

*Human beings are relational animals,
shaped by the people we gather with—and by the
gatherings themselves.*

Yet, it has never been easier to stay apart—to work, learn, celebrate without coming together. So when we do, it matters.

Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events is for anyone who brings people together to deepen relationships—to build a community, move a business, shift a culture. The scale changes; the obligation doesn't.

It is also for those who show up expecting an event to be “freaking good.” Get it right and they leave changed for the better; get it wrong and they leave feeling worse than before.

Drawing on anthropology, psychology, decades of lived experience, and conversations with leading voices, Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events presents focused, story-rich essays that will change how you see every event you touch.

“A real-world account of how powerful a well-run event can be
and the return it can produce.”

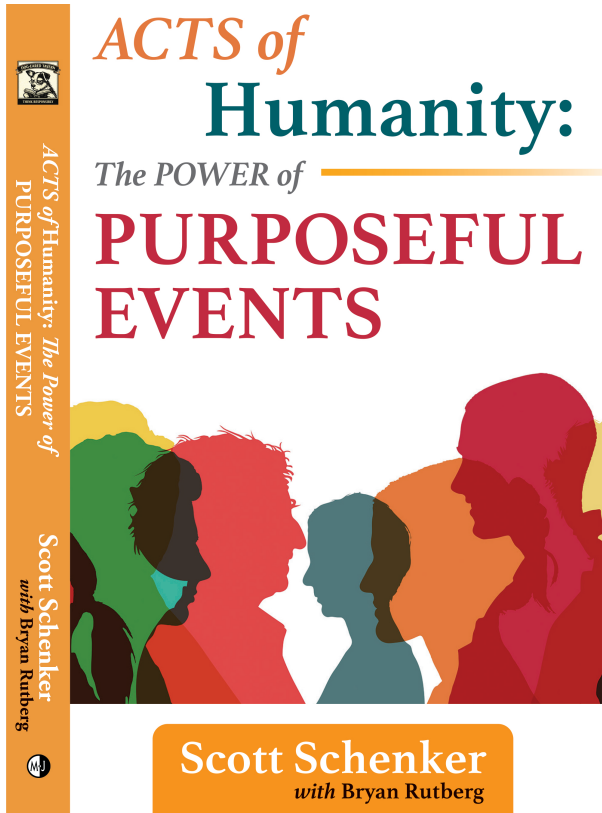
— Kevin Haverly, Chief Revenue Officer, ServiceNow

“A brilliant framework for turning ordinary gatherings into ‘Kairos moments’
that drive real change—an essential read for any leader looking to build lasting
trust and community.”

— Chris Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Project Worldwide

“Scott thinks about gatherings in the only way that really matters: as part of a
broader system, and what they signal about priorities and care.”

— Chris Caposela, Former Chief Marketing Officer, Microsoft



MEDIA KIT • THE POWER OF EVENTS, SEEN MORE CLEARLY

Acts of Humanity

The Power of Purposeful Events

by Scott Schenker, with Bryan Rutberg

On sale August 11, 2026 • Morgan James Publishing

***Human beings are relational animals,
shaped by the people we gather with—
and by the gatherings themselves.***

*Events are one of the primary ways we build the relationships, trust, identity,
and stories that make us human.*

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FACT SHEET

The Book at a Glance

Title	Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events
Authors	Scott Schenker, with Bryan Rutberg
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Category	Business • Leadership • Events & Experience Design • Human Connection
Structure	Four sections of short, standalone essays
Audience	Executives, marketers, and event professionals — plus anyone who plans an offsite, fundraiser, wedding, worship service, or community gathering
Order	Amazon • Barnes & Noble • Direct
Web / social	actsofhumanitythebook.com • #ActsOfHumanityTheBook

Note: final page count to be confirmed; ebook edition forthcoming (not yet finalized).

BOOK DESCRIPTION

About the Book

ONE LINE

Human beings are relational animals, shaped by the people we gather with—and by the gatherings themselves. Events are one of the primary ways we build the relationships, trust, identity, and stories that make us human.

SHORT DESCRIPTION (≈ 80 WORDS)

Human beings are relational animals, shaped by the people we gather with—and by the gatherings themselves. We can only be human together. Gathering is one of the primary ways we initiate, build, and grow the relationships, trust, and shared stories that shape who we are. In Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events, Scott Schenker — who led global events at SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow — argues that gatherings of any size carry that power, and offers a set of mindsets and lenses for designing the ones that truly matter.

LONG DESCRIPTION (≈ 250 WORDS)

Human beings are relational animals, shaped by the people we gather with—and by the gatherings themselves. We can only be human together. And gathering, in person, is one of the primary ways we initiate, build, grow, test, and repair the relationships that give our lives meaning.

That is the starting claim of Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events. From a birthday dinner to a 5,000-person conference, gatherings draw on the same ancient human need — to be together — and they carry real power over identity, trust, and the stories we tell about who we are. A gathering of five thousand carries an energy a dinner for eight cannot — and the same purposeful design serves connection at either scale. The larger the gathering, the more that design matters.

Scott Schenker spent decades leading global events at SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow after starting at agencies Jack Morton and George P. Johnson. Here he offers a set of mindsets and lenses for seeing gatherings clearly: Kairos moments — the opportune moments that weigh more than the time they take, and must be seized because they don't come twice; the Hearts-Heads-Hands path from feeling to action; rituals and traditions; the discipline of crafting stories; hosting as the art of receiving people; and the honest question of when not to gather at all.

It is a book about why events are so powerful — and about what we owe one another when we ask people to give us their time. We are shaped by the people we gather with—and by the gatherings themselves.

Excerpt

In the middle of COVID, Grand Central Terminal offered one of the clearest pictures of what this book is trying to say. The building was still there. The light still poured through the high windows. The floor still shined. But almost everyone was gone. What was missing was not architecture, transportation, or activity. What was missing was humanity.

Gatherings are not merely calendar items, logistics plans, registration counts, or rooms filled with chairs. They are one of the ways human beings become more fully human together. We gather to mark milestones, celebrate, mourn, learn, protest, worship, compete, remember, and begin again. We gather because relationships shape our lives, and gatherings are among the primary ways relationships are formed, strengthened, tested, repaired, and carried forward.

When we ask people to give us some of their finite time, their attention, their travel, their money, and their hope, we are doing more than hosting a program. We are shaping a few hours or days of their lives. Done carelessly, a gathering is forgettable. Done with purpose, it can become one of the moments people remember when they tell the story of who they are and what mattered.

— *from Essay 1.1, “Acts of Humanity”*

Read the full excerpt at actsofhumanitythebook.com/excerpt

WHAT MAKES IT DISTINCT

Lenses for Purposeful Events

These are familiar truths about human nature, applied to events in a new way. They are a set of lenses, uniquely applied to events — to the roles people play, and to how a gathering becomes powerful and consequential. A sampling:

Kairos Moments	The right, opportune moments — ones that weigh more than the minutes they contain and must be seized, because they don't come twice.
Hearts, Heads & Hands	Moving people from what they feel, to what they understand, to what they do next.
Traditions & Rituals	The repeated acts — songs, ceremonies, gestures of welcome — that turn a group of individuals into a “we.”
Stories	Meaning, crafted and carried with responsibility — the way people make sense of what they shared.
Hosting	The art of receiving people — helping each person cross the threshold and feel they belong.
Advocating, Participating & Fans	The roles people take on together, and how belonging takes shape.
The P's of Purposeful Events	A practical lens for turning intention into lived experience.

COMPARABLE & COMPANION TITLES

Where This Book Lives

Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events sits in a small neighborhood of books about gathering, experience, and human connection. It shares their concerns and departs from them in two clear ways. First, its starting point: “human beings are relational animals, shaped by the people we gather with—and by the gatherings themselves.” Events are the primary way we build relationships, trust, and stories. Second, its contribution: a distinct set of mindsets and lenses for seeing gatherings clearly. This book is in conversation with the books below and reframes their ideas through the single filter of a “*purposeful event*.”

CLOSEST COMPANIONS — THE GATHERING BOOKS

The Art of Gathering Priya Parker (2018)

The definitive book on gathering with purpose, focused — by her own size framework — on gatherings of roughly 150 and below. Where Parker stays within that intimate range, this book broadens at any size, and especially at scale: the purposeful event holds connection inside a crowd of hundreds or thousands.

A Time to Gather Bruce Feiler (2026)

A round-the-world chronicle of how people are reinventing ritual to mark life’s great transitions — birth, coming of age, marriage, loss — and a practical guide to hosting gatherings that move people. Feiler’s lens is ritual and the life passage, and his method is reportage drawn from a journey across sixteen countries. This book shares his conviction that intentional gathering answers a real cultural hunger, then turns the lens from the ceremony that marks a passage to the relationship the gathering builds, and from the personal rite to the purposeful event in business, community, and culture.

The Power of Moments Chip Heath & Dan Heath (2017)

On why certain experiences become defining moments. Where the Heaths map the psychology of the individual peak moment, this book places those moments inside the relationships and stories a gathering builds — and leaves behind.

THE BUSINESS OF EXPERIENCE

The Experience Economy B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore (1999)

The classic argument for staging experiences as economic value — “work is theater, every business a stage.” This book reframes the experience in relational terms: connection first, commerce second.

Experiential Marketing Kerry Smith & Dan Hanover (2016)

The industry manifesto for live, face-to-face brand engagement. Where it makes the marketer’s case for events as a channel, this book makes the human case for events as connection — the book to read once the tactics are mastered.

FOUNDATIONS

Together Vivek H. Murthy (2020)

The former U.S. Surgeon General on loneliness and the healing power of connection — part of the research base for this book. It sharpens the thesis and offers the purposeful gathering as one of its most practical antidotes.

Sapiens Yuval Noah Harari (2014)

On storytelling as the uniquely human capacity that lets large groups trust and cooperate. This book carries that insight into the event: gatherings are where shared stories get told, felt, and carried forward.

Bowling Alone Robert D. Putnam (2000)

The landmark account of America's fraying civic fabric — the slow collapse of the clubs, leagues, and associations that once held communities together. Where Putnam diagnoses the loss, this book offers the repair: the purposeful gathering as a deliberate way to rebuild the connective tissue he watched come apart.

THE CONNECTION BOOKS

Atlas of the Heart Brené Brown (2021)

Brown's bestselling map of the emotions and experiences that connect us — the interior language of belonging, vulnerability, and trust. Where she charts the inner terrain of connection, this book builds the outer architecture that produces it: the gathering as the place where belonging, trust, and story are actually made.

How to Know a Person David Brooks (2023)

Brooks on the lost art of making another person feel genuinely seen — the one-to-one skill at the heart of every real relationship. The vocabulary overlaps with this book on purpose; where Brooks teaches how to know a single person deeply, this book asks how a gathering lets a whole group be seen at once — the same act of attention, scaled from the pair to the people.

THE AUTHORS

About Scott Schenker



Scott Schenker has spent a career making events memorable, meaningful, and magical. He began at two of the world's foremost event firms, Jack Morton and George P. Johnson, working across clients, industries, and continents, then moved to the corporate side as global head of events at technology powerhouses SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow. He holds a Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management — and, by his own admission, becomes the world's grumpiest man at the words “early-bird discount.”

SHORT BIO (≈ 50 WORDS)

Scott Schenker has led global events for SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow, after beginning his career at agencies Jack Morton and George P. Johnson. A Kellogg MBA, he has spent decades making gatherings memorable, meaningful, and magical. Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events is his argument for treating events as acts of humanity.

About Bryan Rutberg



Bryan Rutberg (collaborator) spent more than 20 years in sales, marketing, and communications at Hewlett-Packard, McKinsey & Company, and Microsoft, where he served as Director of Microsoft's Executive Briefing Center. Today he writes speeches and books and keynotes at sales kickoffs, leadership retreats, and association meetings, helping leaders build great customer relationships.

What Leaders Are Saying

With a foreword by **Chris Capossela**, former Chief Marketing Officer, Microsoft.

“Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events is, in its own way, another mirror — held up to the way we gather.”

— **Chris Capossela, from the Foreword**

“Schenker masterfully elevates events from logistical line items to powerful strategic instruments ... a brilliant framework for turning ordinary gatherings into ‘Kairos moments’ that drive real change.”

— **Chris Meyer, CEO, Project Worldwide**

“Scott powerfully reframes events as one of the most strategic and human levers for engagement, brand, and growth ... as valuable for C-suite leaders as it is for seasoned event professionals.”

— **Nellie Greely, events and marketing leader**

“Our events were good — and they took a quantum leap up when Scott came in and took the helm. A must-read for anyone who wants to deliver or play a key role in a world-class event.”

— **Kevin Haverty, sales executive and Chief Revenue Officer**

“A terrific job tackling a complex subject.”

— **Alan Marks, marketing and communications leader at Gap, eBay, and ServiceNow**

“An unvarnished look at both the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of producing meaningful events — whether you’re the executive sponsor, the CMO, or the agency hired to make the magic happen.”

— **Leasa Mayer, longtime events executive and former agency owner**

“A compelling, insightful exploration of how intentional gatherings create lasting human and societal impact ... an important contribution to the evolution of the events profession.”

— **Christoph Tessmar, Director, Barcelona Convention Bureau**

“A call to reclaim what events are truly for: genuine human connection and transformation. For anyone who has ever stood in a room and felt something shift, this is the book that explains how.”

— **Sharon K. Gillenwater, entrepreneur and author of Scaling with Soul**

Story Angles

Acts of Humanity: The Power of Purposeful Events isn't one story — it's many, depending on your beat. A starting menu, each angle drawn from the book:

LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS

Nothing Big Happens Alone

Almost nothing worth doing can be done alone — starting a company, growing one, changing minds, changing the world. All of it runs through other people, which means it runs through relationships. Gathering is how we build and activate them, whether that's four people around a table on a neighborhood problem or thousands at a global summit.

Best as: byline or op-ed

From Applause to Consequence

How a gathering moves past a good show to actually changing what people do next — the Hearts, Heads, and Hands path, anchored by a Microsoft closing keynote about the Special Olympics.

Best as: feature

MARKETING & BRAND

Fans, Not Hostages

The difference between loyalty built on belonging and loyalty built on switching costs — told through Rod Stewart, who said he'd rather make the cover of Railway Modeller than Rolling Stone.

Best as: feature; highly social-clippable

From Customers to “Lustomers”

Reframing experiential marketing as relational rather than transactional — built on co-author Bryan Rutberg's idea of turning customers into “lustomers.”

Best as: byline with Bryan Rutberg

FINANCE & OPERATIONS

The Strange Economics of Events

At events we accept things — early-bird pressure, manufactured scarcity, urgency, discounting games — that we'd never accept anywhere else in commerce, or in our own lives. What that reveals about how gatherings work on us, and how to budget and price with intent.

Best as: Q&A or feature

PSYCHOLOGY, SCIENCE & HEALTH

Loneliness Is a Health Risk. Gathering Is a Treatment.

The research is stark — isolation rated comparable to smoking around fifteen cigarettes a day, with higher risks of stroke, dementia, and early death. The relational-creature thesis frames the purposeful gathering as one of the most practical antidotes we have.

Best as: expert essay; strong podcast fit

The Moments You Only Get Once

Kairos moments — the rare, opportune windows that weigh more than the time they take and offer no second chance. Opened by the author skipping his own college graduation for a conference that mattered more.

Best as: feature

MEETINGS & EVENTS TRADE

Connection at the Scale of Thousands.

A gathering of thousands carries an energy a small one cannot — and purposeful design turns that scale into belonging. What changes when a leader builds the big event for connection as much as capacity.

Best as: byline or keynote excerpt

Hosting Is the Art of Receiving

Receiving people, not processing them — helping each guest cross the threshold and feel they belong. Told through the author's mother and her circle of friends, who always arranged for a host.

Best as: byline

WORKPLACE & THE FUTURE OF WORK

When Not to Gather

Straight into the meeting-overload and return-to-office debates: the discipline of deciding when a gathering is the wrong tool. The personal version cuts deep — a sales kickoff weighed against a daughter's dance recital.

Best as: op-ed; timely

CULTURE & PODCASTS

The Town That Appears for Only a Few Days

Brigadoon: the event as a temporary city — citizens, rituals, neighborhoods — that vanishes when it ends, leaving behind a residue of friendships, decisions, and memory.

Best as: narrative feature or podcast

The Arc of a Gatherer

A long-form spine for interviews: agency beginnings, then global head of events at SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow — a career spent asking how a gathering changes the people inside it.

Best as: interview podcast

Suggested Interview Questions

1. You call humans relational animals. What does that mean, and why does it change how we think about gathering?”
2. You call events “Acts of Humanity.” What do you mean, and why does that frame matter now?
3. You argue a gathering of thousands carries an energy a smaller one cannot. What does purposeful design at that scale look like?
4. The book is built around a set of lenses — Kairos, Hearts/Heads/Hands, ritual, hosting. Which one do people most often miss?
5. What is a “Kairos moment,” and can you give an example of one you’ve witnessed or created?
6. You argue information alone never changes a gathering. What does “Hearts, Heads, and Hands” look like in practice?
7. When is a gathering the wrong answer — and how should leaders decide whether to hold one at all?
8. There’s a well-documented loneliness epidemic. What role can purposeful gatherings play in addressing it?
9. After decades at agencies and at SAP, Microsoft, and ServiceNow, what changed your own thinking most?
10. If a reader plans just one gathering differently after this book, what do you hope they change?

VISUAL ASSETS

Imagery & Brand

High-resolution key art accompanies each essay and is available for editorial use. A representative selection is shown below; full-resolution files and the author headshot are available on request.



BRAND PALETTE

	Gathering Red #C7133C	Hero accents, headline emphasis, key pull quotes
	Signal Coral #ED2147	Primary CTA / pre-order moments
	Deep Assembly Teal #006D63	Brand anchor, navigation, major section headers
	Human Flame #EB5C26	Section accents, energetic callouts
	Kairos Gold #EDD12E	Highlights, quote marks, small emphasis details

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