. And that's how human beings tend to connect. The second is it might be helpful to understand how trust actually works and what it's made of. So I'd mentioned that you can build trust through shared effort, but if I were to ask you, what is trust made out of? It's not something that, you know, just is obvious to anybody.

John Levy ([08:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=520.58)):

And although there's a bit of argument, whether it's made up of four things or three things, I tend to keep it simple with three. And those are competence —the ability to get something done that you say you can do. The second is, uh, honesty, you're truthful. And the third is benevolence — that you have my best interests at heart. Now what's interesting is that they're not equally weighted. So if Michael Jordan misses a shot, right, you don't go, oh, he's incompetent. I can't trust him. You say that's part of the game. Occasionally you'll miss a shot. If you were to find out some of these lies though, you would doubt the things that they have said previously. And the things that they say moving forward. So a breach and honesty is much a bigger deal than a breach in competence, but there's this odd loophole and it works like this. So max, let's say we're walking down the street and the two of us are, uh, chatting. And I say, Hey, do you mind if we pick up something from my friend's house? And you're like, yeah, sure. And I say, uh, okay, we're going to hop in right now. And as we do 40 of your friends, jump out and scream, surprise. Now, I have technically just lied to you, right? I told you a mistruth intentionally, but it'd be very weird if you said, John, I can't trust you anymore. You just lied to me.

John Levy ([10:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=605.97)):

That'd be super strange. You'd be like a total weirdo. And the reason is that we value benevolence. I had your best interest at heart above honesty and honesty above competence, which means that we need to examine the way that we lead with things. Because currently most companies lead with our servers have 99.9, nine, 9% uptime, and you go, okay, that's great. Maybe we should lead with, we know that you care about having your website up and we're going to do everything in our power day or night to make sure that what you need will stay up. And that's leading with benevolence. That's me being very clear, Max, that I know what's important to you, and I'm going to support you in that. And that's a much faster way to build trust, frankly, than with leading with competence. Right? If you look at lawsuits on doctors, if memory serves and I could be off on this, it's the ones with the bad bedside manner. The ones that don't seem to care get sued, not the ones that screw up. That's super interesting.

Max Irzhak ([11:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=682.37)):

That is very interesting. I also wonder if they're more likely to get sued because they didn't build that rapport with the patient. So now the patient really has no qualms about doing that.

John Levy ([11:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=695.45)):

I would absolutely believe that if you remember, we started off by talking about behavioral biases and ultimately most of our decisions happen on an emotional level or mechanical level. They don't, we then justify it with really terrible logic, right? Like when I see a candy bar on my counter, I totally deserve that - fun fact. I don't. But we justify things and we explain them away. And if you can emotionally connect with somebody, that's going to make the decision making process completely different than if you seem like a cold, sterile automaton.

Max Irzhak ([12:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=735.24)):

Can you tell me about the Ikea effect and how that relates to building valuable relationships?

John Levy ([12:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=741.33)):

So, as I mentioned, the Ikea effect, this idea that when we put effort into something like building our Ikea furniture, we care about it disproportionately. And that's your friend. Anything we put effort into. It's why we care about my people and care about their children. It's not despite the fact that they're a pain in the bud. All of you are listening right now. Yes, you are a pain in the butt. It's because of it. It's because the late nights your parents spent helping you with homework or taking care of you when you were sick or worrying about you, that actually causes them to care more about you. Now, the reason that happens is likely because of something called a vulnerability loop. You see, trust does not proceed Vulnerability. Vulnerability, proceeds trust, and it works in a multi-step process. Step one person A puts out a vulnerability signal. So Max, you and I are walking down the street and I say, I've been so overwhelmed. I don't know how I'm going to get all this work done. Now, Max, if you ignore me or make fun of me, that's going to reduce our trust.

John Levy ([13:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=809.46)):

But if you acknowledge it and put out your own vulnerability signal in return, "John I've been totally overwhelmed too. Ever since this pandemic, I just feel like I can never get enough done. " Now, both of us have demonstrated that we can be vulnerable with each other and as a by-product, we are safe and trust has been increased. So by investing effort into one another, by being vulnerable with one another, that actually is what creates a greater level of trust and more potential for belonging at times, that means that you have to really pay out attention for, um, for people when they're putting out signals. And at times that means that if nobody's putting out a signal, you might need to so that they can respond. Sometimes it won't work out, right? Sometimes people will make fun of us or will ignore us. But that discomfort isn't nearly as bad as the impact of being alone or lonely. And so it's well worth the risk. And in general, you'd be surprised. People are pretty wonderful about completing those groups. Otherwise we wouldn't be around as a species.

Max Irzhak ([14:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=884.14)):

So you have this new book coming out on May 11th, titled, "You're Invited, The Art and Science of Cultivating Influence." What's the number one lesson you want people to walk away with after they read it?

John Levy ([14:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=897.73)):

Fundamentally, everything from human longevity, literally like the greatest predictors of living a long life are not eating kale and doing yoga. It's number two, strong social ties. Number one, social integration. You're part of a community on business success. You can measure people's company's stock value, employees, sick days and profitability to the level of oxytocin in people's blood streams that ‘cuddle chemical’ of belonging. Human beings fundamentally need other people. And if we don't spend time cultivating those relationships, we're going to suffer. And if we do, life has the potential of being extraordinary. There are no guarantees. If I can make any suggestion, it's to reach out to people, to give them a sense of belonging, to connect, to build trust, to put in shared effort and to connect them with each other, because realize it's not just knowing people— that was the second greatest predictor. It's the social integration, the experience of belonging that really matters. And if you can cultivate relationships between people, you know, it'll really strengthen everybody's success, happiness and satisfaction. We'll all be [inaudible].

Max Irzhak ([16:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=978.06)):

John. This was a truly fascinating conversation. I want to thank you for sharing your wisdom and teaching us that the meaning of life ultimately comes down to having meaningful relationships.

John Levy ([16:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=990.21)):

It's been my pleasure. Thank you for having me on

Max Irzhak ([16:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/lbbUXbX2RZOaRqmbvlilAbtZlr9AO7v3JB_ARe7m6HnQVSnra8-pHWU82TknTAKx6nHMG7PV7zjpsZ8h1KaYDPRkwQY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=992.43)):

And thank you everyone for listening. I encourage all of you to pre-order John's new book. You're invited to the art and science of cultivating influence available May 11th. We'll see you all next week on Motivational Mondays.