

LLOYD A. LUNA

# **Even Chairs Do Their Best**

How Presence Leads to Influence







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LLOYD A. LUNA

# **Even Chairs Do Their Best**

How Presence Leads to Influence

LLOYDLUNA 20 years  
of global  
speaking

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# **DEDICATION**

To Rei Summer



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Additional research and proof of concept is carried out as you read this book. Applying the concepts, principles, and insights from this book and the consequences of its application is sole responsibility of the reader.

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# INTRODUCTION

A couple of years ago, while teaching a Zoom class at the Public Speaking Institute, I asked my students this: If you speak and people don't get you, is it their fault or yours?

Total silence.

For a full minute, nobody spoke. No one wanted to blame themselves—but no one wanted to blame the innocent listeners either. Then one student finally took the liberty to explain: “Sir, there are people who are simply not interested in what a speaker like me says. I know someone who is really not interested in what I say no matter what I do. As much as I'd like to blame myself, I guess it's his lack of interest that's the problem—not me. Or certainly not my speech.”

I knew this was coming. But as a public speaking teacher with over two decades of experience—having shared stages on four continents and in 26 countries—making me, somewhat ridiculously, the most traveled Filipino motivational speaker in the world—I knew it was best to approach the conversation thoughtfully. So instead of pointing out who's at fault, I asked

slowly: “Is he really not interested... or might it be that you’re not interesting?”

You see, many have asked me how I’ve stayed in this business for so long: from a local presenter to a global speaker, from speaking in small schools to influencing Fortune 500 companies. It’s almost absurd to think there’s one simple answer.

In reality, it’s a combination of a million little things I’ve done since I started in 2005. But audiences can be persistent. They keep asking for that one simple answer—perhaps because they’re also searching for shortcuts, for an elevator to success, for instant achievement.

When I look back on a professional speaking career that has spanned more than two decades, I’ve realized something: the key isn’t the message. Thousands of speakers around the world share the same ideas and speak on the same topics. It’s not the resume or educational attainment either.

I’ve seen leaders with double PhDs and master’s degrees who still struggle to capture people’s attention. They struggle to attract the opportunities that may have already been theirs if only they could capture interest. It’s not even the rank. I’ve met CEOs and C-level executives who are exceptionally brilliant but still fail to connect with the people they talk to.

And so I arrived at a simple answer: Maybe—just maybe—it’s about being interesting.

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This book was born out of that idea: from a simple answer drawn from many years of experience, to a response to an audience that persistently wanted just one thing, to a reflection of how I struggle, gamble, and juggle my way to the top. Most motivational books tell people they need more choices, more freedom, and more opportunities. I am telling you the opposite: Your problem is that you have too many exits.

### THE LUXURY OF TOO MANY EXITS

Many people may have already quit before they even try to make a day matter. They set an alarm in the morning *para mainis lang* and then snooze the phone. *Kasalanan pa ng alarm na ginawa niya ang trabaho niya.*

We use our choice to say, “15 minutes *pa*.” Because they are now late for school or office, they might skip breakfast. *Baka mag-take out na lang ng kape along the way.* If lucky, *baka may officemate na nagbaon ng pandesal.* Boom! *Nakatipid pa!*

You open the laptop, check emails, maybe reply if *nasa* mood. Opps, it’s time for a team meeting. Make a presentation or listen to the boring routine report then back on your seat and wait before time’s up.

Then what was supposed to be a promising day—which is let’s say the entire eight hours—is gone. Weeks. Months. Years. Where did your time really go? Where did your life go?

In a world obsessed with the protecting your peace, we've accidentally branded boundaries as an excuse for invisibility. But real peace isn't found in avoiding the grind; it's found in narrowing your choices so you can live peacefully.

You aren't a background character. Or, at the very least you're not supposed to be. You are the protagonist, and protagonists don't stay in bed when the plot is waiting.

Most people live in that kind of ordinary because they choose the comfort of the routine. But in the ordinary isn't where true success lies. You can't have an ordinary presence and expect to command influence. Promise, *hindi talaga nangyayari 'yun*.

People listen to voices that interest them, not the annoying noise that's out of the ordinary. In a class of 45 students, there's only one who'd rank number one. That one is special. The rest of the class are ordinary. In a company with 300 sales people, only the top 10 will take the stage and receive an award. The 290 are just ordinary.

However, it's in the same ordinary life that the extraordinary people, perhaps like you, can come to life. That happens only when you wisely narrow your choices to the path of becoming interesting. Being an interesting person isn't a trait that everybody is born with. Yes, generally, newborn babies are cute and adorable. But they are not interesting.

That makes presence a life skill, not a physical feature. *Madali lang mag power-dress o magpaayos sa salon weekly pero ang ending, wala ka pa ring impact.*

## INTRODUCTION

Of course, you can say, “Well, I’m choosing a peaceful, silent life. I don’t want the spotlight.” I’m all for that if you’re happy with it. But a chair is at peace and lives a silent life, too. And I’d be more than happy for the chair if that’s really the kind of “life” it wants to live.

I was in a coffee shop one time because I was casually meeting up with a longtime friend. I was already seated when he came but I was first to ask, “*Kumusta?*” As I expected he replied, “*Okey lang, same pa rin. Wala namang bago.*”

“Oh okay,” I said. Holding the arm of the chair, I jokingly said, “*Brother, itong upuan okey din eh. Same pa rin. Wala ring nabago. Upuan pa rin.*” We laughed, but in that laughter, we knew there was something in those lines that speaks volumes about our humanity. *Kapag ang buhay mo eh na-compare na sa upuan*, success becomes the bare minimum.

*Sa isang team na may tamad, pwede ko bang sabihin, “Wala ka na namang ginagawa. Sana naging chair ka na lang!” Or, sa isang ahente na madalas magbibigay ng excuse, “Sir sinipagan ko naman pero wala talagang benta eh.” I’d say, “Masipag din yung chair at wala rin siyang benta.”*

True to its promise, a chair works harder than anyone else in a room. It doesn’t complain. It struggles in silence, and no one expects it to have an inspiring story. But look at it closely: *masipag, walang reklamo, walang drama—‘yun nga lang, wala ring kaluluwa.* Yet, it offers us a powerful sense of accountability. If a piece of wood can show up and be that faithful every day, what’s

our excuse? Suddenly, the “snooze button” or the “boring report” isn't just a task; it becomes a battle of character.

## THE CHAIR PHILOSOPHY

Because here is the core of the Chair Philosophy: **A chair succeeds because it has no choice, and a human fails because he does.**

Look at the chair where you are sitting now: *Walang sariling desisyon. Walang kayang baguhin. Kung paano siya ginawa, 'yun na siya.* It is successful at being a chair because its purpose is narrowed down to one thing. It has no choice but to be exactly what it was made to be.

But you? You're not a chair. I believe you can make people pause because of what you say and how you carry yourself. You can weave your own story, decide whether you'd wake up when the alarm sounds at 5 a.m. or turn it off because you're too lazy to get off the bed, and change when you feel like you need a life upgrade.

Being interesting isn't about being the loudest in the room. It's about narrowing your choices so wisely that you break away from the human tendency to be comfortable with the routine he has worked so hard to obtain. Instead of just cruising through the day, why not try a little humor that breaks an awkward silence? Try to be curious and ask questions like the ones you do when you're still a kid! Try to be in the moment—not too far back or too forward from it.

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Of course, these moments don't change the world for sure. But they change the way you see it and if you become interesting enough, they can even change the way other people see the world, too. By breaking away from life's boring pattern, you can amaze yourself with opportunities that may come your way because success happens when you decide not to live an ordinary life.

A chair does its job. It stands and waits. It rarely makes anyone stop or remember. Being interesting is different: it draws attention quietly, makes people notice, and over time, builds presence. You don't need magic here. Just a change in perspective. And unlike a chair, you must be willing to show your vulnerability because people don't respond well to perfection. A chair is perfect but look at how we treat it. Instead, people are attracted to someone who turned life's misery into a beautiful story.

That's human.

Over time, people remember not because you tried too hard. You don't need to be loud. They remember because you were present at the moment, you let life happen, and you chose not to accept the ordinary.

## THE POWER OF THE NARROW PATH

To clarify, having too many choices—or too many exits—is often what makes people fail. Unlike a chair, which has only one path and therefore succeeds by default. Of course, that isn't the chair's choice.

But if you think about it, do we really have a choice but to breathe, eat, sleep, and work to survive? In that sense, we are just like chairs: we survive because we have to. It is our biological default. But is survival your ultimate end-game? If you are only doing what you must to stay alive, you are essentially a chair with a pulse.

Nobody wants a narrow path because it's uncomfortable. But struggle is the only path to lasting influence.

Chairs are okay. *Pero hindi ka naman siguro upuan.* A chair succeeds because it has no choice and fulfills its purpose by default. You, however, have the burden and the blessing of choice. Despite the many exits that make you think twice about what works and what doesn't, you can choose to risk and hope to get rewarded for taking that risk.

When we, as humans, finally narrow our choices down to the very essential—moving from survival by default to existence by design—we create something rare: an undeniable presence. That presence is what eventually leads to influence.

Lloyd A. Luna  
April 19, 2026  
Manila, Philippines

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## You've got enemies?

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” I believed that for a while, until I became a little more philosophical about life and asked myself, “But what if the people I know don’t really know me? Will I still get the opportunity?” When I realized the answer was a clear “No,” I adopted a new guiding principle that has stayed with me ever since: it’s not who you know; it’s who knows you.

But how do people truly know you? What makes them want to know you—the kind that makes someone pause and think, “*Sino ulit ‘yun? Interesting ‘yun ah.*”

When I tell people that I was never going to be a professional speaker *kase mahiyain talaga ako, walang gustong maniwala*. In fact, *noong bata pa ako, nagtatago ako sa likod ng aparador sa bahay namin wag lang makita ng mga bisita*. Lately *ko na lang talaga naisip bahay namin yun, bakit ako ang magtatago. Dapat yata wag magpunta yung mga bisita*.

Through a mix of hard work and harder decisions, I became a global speaker. People began to recognize my name. But more importantly, they began to recognize my value. Today, I am hired not because of the people I know, but because of the 'me' they have come to know. And that number is growing every day.

## THE GRAVITY OF ATTENTION

While this leads to making more acquaintances and friends, this can also go the other way. Because you're so interesting, you get more attention. As you get more attention, you get more opportunities. The more you move up to the ladder of success, the more people look bad because of how good you become.

Ladies and gentlemen: Interesting people attract friends as they do enemies.

In my many years of experience as a public figure, I have made many friends. I can only be grateful to have that kind of luxury. They come from different places, of different ages or generations, different industries. If you think the man you see on stage or television lives a life without enemies, you're seeing the performance, not the reality. The truth is far more complicated.

A one-hour keynote speech in a crowd of 500 or 1,500, or 5,000 or a one-hour show with viewership that reaches millions is only a tiny fraction of my envied life.

Interesting people don't live quiet lives; they live jealous ones. To be interesting is to be envied. The moment you claim the chair

## CHAPTER 1: YOU'VE GOT ENEMIES?

that others only dream of sitting in, don't expect applause—expect scrutiny. Influence is a double-edged sword: it buys you a following, but it also buys you foes.

### THE PHYSICS OF OCCUPYING SPACE

This is the art of removing the exits. When you are finally down to the essential, you realize that being the best isn't just about presence; it's about protection.

In my opinion, every single one of us lives an invisible life most of the time. People can only see the surface and no one really knows us.

Off the stage and away from lights of a studio, making friends for me works the same way as making enemies. When I do something good for others, I earn friends. But when that same act makes other uncomfortably, jealous, or insecure, I make enemies. *Alam mo*, when you've lived long enough as much as I have in a certain industry, you'd know if you've become successful enough just by asking one question: Have you made some real enemies?

Of course you do. If you don't, you're chair-like: friends to everyone and enemies to no one. Being a reliable chair is fine if you just want to stay put, but safety is a trap if you want to be heard.

In this day and age, it's impossible—if not flatly improbable—to succeed without making some people raise their eyebrows and look at you like you've committed a crime. The argument? When

people see you as a threat, they do everything to take you out in an instant. And who can blame them for feeling like they have to fight for their life every time you improve yours?

## THE PRICE OF VISIBILITY

Don't get me wrong. It's not that I want you to make an enemy on purpose. The toll of having enemies is draining to say the least. It's time consuming, too. But when you decide to start getting attention because you're becoming a better version of yourself, it's natural to also breed a bunch of critics around you. That's the price you pay for moving: you might be taking up some space that displaces others.

But you can't be too cautious either. When you're too cautious living your life, you reward invisibility. You don't move for fear you'll occupy someone else's space, which in turn, will cause you to make enemies. But success doesn't come to the invisible. You've got to move, be seen, and occupy a space you deserve.

That's unlike every chair you've seen in your life.

Chairs don't mind not if they're sidelined or moved or placed in a lonely corner. Wherever you place them, they will still perform their function so well even if you don't even notice it well enough to warrant "The Best Chair of the Year" award.

They almost please everyone who sit on them without saying a word. Heavy or light, fart on it or not, drag it or lift it up, push it or kick it, nothing really matters. But if someone actually looked

## CHAPTER 1: YOU'VE GOT ENEMIES?

closely at a chair, they simply see an object, not a threat or an opportunity, not a friend or a foe.

That's why chairs thrive in silence. No enemies. A lot of friends. But they are not interesting after all.

### FLAWLESS IS FOR FURNITURE

Unlike the chair, you're allowed to have a story. Your life is not a mere function. Give yourself permission to fail and get your heart broken. Invite some enemies—not for your rudeness, but for your courage to finally make a choice. The willingness to misfire in the moment pays the highest dividend in the long game.

Like chairs, you can always say, "I'm okay!"—that you don't have any ambition at all, or that you don't want to achieve anything more. I understand its validity since you have the power to choose.

But if you're only considering yourself and therefore disregarding how other people can benefit from your further achievements, then you can be okay. But one thing to look at it is selfishness. You reward invisibility because you only care about yourself. So you can be "okay" and ordinary.

But doesn't the world always respond to the interesting, not the "okay"?

Interesting people get more breaks than those who simply exist. This is definitely the reason chairs don't get rewarded even when

they do their best work all the time. They don't make mistakes. They don't mispronounce names or tell corny jokes. Perfection at best—*pero sorry ha, walang award.*

I remember one instance when I drove for about two hours to get to the venue where I was supposed to speak. I arrived and noticed no one was there except for the caretakers. I was so proud to have arrived way earlier than the organizers and the participants. A few hours later, I couldn't help but ask the person there where my audience might be. He replied, "*Yun po ba yung event sa March 27?*" Thinking fast to save face from further embarrassment, I said, "*Ah opo, mag-o-ocular inspection kase ako ng venue para alam ko yung adjustments ko. Pwede ko bang tingnan?*"

I was there on February 27, for an event scheduled for the 27th—of March. Same date, wrong month. *Tama! Isang buwan pa bago yung event, nandun na ako. Yung early bird n'yo na two hours early, easily no match sa nagawa ko!*

When I recount this story and share it, we laugh. People rarely remember the stupidity or the carelessness or the flaws in that story. They remember the human—the one who drives two hours to a venue, yes, a full month early.

Curiosity matters too.

*Bakit fire station ang tawag kung tubig naman ang dinadala? Hindi ba dapat water station? Yung tinawag siyang fire exit kahit tao naman ang nag-e-exit, hindi ba dapat human exit? Yung school bus, school ba ang sumasakay? Student bus sana. Bakit kailangang huminto sa drive thru. Hindi ba stop thru dapat? Rush hour ba yung*

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*hindi ka naman makapagmadali? Teethbrush dapat kung hindi naman isang ngipin lang ang lilinin? Mag-decide tayo kung original or copy, hindi ung original copy. Yung pretty ugly, nakakalito yun!*

One time, in the house, I was asked: *Ano pang nakalimutan? I replied, "Paano ko malalaman kung nakalimutan nga?"*

Every interaction is an opportunity to be seen, to be more than okay. You can be playful, witty, and curious. *Oh, alam ko na.* Maybe you hesitate because the joke might flop or someone might roll their eyes. *Mahirap naman talagang mapahiya.* But that's exactly why it matters. When you notice the absurdity of life and its contradictions, you stop being background noise and start being someone people actually notice.

Not every attempt lands, *siyempre naman.* And that's okay. You might stumble, misfire, mispronounce, or say the wrong thing. That's okay, too. That is what makes you human. That is what makes you interesting.

Chairs never fail; they simply exist. You could do the same. *Bakit ba hindi, di ba?* But is that really the best use of your life? To live just for the sake of existing?

But when you finally decide to engage and occupy a certain space in the world, expect to make enemies even when you try your very best not to make one. Think of it like a social media algorithm. If everyone likes your content, you're likely playing it too safe. Real influence creates friction.

When you stop being “okay” and start being interesting, you will inevitably trigger someone else’s insecurity. That’s not a toxic environment; that’s just the physics of occupying space. Having enemies is proof that you aren’t a curated version of yourself designed to please everyone. It’s a sign that your vibe is strong enough to be felt.

## THE RECEIPTS OF PRESENCE

A quick warning, though: Don’t confuse being interesting with being insufferable. There is a world of difference between *enemies of progress* and *enemies of personality*. If people dislike you because you are outperforming them, that’s the price of growth. But if they dislike you because you are rude, arrogant, or dismissive, that’s not friction—that’s just bad character. Interesting people displace others with their excellence, not with their ego.

In a world where noise is the norm, being felt is the ultimate win. Your success is a threat to those fighting for the same spot. Your progress forces them to look at their own standing—and that alone is enough to make you an enemy.

I wasn’t supposed to be a professional speaker. In college, I saw a speaker who inspired me so much that I told myself, “I want to be this guy someday!” Excited, I asked him to mentor me, only to be pushed away with a cold, “You’re not one of us.”

He even sent an emissary to a coffee shop in Greenhills to advise me to stop pursuing motivational speaking and focus on internet marketing instead. On another occasion, a corporate speaker

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called me from China while I was in Glorietta carrying my Nokia 9500. I answered and heard: “We can’t allow you to speak on stage because you are a risk.”

I didn't wait for a career to make enemies; I made them long before I ever stepped on a stage. I climbed into the boxing ring with the naive intention to learn, only to realize I wasn't there to be a student—I was there to be the casualty.

As a young man with no idea how cruel the world can be to beginners, I exposed myself. I tried to displace people and occupy a space I thought I was allowed to have. In the process, I was perceived as a threat and took an indescribable series of blows before I could even learn how to punch.

Those scars are the receipts of my presence.

I moved from being ‘okay’ to being memorable. Those scars are a constant reminder that it’s dangerous to be just ‘okay.’ When you try to occupy a space, those already in the proximity may gang up on you and bully you until you are no longer a threat. But make no mistake: They don’t do this because you’re doing something wrong; they do it because you’re doing something right. The friction is caused by your presence, but the fire is started by their character.

My mistake was thinking I needed their permission to exist in the same room. I didn’t realize that in the world of high-stakes influence, nobody gives you a seat. You have to be willing to take the blows until you’ve earned the right to sit down.

LLOYD LUNA: EVEN CHAIRS DO THEIR BEST

The journey is often messy and scary. Those who try to succeed are misunderstood because many people confuse threat with genuine aspiration. But that's part of it. A chair doesn't care about the cruelty of the world because whatever people do to it, it really is not its business. The realization that I am not a chair is more than enough for me to keep moving, occupying spaces, and risking to be seen—even if it means hitting a few nerves along the way

You can be so much more than okay. A chair? Not so much.

## 2

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# The Presence Currency

I realized early on that attention is more than just being noticed. It's definitely not about standing on a table shouting your ideas or waving your hands *na para kang* MMDA traffic enforcer directing chaos in the middle of EDSA. You don't ask people to pay attention. Well, you can try, *pero hanggang doon lang 'yun*. You can get people to stop for a moment, but you can't make them stay in that same moment with you.

I've learned that you can't buy it, either. *Kaya kahit 'yung boss mo, pwedeng magsalita 'yan sa harap niyo nang hindi niyo naman talaga pinapakinggan*. Maybe you're looking at him because he's the boss, *pero sa totoo lang, hindi niyo naman talaga iniintindi ang kanyang sinasabi*. The reason is simple: attention is earned.

## THE HUMBLING OF THE “FAMOUS”

Looking back, I remember realizing just how little people actually recognize me. *Nakaka-humble siya, promise.* It hit me that I was the only one who knew I was “famous”—most people actually had no idea who I was.

I remember this one time I was giving a speech in the City of Valencia in Bukidnon for an International Teachers’ Month celebration. I arrived just in time, walked into a gymnasium packed with more than 5,000 people, and a few minutes later, I was called on stage.

I was thrilled and excited. I started speaking, and midway through my typical opening spiel, I noticed something was off. *Tiningnan ko ‘yung leeg ko. Sabi ko sa sarili ko, “Teka, wala pa ‘yung garland, ah.”* Now, most people would have just ignored it to avoid the awkwardness. *Pero ako,* right there in the middle of my speech, I turned to the organizers and said, jokingly, *“Nasaan nga pala yung garland ko?”*

On the spot, I paged the person in charge of welcoming guests at the gate. The 5,000 people in the crowd started looking around, wondering *sino ba ‘yung hinahanap ni Sir.* The organizers spotted her and pointed; I didn’t hesitate—I called her right up to the stage. She came up, looking a little surprised. We ended up sharing this funny, unscripted moment as she placed it around my neck while I was still speaking. In that moment, she wasn’t just an anonymous organizer who made a mistake; she became a co-star

## CHAPTER 2: THE PRESENCE CURRENCY

in a story the audience would never forget. We turned a potential embarrassment into a shared connection.

Usually, the garland is a formality given *before* the speech starts. *Pero* that day, *sa gitna ng speech nangyari*. And you know what? The audience loved it. *Biglang hindi na lang ako basta speaker na nasa stage*. I became part of their story. I became an experience.

### CLOUT VS. CURRENCY

I've realized that attention is powerful because it is limited. In a world of endless notifications, buzzing phones, overflowing inboxes, and simultaneous Zoom calls, attention is the one thing people protect fiercely. You can't demand it. You can't fake it. You can only earn it. *Sa dami ng speakers na narinig at napanood na nila, iisipin nila: sino 'yung nag-iisang kayang gumawa ng ganito?* That's presence. That's what gets attention. That's what makes you someone *na hindi nila makakalimutan*, even long after the event is done.

I've written before about how presence is one of the most undervalued assets in today's noisy, distraction-laden world. Sometimes, *hindi natin namamalayan kung gaano kalaki ang value na nadadagdag nito sa atin* when we know how to use it intentionally. If you haven't realized it yet, let me tell you: attention has tangible effects on our lives.

Attention is the only asset that doesn't depreciate. But don't confuse clout with currency: clout is loud and temporary; currency is quiet and consistent. You don't need a million

followers for presence—you only need the buy-in of the people in the room. Influence is the ultimate hack; it opens doors that a resume can't even find.

If you think I've ever spent a single centavo marketing myself on billboards or advertising on television, you're wrong. I never did. And probably I never will. But why would I spend on it if the people who see me speak can already do the job of referring me to my next clients? My performance is my business card.

When I catch their attention, it becomes the quiet handshake that precedes my influence. The approval I get becomes the currency I use to earn a front-row seat to the next opportunity.

I always tell people: being interesting isn't about stealing the spotlight. It's not about being the loudest or the flashiest. It's about being someone people *want* to look at, someone whose presence naturally draws attention because it is authentic and insightful.

## THE PERKS OF THE "FRONT ROW" LIFE

When you become influential enough, I've noticed that people tend to show their best selves to you. They prepare more. They listen more carefully. They choose their words better. They become more intentional in how they accommodate you so you can have the best experience.

Because of this "currency," I've been given the best seat in the room, the best room in the hotel, and the best hotel in town

## CHAPTER 2: THE PRESENCE CURRENCY

wherever I go around the world. They don't let me commute; they pick me up. They even lend me a driver and a car for the day. When I arrive, they don't serve ordinary food and wine; they offer the best—at times, the most expensive.

As a hobbyist golfer, I've even had organizers offer an extra day just so I can play at the nearest golf course. And no, I'm not paying for it. *Sila na ang bahala*. In Indonesia alone, I've played almost all the courses in Bandung.

### THE VANTAGE POINT

But you might ask, “Lloyd, isn't this just about ego? *Yabang naman nita*.” Not at all. You see, if you are invisible, your message is silent. If you have no presence, your influence has no reach. I didn't ask for that garland in Bukidnon because I needed an accessory—I didn't. I asked for it because I needed the vantage point to influence five thousand people in that gym. I wasn't being seen for my own sake; I was being seen so that the truth I carry could not be ignored.

So, if you want more opportunities, start working on this currency. Remember: a chair can hold space. It can sit quietly and do its job reliably every single time. But it is never truly seen. Being seen is risky and scary. Staying in the corner is safe—but it is also lonely.

*Pwede kang magtago, pero hindi ka lalago. Pwede kang magpakita, pero dapat maging matapang ka. Hindi lahat ng makikita nila ay magaganda.* When you expose yourself out there, you'll be under

LLOYD LUNA: EVEN CHAIRS DO THEIR BEST

the microscope. But it's not a question of "Will they like me?" as much as it is a question of "Will I have the courage to choose to be seen?"

The chair doesn't have to be seen for it to succeed in what it does. You do.

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## The Chair Philosophy

You've ever seen a chair? Good. We all know what a chair does. It holds the weight of whoever is seated. It doesn't ask for attention or make demands. It doesn't complain if *mabigat or magaan lang ang uupo*, or worry about being liked. *Ano namang pakialam ng chair if gusto mo siya or hindi, 'di ba? Upuan mo ako kung gusto mo. 'Wag kung ayaw mo.* But I also observed that it's reliable. You can count on it, mostly. And that, if you pause to think about it, is remarkable. That's what I mean when I say, "Even a chair does its best."

Now think about that for a second. A chair, a simple, silent, unassuming object, performs exactly what it was made to do, yes, without trying to get attention and without complaint. Every once in a while, it may jiggle or sway and eventually break. But if you're going to give it deeper thought, wouldn't you agree with me when I say it faithfully fulfills its purpose without drama?

And yet, no award-giving body has ever been formed to recognize these hardworking, ever-reliable chairs. In human eyes, chairs are

almost always invisible. It's there, but it's really not there. You look at it with only one thing in mind: I'm sitting down. Yet you only notice them when they fail or when someone trips over one. *Ouch!*

In my mind, if a chair can quietly do its best, how much more can a human do as someone who can think, decide, and invent? If chairs can endure the task they're meant to accomplish, what miracles can we still perform given the education, connections, and decisions we have at our disposal? Isn't it interesting that this inanimate object can succeed without setting any goal or attending any training?

You don't need to lead and manage a chair for it to excel in what it does. No paycheck, no benefits, no commission, and still it will deliver.

Yet, human beings may tend to live below the chair's standard. Many quit before they even get started. A little scolding, disapproval, or rejection, and we fold. We complain about small things like waking up early in the morning or getting stuck in traffic, which, by the way, has been there long before we were born. We pay attention to the pain more than our ability to endure it and the human potential to grow from it.

A chair struggles for a known reason it has already accepted long before it is made. It simply endures the experience. Do you know why you're struggling and why you must endure it? Or do you simply take the pain, complain, and then repeat the same process again and again?

## THE HUMAN CLICKER

Sometime in 2003, I did volunteer work in the Office of the President of the Philippines in Malacañang Palace. I was a youth leader trying so hard to contribute to nation-building. I thought it was best to use my time and skills to help in the Youth Affairs Office. This was during the time of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The office where I belonged introduced and cascaded the President's vision at the time: Strong Republic, or *Matatag na Republika*.

In many of my speeches, I normally ask the audience, "*Hulaan n'yo kung ano'ng trabaho ko noon? Ang makakahula, bibigyan ko ng P5,000.*" To this, they would raise their hands and guess, "Speechwriter," "Janitor," "Maintenance," "Security." I'd say, "*Ang daming nangangailangan, ah. Hala sige, lahat na sinabi.*"

But no one has ever made the right guess. The job? Human clicker.

*Ako kasi 'yung gumagawa ng PowerPoint presentation ng boss ko. Siyempre, taga-bitbit na rin ng laptop. Every time he presents and says, "Next," ako 'yung pipindot ng Enter para lumipat 'yung slide.*

Interesting job? Relevant at the time since there was no clicker available to us. Was that job something anyone could be proud of? Maybe not. Was it particularly prestigious? I doubt it. *Wala ngang award-giving body na nagbibigay ng "Clicker of the Year" eh, so malamang hindi.*

But as early as then, I wasn't working for prestige. I was working for experience. For someone like me who didn't have so many opportunities in life because I came from a middle-class family with only public education, having an access was a luxury.

One day, we had an event and my boss was supposed to speak. Being the assistant, a responsible one at that, I was the first to arrive at the venue so when he got there, everything was set up. It was an auditorium filled with more or less 200 people.

Then he called me saying, "Traffic, *baka ma-late ako. Kapag na-late ako, ikaw na ang mag-talk.*"

I didn't know how to react to that. For someone introverted and painfully shy like me, it was one of those moments when everything gets blank, your feet get cold, and your stomach turns upside down. I was hoping I could say "no" but given the office that we represented, it was out of the question. Someone had to go up and speak.

Still hoping he could make it on time, we waited. But when the emcee got up, I knew there was no way he would make it. So instead of introducing my boss, she introduced me.

It was my first time. When my name was called, I stood up and took the longest walk I've had in my life. *Alam mo yung lakad na ayaw mong makarating sa entablado pero kahit anong bagal ng lakad mo, makakarating ka pa rin?* After three days, I arrived. No, just after a few seconds. I was up there facing my "Everest," so to speak. Then I looked at my seat because I felt something was missing. Guess what? *Naiwan ko yung kaluluwa ko!*

## THE PRIVILEGE OF FAILING

I started talking and talking. And I knew from the get-go, nobody wanted to listen to me. I knew that instead of getting clarity, *lalo pa silang nalito dahil sa speech ko. Paano ko alam? Ako mismo eh litong-lito sa speech ko. Kung hindi malinaw sa akin ang speech ko, gaano ito kalabo sa audience ko?*

It was the most unforgettable 30-plus minutes of my life. I ended the speech and got off the stage. It was then that I knew I messed up. Whether to do it again or not was entirely up to me.

It was easy to say, “That was the first and the last time I’ll step on the stage.” At least I wouldn’t feel the same shame twice. *Tapos na. Pwede nang kalimutan.*

But something in me wouldn’t let it end that way. “You already felt the pain,” it said. “What else are you trying to avoid? The worst has already happened. You stood up, you embarrassed yourself, you got confused. And you’re still here.”

Thinking about it now, I realized that a chair can’t mess up being a chair because it has no freedom to fail. But by standing on that stage and failing, I was doing something no piece of furniture could ever do. We often treat failure like it’s a permanent stain. But the most interesting people are the ones with the best recovery arcs.

A chair is a static object—it’s the same on Day 1 as it is on Day 1,000. It has no glow-up potential. But my embarrassing first speech or my entry-level clicker job is just the pilot episode. The

privilege of failing is that it gives you a story worth telling. Perfection is boring; *'yun ang sabi sa akin nung isang upuan na naupuan ko noong minsan*. I realized then that I am a human with the privilege of being wrong, getting tired, and complicating my life.

Rolling the dice, trying my luck, and hoping it wouldn't be a waste of time, I did it again. This time, it was the same result. After the third, fourth, and fifth time, it was the same painful result. Finally, after the 10th attempt? It was still the same. I didn't know when I finally got it right. And probably, that doesn't matter anymore.

After fifteen million mouse clicks—another 100 Enter keys broken—and I-don't-know-how-many embarrassing moments, in 2018, onboard Philippine Airlines Flight PR 218 from Manila to Auckland, New Zealand, I made history. I became the first Filipino to represent the Philippines in the Global Speakers Summit. It was there that I was also recognized as the first Filipino member of the Board of the Global Speakers Federation.

I knew why I needed to go through the painful process of personal development. Of course, I didn't know where the “clicker skill” would come in handy, but I thought it was part of the process, so why not do it? Why not be the best at it?

## BEAR THE WEIGHT

The not-so-easy journey from human clicker to global speaker started when I made the choice to take the job. And once in there,

### CHAPTER 3: THE CHAIR PHILOSOPHY

I acted like a chair, which stops at nothing to bear the weight of what comes with being one. It began the moment I made a conscious decision to embrace the pain and endure it, whatever the cost.

My life changed when first, I chose as a human and second, I executed like a chair will.

So I'm not exactly asking you to be as passive as a piece of wood. *Alam naman nating lahat na walang ambisyon ang upuan, pero ang execution niya? Wagas.* It does exactly what it was made to do, every single time, without fail.

As a human, you have the advantage of choices, but only when you narrow them down to the very essentials. Not all choices are viable choices. You can use your soul to choose your “Everest.” You have the power to decide your direction. But once you start the climb, you must embody the dedication of a chair. You remove the exits. You stop questioning the weight of the burden. You become an immovable force until the job is done—or when the situation calls for a reasonable exit.

**The Chair Philosophy states: “A chair succeeds because it has no choice. A human fails because he does.”**



## 4

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# The No-Choice Doctrine

Because humans are given the luxury of choice, I understand that it's inconvenient—if not outright unacceptable—for me to tell you to abandon such luxury, trap yourself in a single choice, and risk losing everything should you fail. But if you think deeply about it, isn't it also true that the luxury of having too many choices sets you up for devastating failure, too? While you may find this insight hard to imagine, I believe indecision is actually harder because it spreads the soul too thin to ever achieve excellence.

That's my point exactly. Having too many options spreads us so thin that success becomes improbable. A professional athlete trying to master basketball, tennis, golf, boxing, and chess will never win against an athlete who only focuses on boxing. By choosing and focusing on a single sport to specialize in, you practically narrow your path down to the essentials. That is pure power.

In a world of “generalists,” the specialist holds the most power. You can’t be everything to everyone. It’s draining and exhausting. But here, a “specialist” isn’t someone who *can’t* do other things, but someone who *refuses* to. A knife is sharp because it concentrates energy into the smallest possible area to maximize impact. For this same reason, success is more attainable through concentration than through pursuing too many options. By removing the option to be “okay at everything,” you force yourself to be “exceptional at one thing.”

I call this the **No-Choice Doctrine**: It states: When you eliminate the choices, you guarantee the outcome. It is the art of removing the exits until the only thing left is the essential. It’s about choosing your path with the heart of a human, then walking it with the spine of a chair.

In *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill tells the story of a great warrior who ensured success by burning the ships that carried his men to the enemy’s shore. Addressing his soldiers, the warrior said: “You see the boats going up in smoke. That means that we cannot leave these shores alive unless we win! We now have no choice—we win or we perish!”

They won.

As Hill puts it, every person who wins must be willing to cut all sources of retreat. Only by doing so can one maintain the burning desire to win that is essential to success.

A chair follows this same, brutal logic of victory. It simply does what it is meant to do. It stays still and fulfills its purpose without

## CHAPTER 4: THE NO-CHOICE DOCTRINE

asking what else is out there, without complaining about the weight, and without questioning why it was made for a single function. *Walang reklamo. Walang excuse.* No matter how heavy the burden, it carries it. It does not run from the struggle; it doesn't look for an exit.

Now, *tingnan mo nga yung sarili mo.* You can think, decide, and change direction. You have the incredible ability to improve and build something better out of what you have. *Ang kaso, kapag masakit na, aatras na. Pag nahirapan, magtatanong agad kung bakit kailangang ganito.* We fail because we give ourselves the option to quit. The chair succeeds because it doesn't. Like the warrior's soldiers, the chair has already burned its ships. *Wala nang choice kundi tumuloy.*

If you think about it more deeply, a chair exists for one reason. It cannot decide to stop being a chair—*kahit gaano pa niya kagustong maging tao.* It cannot question its role. So when it does what it is supposed to do, it succeeds by default. Imagine one day you're in a restaurant. *Tapos yung mga chairs doon may choice na paupuin ka o hindi. Maghahabulan kayo doon sa loob?*

The thing is, you are human. *Hindi ka upuan.* You are not born with a fixed purpose the way a chair is made for one. You can think. You can choose. You can act, or if you don't feel like it, you can refuse to act. You can move forward, stay put, or even regress. And because you have that freedom, you also carry the risk that comes with it. You can make mistakes. You can get hurt.

But the same caution that protects you is the same thing that traps you. As I always say, “The tears that cloud your vision are the same tears that clear it.”

That is where misery quietly begins: when you choose the safety of being an object over the struggle of being a person.

If a chair could escape its fate, it would probably say, “I wish I were human. Even if it's hard, at least I'd have a choice. Right now, it's hard *and* I have no choice.”

So the question is not whether you *can* succeed. Of course you can. The question is: When the pain and the struggle arrive, will you stay to see it through, or will you walk away just because you have the choice to?

Of course, there's a small exception: *Kung nasusunog na ang bahay, hindi ka pa ba lalabas? Ang sabi ng upuan, “Masunog na kung masunog!”* But you? You have the obvious choice to survive. If the house is burning, the chair sticks to its mandate and dies. You, on the other hand, change direction to stay alive. You must have the “gut feel” and discernment to know the difference between a heavy burden and a hopeless disaster. “Burning the ships” is a strategic move, not a suicidal one.

The No-Choice Doctrine suggests that human failure often stems from an abundance of options. In contrast, a chair “succeeds” because it lacks the capacity to choose to be anything else. By intentionally removing the “exits” that lead to mediocrity, you shift from survival by default to success by design.

## The Rules of the Doctrine

We often act as humans who want the comfort of a sofa, but we are called to be leaders with the spine of a chair. The following rules are not suggestions; they are the requirements of the seat you have chosen to occupy.

### THE NO-EXIT RULE

**The Rule:** Remove the exit to prevent retreat.

**The Principle:** Eliminating the option to quit forces total commitment. By closing the “back doors”—alternative plans or “just in case” mentalities—you redirect your energy entirely toward progress.

### THE EXECUTION RULE

**The Rule:** Choose a path and walk it until the job is done.

**The Principle:** Choose with a human heart; walk with the spine of a chair. Once committed, stop questioning the burden and start executing the task.

## THE PRESENCE RULE

**The Rule:** Assert your visibility; failing to do so is an abandonment of duty.

**The Principle:** A hidden chair provides no value. Presence is the foundation of influence.

## THE ALIGNMENT RULE

**The Rule:** Refuse responsibility until the work aligns with your humanity.

**The Principle:** Only become an immovable force if the task passes three filters: **Competency**, **Values**, and **Contribution**. Do not sit in the wrong chair.

### Breaking Down the Three Filters

- **Competency (The Structural Filter):** *Can I do this?* This is about your “build.” A chair must be structurally sound to hold weight. If you lack the fundamental skills for the seat you occupy, you will break under the pressure—not because you lack “spine,” but because you lack the necessary skill set.
- **Values (The Ethical Filter):** *Should I do this?* This is about your “fabric.” This ensures that the burden you carry doesn’t crush your spirit. If the task violates your core beliefs, your “human heart” will constantly look for an exit, making it impossible to apply the **No-Exit Rule** effectively.

## CHAPTER 4: THE NO-CHOICE DOCTRINE

- **Contribution (The Functional Filter):** *Does this matter?* This is about your “utility.” A chair is only successful if someone is actually sitting in it. This filter asks: Is this work solving a real problem or serving a greater need? Without contribution, you are merely “occupying space” rather than “fulfilling a function.”

The third filter, contribution, helps you prevent the “No-Choice Doctrine” from becoming a form of “busy work” or empty discipline.

- **Competency + Values** (without Contribution) = **The Hobbyist.** You're good at it and you like it, but nobody needs it.
- **Competency + Contribution** (without Values) = **The Mercenary.** You can do it and it's needed, but it eats away at your soul.
- **Values + Contribution** (without Competency) = **The Amateur.** Your heart is in the right place and the need is real, but you'll eventually collapse under the weight because you aren't prepared for the role.

## THE PURPOSE RULE

**The Rule:** Reject passive survival; embrace existence by design.

**The Principle:** If you only do what is required for survival, you are merely “a chair with a pulse.” Replace the safety of the crowd with a singular, functional purpose.

## LLOYD LUNA: EVEN CHAIRS DO THEIR BEST

Success is not found in the freedom to wander, but in the power to remain where it matters. Stop negotiating with your potential. Burn the ships that allow for retreat and commit to your purpose with the unyielding spine of a chair. The world doesn't need more people who are merely “surviving”; it needs people who make no other choice but to succeed.

## 5

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# What the chairs know

The chair is the ultimate witness to the survival and evolution of humanity.

Think about it. From the grand halls of government where a country is run, down to the heavy silence of a master bedroom where two people are deciding whether to fight for their marriage or sign the divorce papers—there is always a chair. It is there, looking and listening as we navigate the brutal complexity of life.

It has seen married couples settling their differences, or sometimes, sitting in a cold, distant silence that speaks louder than words. It has felt the sweat of a leader's palms before a declaration of war, and the tears of a mother praying for a sick child. It is a silent piece of wood that holds the weight of our secrets just as firmly as it holds the weight of our bodies.

*Siguro naman safe na sabihin ko, "Maraming nalalaman ang upuan na pwede nating matutunan."* If the chairs in your life could talk,

they wouldn't tell you how to be comfortable. They would tell you how to be human.

## THE MOST NEGLECTED GIANT

Isn't it funny how the chair is the most important thing in the room, yet it's the one we neglect the most? We treat it like a background character in the movie of our lives. You don't walk into a room and say, "*Wow, chair, super hardworking ka. Pahinga ka naman!*" In reality, *wala namang pumapansin diyan*. But the moment you're tired, the moment your knees start to shake from the weight of the day, what's the first thing you look for? You look for that silent, inanimate object that has been waiting for you all along. It's a masterpiece of humility—it carries the weight of the world without ever asking for a "thank you."

## THE THRONE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When things go wrong in an organization or a nation, people don't look for the ones walking the hallway. They look for the one sitting in the chair. They ask the golden question: "*Sino ba ang nakaupo?*" *Hindi, "Sino ba ang nakatayo?" Tama ako?* Notice that? Accountability is never asked of the person standing up. Standing is for the crowd; sitting is for the leader. When you take the seat, you aren't just resting your legs; you are claiming the responsibility. *Hindi pwedeng nakaupo ka lang pero ayaw mong dalhin 'yung bigat*. The chair is what turns a regular person into the one who actually matters.

## CHAPTER 5: WHAT THE CHAIRS KNOW

Think about it: the world's most life-altering decisions are made in a chair. We don't sign peace treaties, multi-million peso contracts, or marriage licenses while running a marathon. We do it while we are seated.

*Bakit kaya? Because the chair provides the stillness. Standing is for the show—the speeches, the grand gestures, 'yung porma. Kung magpapasikat ka lang naman, 'di tumayo ka, tumakbo ka, o kaya mag-tumbling ka—gumawa ka ng kung anu-anong eksena.*

But sitting? Sitting is for the soul. The chair is where the heavy lifting of the mind happens. It anchors you to the moment, forcing you to stay put until the choice is made.

*Sa board meeting n'yo ba, nakatayo ang mga decision-makers habang nagdedesisyon? 'Yung mga members ng Sangguniang Bayan, nakatayo ba habang nagse-session? Siyempre hindi. Pero ito ang irony: the moment a member takes a stand, 'yung mga naiiwang nakaupo ang gigisa sa kaniya.*

Because while the one standing takes the heat, it is the people in the chairs who are ultimately accountable for the decision they make.

## THE CONFESSIONAL OF THE WEARY

The chair knows the secrets you never tell the world. *Alam niyan ang lalim ng paghinga mo* the moment the door closes at the end of a very long day.

Before a speaker becomes a giant on the platform, they are just a person huddled in a chair backstage, battling their own “Everest.” The chair doesn’t judge the trembling hands or the silent prayers of the anxious—*tulad ko habang ini-introduce na ng emcee*.

It knows that strength isn’t about never being tired; it’s about having a place to gather yourself so you can stand up and try again. *Ang upuan ang unang nakakaalam kung kailan ka pagod na, at kung kailan mo na ulit kayang lumaban.*

## THE PROJECTION OF STABILITY

There is a specific kind of power in sitting down. *Kapag nakatayo ka, mukha kang aalis. Madalas tatanungin ka pa, “Saan ka na naman pupunta?”* You look like you’re in transition—unsteady and ready to walk away.

But when you sit, you project stability. You’re telling the room, “I am here, and I am not going anywhere.” A person who is constantly standing looks like they’re chasing the next thing. *Hindi naman masama kung may lakad ka pa.* But a person who is seated looks like they *are* the thing. Learn the difference.

What the chair does is allow you to settle into your presence, grounding your energy so that people actually feel the weight of your words. It’s the difference between a breeze that passes by and a mountain that stays put.

## THE GEOMETRY OF FOCUS

Have you noticed that when you're truly listening to someone, you lean forward? The chair knows the difference between a person who is just physically present and someone who is truly in the seat. It sees the slouch of the indifferent and the edge-of-the-seat posture of the hungry learner. *Sa* boardroom, *alam ng upuan kung sino ang nandoon para mag-contribute at kung sino ang nandoon lang para mag-occupy ng space*. It knows the difference between a leader and a spectator.

It teaches us that presence is a posture. You don't need to shout to be heard; you just need to sit in a way that shows you are fully committed to the moment. Stop treating your chair like a resting place for your laziness and start treating it like a launchpad for your influence.

*Kung nakaupo ka lang para magpa-antok, 'wag ka nang magtaka kung bakit walang nakikinig sa 'yo*. If you want to succeed, you don't just occupy a chair; you command it.

## THE FIRST ACT OF HONOR

In the Philippines, hospitality is a religion. *May darating sa bahay n'yo, kaibigan man o hindi, ano ang unang pinapagawa natin sa kanila?* "Maupo po kayo."

We never say, "*Manatili po kayong nakatayo.*" Unless, of course, *kaaway mo 'yung dumating* or it's a suitor of your daughter that

you don't like. In your mind, "*Maghintay ka diyan nakatayo sa labas!*"

But generally, you look for the best chair in the house. You offer the one with the softest cushion or the most stable legs. Why? Because offering a chair is the ultimate sign of respect. By giving someone a seat, you aren't just giving them furniture; you are giving them a piece of your territory. You're saying, "You have a place here."

The chair is the first bridge we build between a stranger and a friend. It's the simplest way to say, "*Mahalaga ka, kaya bibigyan kita ng puwang.*"

If you want to know how a person truly treats others, don't look at their business card or their title. Look at how quickly they offer up a seat. Because the moment you give someone a place to sit, you stop being a host and you start being a leader.

## THE EQUALITY OF THE MONOBLOC

The chair is the ultimate equalizer. Whether it's a gold-trimmed throne in a palace or a white plastic monobloc in a *barangay* hall, the function is exactly the same. The chair doesn't have an ego; it only has a purpose.

The chair knows that at the end of the day, every "VIP" and every ordinary citizen has the same basic need for rest and support. *Kahit sino ka pa, uupo at uupo ka rin.* It doesn't care about your

bank account, your social status, or your followers; it only cares about supporting you.

It teaches us a lesson in dignity: that everyone needs support. And when one is in the position to support, forget everything else and simply support.

The chair doesn't soften its surface for a king, nor does it get harder for a beggar. It provides the same support to both.

## THE BORROWED SEAT AT THE TABLE

In the corporate world, everyone is obsessed with getting a seat at the table. But here's the truth that most people sometimes forget: The seat isn't for keeps. You don't own it. It is lent to you, it is borrowed, and it can be taken back the moment you stop providing value.

And just because you finally got the seat doesn't mean people will automatically respect you. Respect isn't built into the upholstery; it's earned by the person occupying it. If you sit there and contribute nothing, you're just a placeholder.

To get to that table, you have to learn to narrow your focus. If you desire everything, you'll end up with nothing. *Kung marami kang gustong makuha, wag kang mag-alala: wala kang makukuha.* The more choices you chase, the less effective you become at arriving where it actually matters. You have to pick your chair and commit to it.

But unlike a physical chair—which gets placed in a room without anyone’s permission—a human needs a gatekeeper. There is always politics. You need to find that person in power, a mentor, to help you get the seat. *Pero tandaan mo, hindi siya dapat tumaya sa ‘yo* if you haven’t built the spine strong enough to carry the weight of the position.

But here’s the reality: Sometimes, we place a bad bet. You might choose to align with a person in power who eventually loses their footing or makes a wrong turn. When that happens, don’t overreact. A chair doesn’t panic when the floor shakes; it maintains its form. You should do the same. *Huwag kang nang-iwan sa ere*. In a world of job-hopping and climbing-the-ladder, staying with the person you chose—even through a bad bet—is a masterclass in integrity.

It reframes loyalty as a choice made by a human, not a requirement of a stool. Tides always change. If you chose that person, stay with them through thick and thin. There is more honor in a person who stays in a “wrong” chair with loyalty than a person who keeps hopping from seat to seat the moment things get shaky. As long as the values of the person remain intact, you don’t abandon the seat just because the circumstances turned cold.

This is where the Chair Philosophy meets the brutal reality of the boardroom. Remember: an object never fails because an object never chooses. A chair just exists. It doesn’t worry about its career path. But you? You have the privilege of choice, and that comes with the inevitable privilege of failure. Let’s be real: having to choose feels like a downside because it opens the door to being

## CHAPTER 5: WHAT THE CHAIRS KNOW

wrong. You might pick the wrong mentor, the wrong company, or the worst possible timing.

But here is the distinction: A chair cannot choose who sits on it, but you get to choose whose table you want to join. That choice is the ultimate gift. If you make a mistake, don't overreact and don't be the first to jump ship. *Huwag kang balimbing*. Character is seen in the person who stays through thick and thin. If you fail, take it as proof that you've officially resigned from being an inanimate object. *Congrats, tao ka na!* This mistake is actually a declaration of life; it gives you the permission to fail, as long as you are the one who made the choice.

Failure is simply the price of the ticket for a seat that actually matters.



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## Rhythmic Human Connection

What's interesting is that connection doesn't require similarity. *Akala kasi ng iba, kailangang pareho kayo.* Same background. Same interests. Same wavelength.

Since returning to television and radio in 2025 as host of *Work Related* on Aliw Channel 23 and DWIZ 882AM, my job has always been to ask questions. Not just the correct ones, but the ones that make people stop for a second. *Yung tipong, "Ah, hindi ko pa 'yan narinig ah."* I know plenty of hosts who just read their questions off a teleprompter. You can feel it immediately. Flat. *Walang buhay.*

The trickiest part of my job isn't coming up with questions. It's knowing when to step back. When we talk about presence, *hindi ikaw ang laging bida.* The moment you start trying to sound smart, you lose the connection. My job, for example, is to make the guest shine as the "man of the hour," not to compete with him.

## THE POWER OF DIFFERENCE

I'm not looking for similarities. I'm more curious about the differences. *Doon kase talaga lumalabas yung kwento. Doon nagiging interesting.* Each episode becomes a space for ideas you don't normally hear, perspectives you don't usually consider. The audience doesn't connect just because they see themselves in the guest. They connect because they discover something new.

I'm fascinated by that. By the small surprises. By the way people think differently. By the things I would have never noticed if I only stayed inside my own perspective.

In one interview, I asked my guest, "Is this the best time to panic about AI taking over our jobs?"

"No," he said. He didn't even pause to think about it. "AI isn't going to replace us. It's going to reposition us. People only become replaceable when they are irrelevant."

I remember just sitting there for a moment, processing that. *Kasi kung ako lang, medyo kabado na ako eh.* I can already imagine a version of me playing as an AI host. *Mas mabilis, mas consistent, hindi napapagod. Walang sablay.* But he wasn't coming from that place.

"As long as you stay relevant," he continued, "and you know how to consistently become one, you can sleep like a baby. There's nothing to worry about. Yet."

*Magkaiba kami ng pinanggagalingan*, and that's the point. An AI might be able to simulate empathy or predict the next word, but it cannot navigate the friction of two different souls trying to find a middle ground. *Magkaiba kami, pero nagkaintindihan. Hindi dahil pareho kami, kundi dahil willing kaming makinig sa isa't isa.* That's human connection at its best.

## RHYTHMIC CONNECTION

*Akala ko dati*, human connection is something you build on purpose. Parang structure. *Kailangan planado, may effort, at may naka-set na schedule. Ang akala ko*, it only happens in deep conversations—“*yung tipong ang lalim nito ah.*” *Yung hindi basta-basta nakakalimutan.*

But over time, I started noticing something else. Human connection rarely announces itself. It doesn't wait for the perfect moment or the perfect words. More often, it slips in quietly through the small, almost invisible gaps between one life and another.

When my guest shared his expert insight, I could have forced my side of the argument. That would have created tension. But instead, I met him where he was—not to agree, but to stay in the conversation. By acknowledging his point, the exchange didn't feel like a transaction. Instead of pushing the interview toward where we disagree, I stayed where the conversation naturally moved. *Hindi pilit*, and definitely, *walang script*. You just listen, respond, and allow the moment to unfold.

I call it rhythmic connection.

Matching the rhythm doesn't mean you're allowed to be slow when the situation warrants you to be fast. When you do, *ano pang production ang magagawa mo, 'di ba?* Rhythmic connection is more about timing than it is about speed. In every transaction, timing is everything.

Knowing when to speak and when to stay silent is a skill of presence.

*Alam mo 'yung hindi kayo pareho ng sinasabi, pero sabay kayo sa daloy ng usapan?* This rhythm doesn't require anyone to be a "talker." Even in silence, as long as you are present, you are part of what is happening.

Human connection is built in that rhythm. Everybody has their own pace. *Hindi lahat mabilis mag-engage at mag-process*; others take time. *Yung iba, loading pa—mahina ang signal!* They don't need you to impress them. They just need to feel that you see them as they are, not for what you can get from them or what use they have for you.

In today's terms, this is the ultimate vibe check. People can sense when a connection is a transaction in disguise. Authenticity isn't about oversharing your trauma; it's about protecting the energy of the conversation so the other person feels seen, not just processed. When you match the rhythm of the room and the people in it, you aren't performing. Instead, you're commanding your very presence.

In a world of transactional networking, being a person who actually holds that presence is a radical act of rebellion.

## THE “SALESMAN” TEST

Let’s take a salesman as an example. Have you ever been asked to buy a real estate property or an insurance policy? I have, on many occasions, because maybe they think I’m rich. Yes, maybe I am, maybe I’m not, but who knows?

When a salesman tries too hard, he over explains, pushing the conversation until your ears almost bleed. The more he tries to sell, the more the potential client distances himself from the deal. In my mind, if I were the client, I’d ask, “Is this person trying to sell to me because he needs the sale, or because he actually sees me?”

People can smell the difference between a technique and a true intention. When that answer becomes unclear, or worse, when it becomes obvious that it’s only about the sale, the transaction is off. Therefore, it’s not a lack of opportunity. It’s a lack of connection. Because at its core, human connection is about feeling recognized. The potential client doesn’t have to fully explain himself to be recognized. It’s the job of the seller to meet him where he is.

And pushing people to buy won’t do the trick. *Kase ang benta*, secondary *lang ‘yan*; the primary goal is to connect. The better question to ask is, “*Ano bang kailangan niya na mayroon ako?*” not “*Ano bang kailangan ko na maipo-provide niya?*” Short lesson in

logic: *Kapag naibigay mo ang kailangan niya, hindi ba't pwede mong makuha yung kailangan mo?*

Rhythmic connection is the shortest path to sales. In fact, it's a sustainable strategy if your goal is to scale. For corporate leaders who are currently terrified of AI replacing their middle management, remember that relevance comes from rhythmic connection, not from mere competence. AI is competent but it cannot match the human timing—not now, not anytime soon. If you're a person who only processes data, you're replaceable. But if you are the person who commands presence through this type of connection? *Sino'ng dapat kabahan?*

## PRESENCE OVER PERSUASION

Shared interests can open the door, but curiosity keeps it open. When I take interest in something that matters to someone else, even if I don't share it, I create space for connection in a different way. I step into their perspective, even briefly, and that alone builds a bridge. It tells them: what matters to you is worth my attention. And that changes everything.

People don't just connect over similarities. They connect over the experience of being valued, whether they share the same view or not. You can feel it when it's there. *Hindi mo na kailangang hulaan. Kailangan mo lang maramdaman.*

And yet, none of it can be forced. That's the paradox. The more you try to control connection, to define it or secure it, the more it

## CHAPTER 6: RHYTHMIC HUMAN CONNECTION

slips away. But when you allow it to unfold—when you stay present—it forms on its own.

Find that rhythmic connection, and you'll connect more meaningfully. Let people know you see them, and you'll connect more consistently. For in a world where most interactions stay on the surface, that alone sets you up to win the race.

In the end, human connection is something you allow. A chair can sit beside someone forever and still never connect. Don't tell me *isang buwan na tayong magkatabi, wala ka pa ring connection sa akin!*

Because the moment you choose to be present in the conversation even when it's uncomfortable, connection stops being accidental. It becomes intentional.



# 7

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## Better questions

I used to think growth, understanding, and insight came from answers, believing that they alone hold the key to success.

In many of my speeches, anywhere I go in the world—whether it's a local organization or a Fortune 500 company—I usually start with a question: “*Sino rito ang na-stuck na sa traffic?*”

Those who don't raise their hands usually get a side comment from me: Interesting. *Naglalakad po, hindi sumasakay?*

Because almost everyone shares the same experience, whether they're in Mumbai, Paris, California, or Jakarta, I follow up with another question: “What do you normally ask yourself when you're stuck in traffic?” The answers are almost always the same: *Why is there traffic? Why now? When will it end?* And I usually say, maybe the better question is: What can I do to be productive in the middle of a traffic jam?

If I'm not driving and somebody is driving for me, can I read a book? Can I call a long-lost friend and reconnect? Can I do a little research? Or, if I'm truly exhausted, can I use this time to intentionally rest so I don't bring my stress home? Imagine saying "yes" to those questions. How much could you improve in a year? No expensive course. No consultant. Just a different question.

## THE TRAJECTORY OF A QUESTION

You see, I've always lived by this philosophy: the quality of your life depends on the quality of the questions you ask yourself. Change the question, and you change the answer. Change the answer, and you change your life. It looks simple, but it's definitely not easy.

Growth, understanding, and insight don't come from answers alone. You can have as many answers as you want, but if your questions are wrong, you'll end up with just as many wrong answers.

I believe that real growth starts with quality questions—the kind that make you pause and reflect in ways you haven't before. And not just any quality questions, but the hard ones—the ones many are too afraid to ask because they feel uncomfortable. Or worse, the questions so scary they're afraid to know the answer.

Each question we ask reflects not only the other person's world but also our own assumptions, biases, and blind spots. Curiosity teaches humility because it reminds us that we don't have all the answers; often, we won't know them until we explore.

## CHAPTER 7: BETTER QUESTIONS

*Tulad ng palagi kong sinasabi, “You wouldn’t know how far you can go until you actually go there.” Hindi mo talaga malalaman kung ano ang nasa dulo hangga’t hindi mo ito pupuntahan.*

Better answers don’t create growth. Better questions do.

But mind you, many people fail because they try to be a chair before they’ve asked enough questions. They burn their ships on the wrong shore. Use your curiosity to explore the map—ask the hard, scary, expansive questions to find where you truly belong. *Huwag kang mabilis sumuko, pero huwag ka laban lang nang laban. Madalas mong naririnig, ‘Laban lang!’ Hello? Hindi lahat ng laban ay tamang laban. Pwede kang manalo sa maling laban. Ang ending, mali ka pa rin.*

In other words, find the right chair before you sit in it. Remember: curiosity is how you find your chair; the No-Choice Doctrine is how you stay in it.

Once the better question leads you to the right path—and that path asks you to jump—stop asking “Why?” and start saying “Sure!” Because at that point, the decision is already made. The exit is closed. All that’s left is the execution.

## THE SPIRAL: UP VS. DOWN

I’ve seen hundreds of clients ask the very questions they would rather avoid. “*Bakit siya may benta at ako wala?*” To which I say, *eh ano naman sa’yo kung may benta siya?*

*Ah, alam ko na.* It makes you look bad.

When you stay in that frame of mind, you spiral. You start feeling sorry for yourself and convinced that life is unfair. You begin blaming the economy, the market, the timing—even the people around you.

But if you change the question to, “What can I improve so I can make a sale?” I’d say, “*Marami kang pwedeng gawin.*”

This isn’t about blaming yourself or asking, “What’s wrong with me?” It’s a diagnostic question. It’s about looking for leverage, not fault.

And guess what that new frame of mind gives you? Excitement. You feel better knowing there’s something ahead. You spiral up. Regardless of how bad the economy is, you still do what you’re supposed to do. And if you don’t make a sale, you understand that it takes time to find your rhythm—but you also know that your time will come.

A change of question is a change in your life’s trajectory. You didn’t make a grand decision or overhaul your entire life—you simply changed the question. And then, the answer changed you. In the end, it is not the answers I hold that define my growth. It’s the questions I am brave enough to ask.

A chair won’t ask.

## 8

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# The chair wins

While “Floor of Power” sounds like a chaotic open arena, the reason we call it a “Seat of Power” is a mix of historical necessity, etymological roots, and the fact that humans have spent thousands of years elevating the act of sitting into a sacred ritual.

To that you say, “Boring!” Okay, fine. But wait, there’s more.

In ancient times, furniture was a luxury. Most people sat on the floor, on mats, or stood. The throne was a literal “elevated seat” that physically raised the ruler above everyone else. Sitting while others stood or knelt was more than comfort—it was a vertical manifesto: “I am closer to the gods than you are.” From this simple act, the “seat” became a symbol for authority. *Parang ‘pag sinabi mong, “The White House issued a statement,” ang totoo niyan, someone in that big building decided stuff.*

Latin also played its part. The word for “seat” in Latin is *sedes*. The Pope’s jurisdiction is called the “See,” literally his chair, or *cathedra*. A cathedral only earns its name if it houses the bishop’s

chair. No chair, no cathedral, *ordinaryong parokya or simbahan lang*. Presidents? Their title comes from *praesidere*, “to sit before.” The leader is literally the person sitting in front of everyone else. Take a moment: we have spent millennia figuring out that sitting is the ultimate power move.

## THE FLOOR, THE TABLE, AND OTHER PRETENDERS

Before the throne—or the chair, if you prefer subtlety over display—humans experimented with various ways to wield influence. Some worked, most didn’t, and all of them teach us something about the intersection of power and humility.

*Kwento ko lang ‘to ha.*

Candidate No. 1: The Floor of Power. This is excellent if your goal is humility, yoga poses, or dramatic submission. Want to rule with awe and reverence? Sure, you can try lying flat and hoping everyone reads your aura. *Pero aminin natin*: on the floor, you’re either invisible or too vulnerable to lead. You can’t see anyone from where you are, and no one can see you. If you can’t look someone in the eye because you’re too busy being grounded, the connection is lost.

Authority requires a vantage point; without visibility, there is little to no authority. It turns out, the presence isn’t just about comfort—it’s about the line of sight.

## CHAPTER 8: THE CHAIR WINS

Candidate No. 2: The Table of Power. It sounds nice and diplomatic. Round, oval, or rectangular—it doesn't matter. Tables are level playing fields, excellent for negotiations, board games, and snacks.

But the table is where the work happens; the chair is where the decision is made. If your goal is to command attention without awkwardly waving your hands, a table won't cut it. You're just one surface among many, and surfaces are notoriously hard to dominate.

Candidate No. 3: The Gate of Power. In fairness, this has historical precedent—elders, judges, gatekeepers—but it comes with a logistical problem: you're always in motion, constantly opening and closing doors, and explaining why everyone has to wait their turn. Gates are transitional. They're the middle managers of furniture: necessary, but not particularly awe-inspiring.

Candidate No. 4: The Beanbag of Power. It's soft, flexible, and occasionally rebellious. If you want people to feel cozy, creative, and slightly off-balance, the beanbag works wonders. Just don't expect anyone to take you seriously while you're sinking into chaos. Comfort is seductive, but authority demands posture.

### THE MONUMENT OF PRESENCE

The Chair (or Seat) of Power—and why the chair wins—comes down to a simple truth. The chair won because it balances

everything humans subconsciously crave—elevation, stability, visibility, and ritual.

A chair gives you control over your immediate domain: arms to gesture, posture to signal, and the kind of height that quietly whispers, “I see all, and I am comfortably seated while doing it.” Sitting also signals permanence. To “take a seat” is to be settled. Philosophically, we call it a “seat” because it turns a tired human body into a monument. It’s the ultimate power move: making the world come to you because you’ve decided that standing is overrated.

*Hindi ka ba curious kung bakit “Chairman” ang tawag sa pinakamataas na opisyal sa isang board? Bakit hindi Tableman? O kaya naman Floorman? Not even Gateman or Beanbagman?*

Because a chair is never just furniture—it is a position of presence, a symbol of authority, and a reminder that true leadership isn’t about standing tall, but about the presence you bring to the space you hold.

You can be rightfully skeptical of titles and thrones. You’ve seen too many people sit in the chair without doing the work. But the ‘Seat of Power’ isn’t about being ‘The Boss.’ Rather, it’s about being the one who owns the outcome. It’s the difference between a placeholder and a steward. You don’t sit in the chair to be served; you sit in the chair to be the guide. If you want a flat structure, fine. But even in a flat room, the person who takes the seat is the one the world looks to when the lights go out.

## THE IRON THRONE MASTERCLASS

Speaking of seats of power, look at *Game of Thrones*. Why do so many kings, queens, and would-be rulers risk everything—alliances, armies, even their lives—for a single chair? Because the Iron Throne isn't just a piece of furniture; it's a symbol, a lens, and a masterclass in influence. The Throne represents visibility, authority, and responsibility. Whoever sits there is strategically positioned to see the entire room. Influence flows from this elevated perspective: you can guide discussions and shape decisions without ever raising your voice.

But notice this: Occupying a seat of power does not automatically confer respect. *Hindi lahat ng nakaupo ay karapat-dapat*. As Westeros proves, there is a sharp divide between leading and merely sitting. The chair provides the vantage point, but it cannot provide the vision.

Robert Baratheon had the seat but checked out, proving that if you ignore the view from the top, you're just a guest in your own castle. Joffrey confused elevation with a license for cruelty; he had the height but none of the stature. Tommen was a ghost in the room—occupying the space but possessing none of the gravity required to hold it. Meanwhile, Cersei and the Mad King occupied the throne only to lose their grip on reality and the people, proving that sitting on a monument doesn't make you a leader.

The lesson is simple: a chair can turn a body into a monument, but it cannot turn a placeholder into a power. Influence flows

from the perspective the seat provides, but you must be brave enough to meet the room's gaze. If you lack the presence to fill the space, you're just a person in a very uncomfortable chair—and as I've learned, authority demands more than just a place to sit. It demands the guts to actually own the view.

Contrast this with someone like Tyrion Lannister. He is small, underestimated, and rarely occupies the high throne. Yet, he understands that true influence is built on observation and strategy, not just elevation. He leverages whatever seat he finds himself in—no matter how modest—by sitting taller in his mind than the kings do on their mountains of gold.

This is the essence of influence: holding a position while being more than your position. It's the realization that while the chair gives you the vantage point, your insight provides the map. Tyrion proves that you don't need a thousand swords at your back if you have the perspective to see the blades coming. Ultimately, power doesn't belong to the person with the biggest chair; it belongs to the person who knows exactly how to use the one they have.

## POWER IS SEATED

The Iron Throne teaches us that influence is not about occupying a seat—it's about what you do while you occupy it. Elevation alone isn't enough. True influence requires that you see the room, notice what matters, act thoughtfully, and leave the people you lead better off than you found them.

## CHAPTER 8: THE CHAIR WINS

A chair can sit there for a thousand years and remain an object. The Iron Throne is made of a thousand swords—a thousand inanimate objects—but it has zero power until a human sits on it.

Thrones are desired for the power they promise, but only the wise can turn that promise into a presence that creates undeniable influence.

Power is seated. Everything else is just rehearsal.



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## If you were a chair

Probably because I've become obsessed with this "chair" thing as I write this book, *napanaginipan ko na naging upuan ako. Mahirap pala talaga*. It's like living a paralyzed life for eternity. Imagine—you have no agency. No say in where you go or who uses you.

*Alam mo yung hindi mo gusto yung uupo sa'yo, pero wala kang choice? Traumatic! Yung iba ang kakapal ng mukha to fart and then deny it for the world to hear, and there you are—stuck holding the evidence.*

If in my past life I was a chair, I'm definitely not coming back now that I'm human! I'd rather figure out how to live an uncertain, complicated life than to live a pre-determined, certain one. Being human means I can move. Being a chair means I can only be moved.

We've talked about the chair in all its glory and misery. By now, we've covered how the chair is reliable, stable, and a witness—but by itself, it is not really influential. It is an object that waits for a subject.

But here is where it gets interesting: Would it be interesting to know your type of chair, should you become one? Because even if we aren't inanimate objects, we all have a resting state—a default way of behaving in a room. Some of us are built for comfort, some for work, and some just for show. Understanding your type is the first step toward moving beyond it.

So, in the end, let's figure out how your chair type can work with other types. It's time to look in the mirror and ask: If I had to be a piece of furniture, which one would I be—and how do I make sure people don't just sit on me?

## CHAIR PRESENCE PROFILE™

### The Functional Presence & Influence Assessment Tool

Instruction: To get the most accurate result, choose one specific area of your life to focus on (e.g., your role in your organization, your family, or your community) and answer based on your natural, effortless default.

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. A group in your circle is arguing loudly about what to do next. What is your instinct?

- (1) Command the direction. "*Ganito na lang ang gawin natin.*"

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR

- (2) Observe the perspectives. *"May point naman siya."*
- (3) Absorb the tension. *"Okay pa tayo ha?"*
- (4) Consider the future. *"So ano'ng mangyayari after?"*
- (5) Suggest a fast move. *"Ito na lang ang gawin para mas mabilis."*
- (6) Point out the error. *"Hindi uubra 'yan kase may mali."*
- (7) Find a middle ground. *"Gawin na lang pareho 'yan."*
- (8) Gather the group. *"Punta muna kayo here."*
- (9) Maintain the calm. *"Chill lang tayo."*
- (10) Prepare the tools. *"Sabihin n'yo lang kung ano kailangan."*

2. When you walk into a gathering of your peers, you feel most comfortable...

- (1) Leading the start. *"Tara, game na."*
- (2) Watching the perimeter. *"Sino kaya yung mga nandun?"*
- (3) Hosting the lonely. *"Kailangan mo ba ng kausap?"*
- (4) Joining the energy. *"Hey, hey nandito rin kayo!"*
- (5) Finding a task. *"Kailangan mo ng tulong?"*
- (6) Checking the details. *"Nakasunod ba tayo sa oras? I-check natin."*
- (7) Keeping the momentum. *"Tuloy-tuloy lang ha."*
- (8) Connecting the groups. *"Nakita nyo na sila?"*
- (9) Anchoring the space. *"Okay lang ako rito."*
- (10) Supporting the host. *"Ako na ang bahala diyan."*

3. What is your biggest contribution to the people around you?

1. Decisive strength. *"Di ba sinabi ko na. 'Yan na 'yun."*
2. Clear vision. *"Tiwala lang, alam ko kung saan 'to papunta."*
3. Total acceptance. *"Ligtas ka rito. Walang judgement."*
4. Deep insight. *"Ang nakikita ko kase diyan e ganito..."*

LLOYD LUNA: EVEN CHAIRS DO THEIR BEST

5. Reliable output. *"Huwag mo nang alalahanin yan."*
6. Perfect standards. *"Hindi ka mapapahiya rito."*
7. Quick adjustments. *"Hindi pala pwede, ganito na lang."*
8. Sense of belonging. *"Meron pang upuan dito oh, halika ka na."*
9. Steady heartbeat. *"Breathe. Magiging okay din tayo."*
10. Readiness to act. *"Ready na ako. Bigay mo lang ang signal."*

4. When things get chaotic in your environment, you...

1. Restore order. *"Sandali lang, wala munang magulo."*
2. Find the exit path. *"Ganito na lang para matapos na 'yan."*
3. Provide emotional safety. *"Sige lang kung kailangan mong umiyak."*
4. Search for the reason. *"Lahat ng nangyayari eh may dahilan."*
5. Focus on one task. *"Ito na nga lang muna ang gawin ka."*
6. Identify the mistake. *"May isang nagkamali rito kaya hindi tama yung result."*
7. Push for movement. *"Galaw-galaw naman. Kaya ba today 'yan?'"*
8. Prioritize unity. *"Walang aalis Aayusin natin 'to bilang isang pamilya."*
9. Slow the panic. *"Hinay-hinay lang. Mahina ang kalaban."*
10. Fix the leak. *"Aayusin ko muna 'to, next na 'yan."*

5. Which of the following situations is the most EXHAUSTING or draining for you to handle?

1. Dealing with a room where no one is following the rules. *"Ano ba 'yan, makinig kayo."*
2. Being forced to focus on small, petty details instead of the horizon. *"Pati ba 'yan?'"*

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR





3. Having to deliver harsh, cold criticism without considering feelings. *"Wala tayong magagawa diyán."*
  4. Being rushed to give an answer before you've had time to think. *"Sandali lang naman."*
  5. Sitting idle with nothing to do while work is piling up. *"Wala pa bang gagawin?"*
  6. Watching someone do a job haphazardly or "good enough." *"Yan na ba yun?"*
  7. Staying in one place or one routine for too long without change. *"Wala na bang iba?"*
  8. Seeing a group split into "exclusive circles" and ignoring the outsiders. *"Magkaaway na naman kayo?"*
  9. Dealing with high-drama, high-volume people who refuse to settle down. *"Di pa ba kayo tapos sa drama?"*
  10. Being told to "sit back and wait" when there is a clear problem to solve. *"Kailangang kailangan na 'yang gawin."*
6. A big change is coming to your group. Your reaction is...
1. Steer the transition. *"Ako na ang bahala, sagot ko kayo."*
  2. Map the destination. *"Alam ko na kung paano 'to matatapos."*
  3. Protect group morale. *"Kakayanin kaya ito ng lahat?"*
  4. Question the logic. *"Bakit kaya nila binago?"*
  5. Build the system. *"Ito ang magandang proseso."*
  6. Ensure zero errors. *"Walang pwedeng magkamali."*
  7. Pivot quickly. *"Tara na, gawin naman natin 'to for a change."*
  8. Facilitate discussion. *"Ikaw, ano sa tingin mo?"*
  9. Maintain the rhythm. *"Wag tayong magpaapekto agad."*
  10. Troubleshoot issues. *"Nasaan ang problem? Ayusin ko."*

7. In a moment of absolute crisis where everyone is looking at you, what is the ONE thing you cannot stop yourself from doing?

1. Take command. "Ganito ang gagawin natin."
2. Look ahead. "Ito ang pwedeng mangyari."
3. Protect the people. "Okay ba kayong lahat?"
4. Analyze the logic. "Tahimik muna kayo. Kailangan kong mag-isip."
5. Do the lifting. "Ako na lang ang gagawa kung nahihirapan kayo."
6. Fix the error. "Nahanap ko na ang problema. Inaayos ko na."
7. Keep spirits up. "Huwag susuko! Tuloy lang ang laban!"
8. Maintain unity. "Basta magkakasama tayo, kaya 'yan."
9. Steady the pulse. "Hinga nang malalim. Kaya natin 'to."
10. Solve the problem. "Okay na 'to, ako na ang bahala."

## SCORING GUIDE

Count your answers. The number you selected most frequently reveals your primary archetype. In case of a tie, look at your No-Choice Mandate.

1. **The Throne**  : The decisive anchor who provides order and finality in times of uncertainty.
2. **The High Chair**  : The strategic observer who sees the future long before it arrives on the ground.
3. **The Beanbag**  : The empathetic sanctuary where others can safely drop their burdens without judgment.
4. **The Recliner**  : The insightful philosopher who prioritizes deep reflection over hurried reaction.

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR

5. **The Stool** 🪑 : The reliable workhorse who leads through silent action and tireless productivity.
6. **The Dentist's Chair** 🦷 : The high-stakes specialist who demands surgical excellence and technical precision.
7. **The Swivel Chair** 🌀 : The energetic catalyst who keeps the group moving with momentum and adaptability.
8. **The Park Bench** 🌳 : The communal bridge who fosters belonging and brings disparate people together.
9. **The Rocking Chair** ❤️ : The steady presence who provides a reassuring rhythm to calm the group's anxiety.
10. **The Folding Chair** 🪑 : The ready responder who offers situational help exactly where the need is greatest.

## THE POWER PILLAR

### THE THRONE 👑

**Your Core Mindset:** Order and Stability. You believe that without a strong center, the environment will collapse.

**Your Natural Influence:** Command. Your presence alone sets the tone for what is acceptable and what is not.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the anchor of the environment. You represent the weight of tradition, finality, and established order.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You cannot afford to be "one of the guys." You must carry the crown so others don't have to worry about the direction.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You stop listening and start decreeing. You occupy more space and become a stone wall until your authority is acknowledged. You feel that if you don't take total control, everything will fall apart.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You lean on the rules to feel safe. You tell people why their feelings are "incorrect" or "against policy" because raw emotion feels like a threat to the order you've built.

**The Blindspot:** You may exist in a bubble of "polite lies" because people fear your judgment too much to be honest.

## THE HIGH CHAIR

**Your Core Mindset:** Objectivity and Foresight. You believe that the truth is only visible from a distance.

**Your Natural Influence:** Strategy. People look to you to find out where the group is going and what obstacles lie ahead.

**The Archetype Profile:** You operate on a different plane. You notice storm clouds or sunrises long before anyone else on the ground.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You cannot get down from your perch for petty dramas. You are required to stay detached to remain objective.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You withdraw into your mind to find a solution. To others, it looks like you've gone cold, but you're actually just trying to see the "big picture" so the small one can't hurt you.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You treat their pain like a math problem. You use complex explanations to distance yourself from the messiness of their anger, making them feel observed rather than heard.

**The Blindspot:** You can appear disconnected. Your head is in the future, but your feet aren't on the ground.

## THE COMFORT PILLAR

### THE BEANBAG

**Your Core Mindset:** Acceptance and Unconditional Support. You believe people need a place to land before they can fly.

**Your Natural Influence:** Empathy. Your ability to absorb the "weight" of others makes them feel safe enough to be honest.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the ultimate sanctuary. You have no rigid edges; you are designed to absorb the weight of others without judgment.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You have no "fixed shape." Your value is in flexibility. If you try to set hard edges, people feel betrayed.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You feel like a sponge that has reached its limit. You try so hard to make everyone happy that you accidentally stop them from fixing the real problem just to make the tension disappear.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You feel deeply unappreciated. You remind them of everything you've sacrificed, hoping they'll stop being angry, which often makes them feel guilty for having their own needs.

**The Blindspot:** You risk losing your own identity while holding everyone else's baggage.

### THE RECLINER

**Your Core Mindset:** Reflection and Depth. You believe that "doing" is useless if it isn't preceded by deep "thinking."

**Your Natural Influence:** Insight. You help people slow down and see the underlying meaning behind their actions.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the resident philosopher. You prioritize "being" over "doing" and deep thinking over quick reacting.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You cannot be rushed. Your nature demands a slow, deliberate pace that allows for true, underlying insight.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You pull back to think. When the world gets too loud, you retreat into silence to make sense of the chaos, often leaving others feeling like you've abandoned the conversation entirely.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You over-analyze their feelings. You tell them they are being "irrational" because you can't understand their speed. You want them to slow down, but they just want to be felt.

**The Blindspot:** You may miss real-time opportunities while busy reflecting on the theory of them.

## THE UTILITY PILLAR

### THE STOOL 🪑

**Your Core Mindset:** Utility and Resilience. You believe that your value is measured by the work you produce and the load you carry.

**Your Natural Influence:** Action. You lead by example, doing the heavy lifting that others are unwilling or unable to do.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are high-performance utility. You do the heaviest lifting behind the scenes without needing the spotlight.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You have no backrest to lean on. You must rely entirely on your internal core strength; you are built to stand alone.

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You go into “robot mode.” You stop talking about feelings and start doing chores or tasks. You feel that if you are useful enough, you won't have to deal with the pain of the conflict.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You use your busyness as a shield. You find a project to finish so you have an excuse to avoid the eye contact and the difficult words the other person wants to share.

**The Blindspot:** People may forget you have feelings and begin to treat you as a “tool” to be used.

### THE DENTIST'S CHAIR 🦷

**Your Core Mindset:** Excellence and Accuracy. You believe that if a job is worth doing, it must be done with surgical precision.

**Your Natural Influence:** Expertise. People trust you with their most sensitive problems because they know you won't settle for “good enough.”

**The Archetype Profile:** You deal with high-stakes “nerves”—the problems others are afraid to touch. You demand excellence and accuracy.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You are for surgery, not rest. You cannot allow yourself to become “casual” or your precision will suffer.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You become hyper-critical of the “truth.” You point out every small mistake the other person is making because you think fixing the technical errors will fix the emotional problem.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You hide behind your competence. You argue that you did your job perfectly, implying the problem is entirely their fault. This makes you seem untouchable and hard to reach.

**The Blindspot:** You are highly intimidating. People will hide their flaws from you rather than seek your help.

## THE SOCIAL PILLAR

### THE SWIVEL CHAIR

**Your Core Mindset:** Adaptability and Speed. You believe that progress is found in movement and the ability to pivot.

**Your Natural Influence:** Energy. Your kinetic spirit keeps the group from getting stuck in old habits.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the kinetic engine. You are designed for 360-degree awareness and keeping the energy flowing.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You cannot stay fixed. Your power comes from the ability to pivot and see the whole room at once.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You become frantic and scattered. You start talking to everyone else about the problem instead of the person involved, hoping the movement will help you find a way out of the discomfort.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You try to change the subject or use humor to break the tension. You're trying to save the mood, but it makes others feel like you aren't taking their pain seriously.

**The Blindspot:** A lack of focus can make it hard to finish what you start. You may be perceived as flaky.

## THE PARK BENCH 🌳

**Your Core Mindset:** Community and Accessibility. You believe that the strongest groups are those where everyone has a place to sit.

**Your Natural Influence:** Connection. You are the bridge that brings different groups of people together.

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the architect of community—a destination where relationships thrive and groups are broken down.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You are incomplete without others. You must remain accessible, even when it leaves you vulnerable to the "weather."

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You stop being a place of rest and become a place of protest. You likely over-share the hurt with the whole group, seeking witnesses to your pain. Instead of talking to the person involved, you gather the community around you to prove you've been treated unfairly.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You weaponize the peace. You likely tell the person, "You're making everyone uncomfortable," or "Why can't we just get along for the sake of the group?" By shifting the focus to the "vibe," you avoid the actual complaint and make them feel like an intruder.

**The Blindspot:** You may lack the boundaries to say no, allowing toxic people to crowd your space just to keep the peace.

## THE SUPPORT PILLAR

### THE ROCKING CHAIR

**Your Core Mindset:** Continuity and Peace. You believe that a steady rhythm is the cure for a chaotic world.

**Your Natural Influence:** Reassurance. Your steady, predictable nature keeps the group's anxiety at bay.

**The Archetype Profile:** You provide the rhythm that keeps the group's heart rate steady, reassuring everyone that things will be okay.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You cannot be still. Your power is in "motion within stillness"—the rhythm that keeps anxiety at bay.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You pretend everything is fine. You keep doing the same old things, hoping that if you don't acknowledge the storm, it will just pass by. You're trying to keep the rhythm to drown out the crisis.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You become quiet and "pleasant" in a way that feels cold. You act like nothing is wrong while the other person is hurting, making them feel invisible or unheard.

**The Blindspot:** Your love for rhythm can make you an obstacle to necessary, radical growth.

### THE FOLDING CHAIR

**Your Core Mindset:** Readiness and Service. You believe in being useful exactly where and when you are needed most.

**Your Natural Influence:** Availability. You are the first to show up and the last to leave when a crisis hits.

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR

**The Archetype Profile:** You are the situational responder. You go where the fire is, and then move to the next area of need.

**The No-Choice Mandate:** You belong to the "Event," not the "House." You must remain portable. If you bolt yourself down, you lose your value.

**When You Are Upset (Internal):** You feel like you don't belong. Your first instinct is to pack up and leave because you don't think you have the right to stay and fight for your place in the house.

**When People Are Upset With You (External):** You walk away too easily. You say "it doesn't matter" or "I'm out," which leaves people feeling abandoned just when they were trying to connect with you through their honesty.

**The Blindspot:** You may feel like a permanent outsider because you are always ready to leave for the next task.

## FIVE PILLARS OF ORGANIZATIONAL PRESENCE

The **Five Pillars of Organizational Presence** paints a room filled with functional chairs and how leaders can maximize efficiency and harmony to achieve structural integrity. This is about the clarity of function and structure—not another feel-good, self-centric, ego-boosting personality test anchored on fleeting emotional tendencies.

While traditional diagnostics focus on "Who am I?", this framework asks, "**What is my function in this room?**" regardless of my personality type. It helps move the traditional organization from a room filled with mere emotional beings to

one with sound, functional beings. The room collapses when one pillar is broken, regardless of how strong the other pillars are:

- **The Power Pillar:** To provide the direction and order that prevents the collapse.
- **The Comfort Pillar:** To provide the depth and psychological safety that allows for honest feedback.
- **The Utility Pillar:** To provide the results and precision that solve the crisis.
- **The Social Pillar:** To provide the connection and unity that bridge the gaps between people.
- **The Support Pillar:** To provide the stability and rhythm that calm the panic.

Understanding your archetype isn't about boxing yourself in; it's about realizing that every chair has a limit. Whether you are the decisive **Throne**, the visionary **High Chair**, the empathetic **Beanbag**, or the reflective **Recliner**, your default state is your natural comfort zone—the way you instinctively handle a room. But if you never move, that comfort becomes your limitation. If you are the diligent **Stool** or the precise **Dentist's Chair**, your value is in your work, yet you must remember to breathe. If you are the kinetic **Swivel Chair** or the unifying **Park Bench**, your power is in the collective, but don't lose your focus. And if you are the reassuring **Rocking Chair** or the versatile **Folding Chair**, your steady readiness is a gift, provided you don't use it as an excuse to stay on the sidelines. Influence isn't just about where

## CHAPTER 9: IF YOU WERE A CHAIR

you sit—it’s about the awareness you bring to the space between you and everyone else in the room.

Now that you know what kind of chair you’ve been all along, it’s time to take your seat.

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### Presence Profiles™

CATEGORY	ARCHETYPES	ROLE IN THE ROOM
<b>The Power Pillar</b>	Throne, High Chair	Provides direction, order, and strategic foresight
<b>The Comfort Pillar</b>	Beanbag, Recliner	Provides empathy, psychological safety, and deep insight
<b>The Utility Pillar</b>	Stool, Dentist’s Chair	Focuses on high-performance results and technical precision
<b>The Social Pillar</b>	Swivel Chair, Park Bench	Fosters connection, collaboration, and dynamic engagement among team members
<b>The Support Pillar</b>	Rocking Chair, Folding Chair	Offers steady rhythm, reassurance, and situational readiness



# AFTERWORD

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## The Borrowed Chair Principle

I call it the Borrowed Seat Principle. It's a simple reminder that influence isn't something you own forever—it's just a temporary lease granted to you by the people around you.

In any office, family, or community, the seat you're in is separate from who you are. *Nandiyang na 'yan bago ka dumating, at mananatili 'yan kahit wala ka na.* It exists apart from you. Understanding this keeps you grounded, because it reminds you that the power isn't in the furniture; it's in how you respect the spot while it's your turn to sit there.

The chair is the permanent fixture—the vessel for trust, authority, and collective hope—while the person sitting in it is merely a traveler.

But the Strategist in me pushes back: If the chair is the only thing that's permanent, then does the human even matter? Am I just a replaceable placeholder in a stationary system?

This is where we must look at the function of the vessel. A tool exists to serve its purpose; it doesn't choose its function, it fulfills it. When we mistake the power of the seat for our own personal glory, we lose the very essence of leadership. You are in that seat not for any other reason other than the situation requires your presence. You lead because you represent the aspirations of those who look toward that chair. You do not define the need; the community does. You simply answer it.

If your leadership serves your vision but ignores their voice, you have stopped being a guest and started being an occupier. It is a no-choice realization: you are here because you are needed, not because you are special.

Yet, the Strategist argues again: If I'm just a traveler, why should I care about the long-term foundation? Why not burn the furniture to keep the room warm for my quarterly results?

That is the trap of the short-term traveler. True leadership is a borrowed concept, but it is not a passive one. A chair fulfills its purpose because it has no other option—it is reliably static. But a leader fulfills their purpose when they realize that, in this moment, they have no higher calling than to meet the needs of the room.

This transforms leadership from a position to a practice. *Hindi ito tungkol sa titulo, kundi sa trabaho.*

The Executive in me still feels the friction: If I am just a guest, doesn't that weaken my conviction? How can I make hard, owner-level pivots if I don't truly own the role?

## AFTERWORD: THE BORROWED CHAIR PRINCIPLE

To sit in a chair of influence is to accept a mandate for transformation, not a license for maintenance. You lead with the humility of a guest, but the devotion of an owner. You act with the full conviction of ownership as if you will be there forever, while maintaining the soul of a guest who knows you won't. If the chair is broken, you fix it. If the institutional varnish is rotting, you strip it down. You don't choose to do this out of ego; you do it because the integrity of the chair demands it.

Finally, the Strategist asks: What happens when I'm gone? If the chair stays, what is my real legacy?

True stewardship includes the unglamorous, no-choice work of succession. A devoted steward ensures the chair remains a viable seat for the future by preparing the next traveler to sit where they sit. Success is not measured by how well you performed while in the seat, but by how well the room functions after you have stood up.

We are a generation of guests on this planet, in these jobs, and in these chairs. To act like you own the seat is the highest form of delusion. But to act as a sacred steward is to realize that your legacy isn't your name on a plaque. It's the strength of the organization you left behind. You aren't building a monument to yourself; you're preparing the ground for the person coming next. That is the only kind of power that actually lasts.

Next time you see a chair—in a boardroom, a classroom, or your home—pause. Reflect on the countless humans who sat there before you, the decisions made, and the ideas born in that space. Ask yourself: am I elevating this borrowed chair, or merely

occupying it? *Naupo ka ba at nagsilbi, o naupo at pinagsilbihan ka lang?*

One day, the season of your tenure will end. If you lead well, the chair won't bear your name—it will simply be ready for the next person to do the work. You leave the seat stronger not because of your greatness, but because you honored the requirement of your presence. Stand up with the heart of a guest who never forgot that the chair was never his to keep, but the sacred duty was always his to preserve.

By the way, if you feel like a “human clicker” right now, don't look for a grand exit. Look for your smallest snooze button. The first exit you need to burn isn't your job or your relationship; it's the habit of giving yourself an “out” whenever things get slightly painful or uncomfortable.

Choose one task today—a boring report, a difficult conversation, or a 5:00 a.m. workout—and tell yourself: “I am a chair for the next hour.” No exits. No complaints. No shifting. Just the absolute requirement of presence.

For those at the top, your “5:00 a.m.” isn't just a time on the clock; it is that moment when you are the only one left to make the call. It is the refusal to delegate your courage. It is the decision to stay in the seat when every instinct tells you to walk away from the pressure.

Success doesn't start when the option to quit is almost an obvious choice. It starts when you finally decide to sit down and be the person you were meant to be.

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## Epilogue

Finding your seat is the beginning of sovereignty. Most people spend their careers fighting for comfort, status, or a better view, never realizing that the position they occupy is actually a sacred assignment.

Once you have decoded the ten archetypes, you begin to see the invisible lines of force that hold every meeting, every family, and every organization together. You move from the anxiety of choosing a role to the clarity of occupying a requirement. You stop looking for an exit and start building a foundation.

Most people live their whole lives looking for a better chair. Only a few realize that the chair isn't the point—the room is. If you have mastered the 10 Archetypes and understood the requirements of **Structural Presence**, you are no longer just an occupant.

You are becoming the 11th Chair.

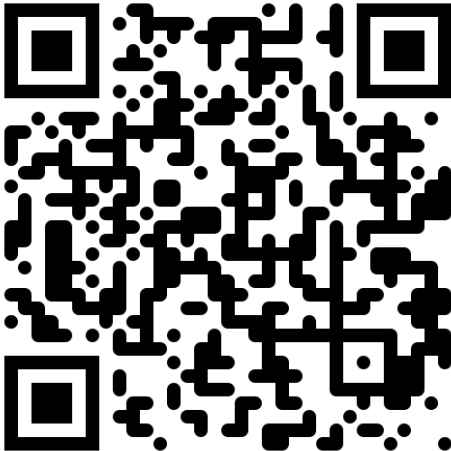
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TAKE THE PRESENCE PROFILES™ TEST



**Sometimes, the problem isn't a lack of options. It's the paralysis of having too many, and the heavy cost of choosing the wrong one.**

**Turning to the chair—the highly ignored, yet inarguably the greatest human invention of all time—this book presents a witty, thought-provoking playbook on turning presence into influence. It's a practical guide on how to navigate life by learning from the one thing in the room that never has to choose to be the best.**

**If you've never thanked a chair—not once, not ever, not now—you're about to realize why you should. Because the most unassuming piece of furniture in the boardroom, the classroom, your bedroom, or any other room has something to say without saying a single word.**



LLOYD ABRIA LUNA travels the world to tell people what a chair knows. Known as #PambansangInspirasyon, he motivates global audiences as a speaker, author, social entrepreneur, and TV personality. A columnist for *The Manila Times* and host on Aliw Channel 23, he is the founder of the Philippine Association of Professional Speakers, the Public Speaking Institute, and Yaman Advocacy Cooperative. He lives in Makati City with his wife, Beth, and their children: Sky, Rain, and Summer.

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