

Top authors share treasured resources and success secrets

# PUBLISHED!

A portrait of David Steele, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, smiling. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt under a dark blue or black jacket. The background is a textured, mottled blue and green.

David Steele, Relationship Expert  
Reach Out and Connect



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*David  
Steele*

*Reach Out  
and  
Connect!*

**David Steele is making a profound impact on coaches, therapists, and those seeking to make conscious life-partner choices around the world.**

**David is the Relationship Coaching Institute founder, and the author of the books *Conscious Dating: Finding the Love of Your Life in Today's World*, *From Therapist to Coach*, and *Building the Million Dollar Private Practice*.**

**I:** What inspires you to write David?

**DS:** As somebody who wants to make a difference in the world, I have a mission and I have a message. My mission is what I want to accomplish. I have a target audience—the people I want to help—and I have a message to share with them. I have things I want to say to them and ways in which I'd like to support them.

I resisted writing a book for a long time, because I figured there were already so many books in the world; writing a book is a long, hard project and I have lots of other things to do. I have a full plate. I really got it after a while that putting my message into a book would help me reach a lot more people and make a bigger difference in the world, so I finally did. I've written several more since that first book. That's what motivates me—getting my message out there, reaching the people I want to reach, and making the difference in the world I feel called to make.

**I:** How does your writing inspire others?

**DS:** In several ways. I want to make a difference in people's relationships as well as with professionals who want to build a successful business, because we can't help anybody if we can't get clients.

As a person, I tend to be very, very practical. When I put something out there that is intended to help to somebody, I do so in a very practical fashion. Here's what works, here's what doesn't work, here's how I've done it, here's what I recommend; here are the steps—A, B, C ... 1, 2, 3. What I've heard over and over again from people is that it is so clear and so easy; I make it easy for them to understand and to do it. It's one of my gifts.

We all have gifts, and one of my gifts is to distill complicated information and to make it easy and practical for people. That is probably the most important way that I inspire people with my writing is to get them into action, and enable them to do something that they might have been confused about or didn't quite know how to do. They are able to do it because I laid it out for them so clearly and easily.

**I:** When and why did you begin to write?

**DS:** I've written articles for most of my professional career. I realized early on that it was a good marketing device. I even had a column in my local newspaper—an 'ask the coach' kind of column. I've been writing articles for a very, very long time, and whenever dealing with a question or a big problem from one of my clients I would sometimes just get this inspiration, like lightening hitting me from above. "Oh my God! It's so clear! I've got to put this in writing!"

I would get out a legal pad and just write and write—do a brain dump—and get it all out there. I've written a lot of articles that way. I often become inspired in response to one of my client's problems or sometimes you're working with a client and you get a brainstorm, like an intervention. "Wow! That was brilliant! I can't believe I came up with that!" Capturing that in writing, being able to write about it so that you can pass it on and share it, that is really amazing.

I would find myself saying the same things over and over to clients, so what I would do

*David Steele continued . . .*

was put that in writing in the form of an article or a tip sheet, and then make a bunch of copies. Then when that topic came up again, instead of just repeating myself, I would give them a copy of the tip sheet, and then we would talk about it from there.

This is one of the ways that I've discovered that we can develop our own intellectual property very, very organically in response to working with our clients. It comes from our own brilliance, but not out of context, not in a vacuum; it's organically responding to our clients.

All of us that are experts, we can and should do that. Does that answer your question?

**I:** Definitely. How do you define writing success?

**DS:** Oh my gosh ... well, when I first published a book, I had big dreams of being like John Gray, becoming a millionaire, having a bestseller, and that kind of thing. Since then, I've become a lot more realistic. I don't expect to make a lot of money from my books. For me, financial success is not even the reason I'm writing.

I define success in my profession as effectively reaching people and connecting with them. In other words, people that don't even know me; I put something out there in the form of an article or a book or a blog post or Twitter or Facebook post, and it somehow reaches them like magic through the Internet, bookstores, etc. It helps them connect with my message and what I have to offer, and then they end up connecting with me, by going to my Web site, or signing up for my newsletter, or buying my book, or signing up for one of my programs.

That's how I define success. I like to think of writing as a boomerang. I'm going to write this, and I'm going to throw it out there in the world, and my goal is that it will come back to me in some way in the form of somebody subscribing to my newsletter, buying my book, signing up for my program, or getting a client.

That's success—when what you write catches somebody and brings them back to you.

**I:** That's beautiful when that happens, isn't it?

**DS:** Yes. It's hard not to let your ego get big, because people will just lavish you with praise. I've gone to places, introduced myself, and they've said, "Oh, you're David Steele! I've been getting your emails for years. I read your book. I love your book—it saved my life!" You get treated like a rock star.

It's really, really wonderful when something you write has touched somebody and made a difference with them, and you end up hearing about it. It's the coolest thing.

**I:** Speaking of which, what is your most powerful writing moment?

**DS:** When I get inspired. It's almost like channeling. This might sound a little 'woo-woo,' but it's almost like it's not coming from me; it's like it's coming *through* me in some way.

I remember one day I was backpacking. I was hiking on a trail with a pack on my back, and I got an idea. I started thinking about all the secrets of success, what makes people happy, and tips for happiness, and how some of them are things that we don't want to acknowledge. We want happiness to be easy and convenient.

I started writing these things down. I started getting idea after idea. Every time I got an idea, I would stop on the trail, I would take off my backpack, get out a notepad, get out a pen, and write down the idea. Then I would put the notepad back in the backpack, and put the pen back in the backpack, put the backpack back on my back, and continue walking. Then, I would get another idea, and I would stop and do it all over again.

*"I define success in my profession as effectively reaching people and connecting with them."*

It went on like this for a couple of miles. I would stop every quarter mile or something like that, and by the time I got to my campsite, I had a list of twelve things, and that morphed into an article, which ended up being one of my favorite articles I've ever written. It was called, *The 10 Dirty Secrets of Happiness*. I call them 'dirty' because we resist them, but they are secrets of happiness. There are ten of them, and they're all very cool.

I did not want to stop on the trail and take off my backpack, but these ideas were just coming to me. It was as if somehow they were inspired from above somewhere. This is my favorite writing experience, when I get excited and inspired by something, and it seems like it doesn't even come from me. It's coming from the Universe somewhere. It's channeling wisdom that I didn't even know I had.

**I:** I love that, and I love that title. That was a wonderful title—*The 10 Dirty Secrets of Happiness*. It's a wonderful, clever title.

**DS:** These are ten tips for happiness, and you're not going to like them; they're not easy or convenient.

**I:** But nothing that's worth having is.

**DS:** That's right.

**I:** What are the three most important personal tips that you could share for achievement through writing? Tell us how those things work for you.

**DS:** I think one would be to capture your nuggets of brilliance. There are times when you have a thought or an idea, or you're talking with a client, and you make a suggestion. There are times when you are brilliant, and we need to capture those. It can be as simple as having a little voice recorder or putting them on a pad of paper; but if we don't, then they're gone.

You probably have had the experience of having a great idea, and you were going to do something about it, and then when you got home you couldn't remember what it was.

**I:** Oh, yes.

**DS:** So, tip number one—my top tip—would be to ***capture your moments of***



*David Steele continued . . .*

**brilliance.** You are brilliant, and when you are able to capture those moments and leverage them into your writing or into something you are creating, then that is how you create intellectual property. That is how you can write a book, create a program, or even build a business; by capturing these seemingly disconnected but very brilliant ideas.

Number two is about leverage. Everything is connected in relationships. We're all connected to each other, even though we can't see it. Ideas are connected to each other. One idea can lead to the other, which leads to another, and so on. Leverage means that you don't simply treat something all by itself; you leverage an idea into an article. You leverage an article into a blog post or a Web page or a Twitter post or you leverage the article by submitting it to article directories, or by submitting it to magazines for publication.

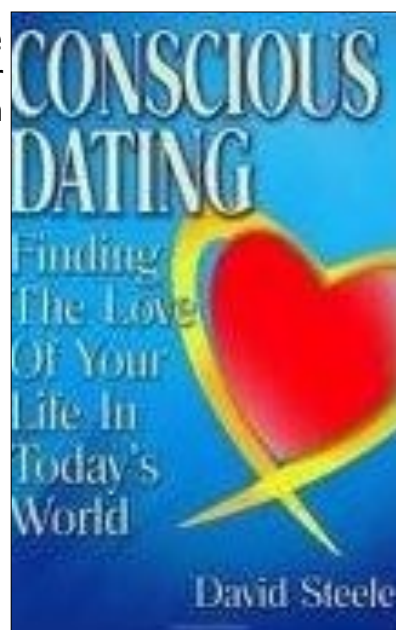
You have a bunch of articles, and you start thinking, "These would be great chapters of a book." You leverage your articles into a book. You leverage your book into a program or your program into a book.

With the *Conscious Dating* book, I didn't start out to write a book for singles about dating. I started working with singles as a relationship coach, and the *Conscious Dating* book came eight years later, after I had already developed my Conscious Dating Program For Singles, a workbook and professional manual. I had already been training all sorts of other people to do it. The book grew organically out of my work with singles. Leverage is tip number two. **Leverage everything you do.** Don't do anything just once.

Number three would be to look in the mirror and be honest with yourself about your weaknesses. We all have areas that hold us back where we get stuck. One of mine—I'm not totally sure I'd call it a weakness, but it does hold me back—is my schedule; I'm busy! I have a large organization that I'm involved with and that I founded. Even though we have staff and trainers and webmasters, and somebody else runs the organization—the President and CEO—I still have a lot of projects, and my desk is a mess. I'm always busy.

Taking the time to write—really being disciplined about it—can be a challenge. Right now, I have a book contract with John Wiley and Sons. They are the oldest trade publisher in the United States, and they're probably the largest, if not one of the largest, and getting that book deal is a whole other story, because they came to me.

Years ago when I shopped around the *Conscious Dating* book and I was looking for a publisher, I got rejected all over the place. I self-published it and I ended up being glad I did, because I think that's really the way to go is to self-publish. In this case, the largest trade publisher in the United States came to me and asked me to write this book, *From Therapist to Coach*. That's great when your body of work has built up enough that you've achieved that kind of recognition, and deals start coming to you. Of course, that



<http://tinyurl.com/DSRelationships>

wouldn't have happened unless I had leveraged my writing in the first place, which was tip number two.

Tip number three is **recognize your areas of weakness**. In my case, what tends to hold me back from finishing a big project is, once again, my busy schedule. I have to ask myself, "How can I make sure that I will be able to get this book out by the deadline?" I have a deadline, and in this case, it's November of this year, which is not that many months away, and I'm only halfway through the book.

What I've done, and one of my secrets to writing a high quality book in a reasonable amount of time is that I get help. I hire a writer to help me. The writer is not writing the book for me; the writer is helping me write the book. I'm leveraging my time by outsourcing, so the writer will interview me, shoot me a draft of the chapter, and I will work on the chapter and edit it and ask for more ideas, and then shoot it back to the writer. We'll go back and forth with it.

It's 100% my content, but somebody else is helping me put it into writing. Getting over that obstacle of what I think a lot of us have encountered is the blank piece of paper, or the blank Microsoft Word document. Starting from scratch and starting to actually write can be a huge obstacle, because we're busy. We've got a whole bunch of other things to do. Writing is a discretionary thing oftentimes; it's not a requirement.

We have so many other things that require our attention but, when we have a buddy or when we have a writer helping us and we're not doing it by ourselves, then it becomes much easier to get this project done. That's been one of my secrets to success.

**I:** Very good. Are your books based on experiences of someone you know, or events from your own life?

**DS:** First of all, I'm a nonfiction writer, so I'm writing about an area of expertise that I know something about; but I'm writing for people, and people need to be engaged. They need it to be interesting so I can't just write dry, self-help stuff—here's how to do this—1, 2, 3. Here are the facts—1, 2, 3. It has to be interesting and engaging.

Telling stories that people can relate to is very important. People love stories. When you watch a movie or television show or you read a good fiction book, it's the story that engages you. Stories are very, very powerful for teaching and for entertaining and for engaging the reader.

There are different kinds of stories—success stories of people you've worked with, so you're telling a story about them. There's also a story about your work with them. I do tell lots of stories from my own personal/professional experience. I'm a very authentic writer and a very authentic person.

I don't hold anything back. I'll tell you all my flaws, my mistakes, my embarrassing moments. The more embarrassing it is, the better the story. In *Conscious Dating*, I mention what was probably one of the most embarrassing things that has ever happened to me in my life is the time that I crashed my twenty-five-foot sailboat into the rocks of Alcatraz. As a sailor and as a guy, I don't want it getting around that I made that big a mistake, but I put it in the *Conscious Dating* book as an example of how sometimes we think we know what we're doing, but we might not; what a great way to illustrate that. I use examples from my own life. I tell stories about myself in a very, very authentic way.

*David Steele continued . . .*

I will use what I call, 'case studies.' I'll tell stories that illustrate my points that are good examples from other people or other situations that I know. The bottom line is, you have to tell stories because they're interesting and engaging. A picture speaks a thousand words—a one-paragraph story will speak many pages of content, and I think that telling stories is a very necessary way to get our message across.

**I:** What was the hardest part of writing your books?

**DS:** Being busy. If I had nothing else to do, it would be okay. I remember one time I took a week off and went up to the mountains and rented a cabin. I figured, "Okay, I have had trouble getting to this project; here, I have nothing else to do but this project." Then, the hardest part became writer's block and really the isolation of doing it myself.

That's where I really decided it was necessary to work with a co-writer; to work with somebody that I could bounce ideas off of, and someone to whom I could outsource some of the work. I was surprised, because it's much more affordable than I thought it would be. There's a lot of hungry writers out there, ladies and gentlemen, so it doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. They need the work and you need the help, so it's a good deal for both of you. That's probably the hardest thing, is struggling with doing it myself when I'm busy and I have a lot on my plate.

**I:** I can see another reason why you might want to work with a writer—to get out of your own way. As you were saying, with the writer's block, if you are able to express the information and the content that you really want to share while you're being interviewed, it gets you out of your own way; no more looking at that white paper.

**DS:** Yes. We might be experts and know a lot about our topic, but we are not professional writers. We aren't necessarily the best people to write a book by ourselves.

I wanted the *Conscious Dating* book to be the definitive book for singles. A book that I could say with confidence, "Don't bother with all those other books out there for singles—this is the only one you need." I wanted it to be high quality, well-written, very, very interesting and engaging to read.

I've read books where they've combined self-help content with really interesting stories. It was also like writing a novel. One book I remember what really struck me was, *The One-Minute Millionaire*, where on one page they would have the content, and on the opposite page they would have a story going on of somebody who was dealing with the situation the content was talking about. It was fascinating to read the content on one side, and then the story on the other.

I decided that for the *Conscious Dating* book, I wanted to weave in stories of real singles. I picked six real singles who have gone through my Conscious Dating Program, who I either worked with or my coaches had worked with that could really be an illustration of most singles out there today. I wove their stories throughout the book. I'm not a storyteller. I couldn't write a story to save my life. I don't tell jokes either. I'm not a joke teller. I'm sorry, but I can't do that.

I hired a writer specifically because she was a very talented storyteller. She helped me



craft these stories to be interesting, engaging, and they really illustrated the content of the book. By the time the book was done, I could really stand behind it and honestly say, "This is the definitive book for singles. This is fun and easy to read; it will really tell you all you need to know about finding the love of your life."

I could not have done that by myself. There are skills that I have, and there's skills that I don't have. To crank out a top-quality product, you're going to need people—maybe just one other person, maybe more—that have skills that you don't have.

This is our profession. We want to take it seriously and be professional about it. We don't want to crank out something amateur.

**I:** Exactly. What are your current projects?

**DS:** My current project is my second book in the two-book deal I have with Wiley, and it's *The Million-Dollar Practice: Building a Successful Business That Makes A Difference*. I have a Web site up at [www.milliondollarpractice.net](http://www.milliondollarpractice.net).

The premise is the, 'one to many' model. When you are a helping professional, working with people one-on-one limits you. It limits your time and it limits your income. If you can leverage your time by serving one to many—serving groups, workshops, retreats, classes, and having membership programs online—then that's scalable. You can do as many as you want. It leverages your time.

That's about building the million-dollar practice. It's at [www.milliondollarpractice.net](http://www.milliondollarpractice.net). I'm halfway through the book, and I have about four more months to get to the last four chapters, so I have to get going.

The *Therapist to Coach* book, which you might be interested in, is at [www.therapisttocoach.com](http://www.therapisttocoach.com). That was the first book that Wiley asked me to write. What was interesting was that, in the process of putting this book project together for Wiley, I got the idea for the follow-up book; I pitched it to Wiley, and they loved it.

The *Therapist to Coach* book is all about the path you need to take if you're a therapist in private practice and you would like to become a coach; you would like to make a difference in the world as a coach. However, once you're a successful coach, what's next? What's next is building the million-dollar practice. For me, it was just a natural next step, so I put a book proposal together for Wiley, and they loved it and accepted it. Now I'm under contract for that book, too. The *Million-Dollar Practice* book will probably be out late in 2012.

In my mind, this is the way that we work as professionals—the way we should work, anyway—to ask ourselves "What's next?" This is probably the most important two-word question for all business owners that want to make a successful business out of our profession. We need to ask ourselves "What's next?" at every step. That's how we leverage what we do to help us grow and evolve.

**Connect with David at:**  
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