Building a Strong Professional Network

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3 Tips for Networking

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1. Ask questions, a LOT of them

- You should ask more questions of the other person than he/she asks of you
Asking Questions

- Examples: FORD technique
  - Family: Have you always lived in XYZ city/state? What brought you to the area? Is your family local?
  - Occupation: Where do you work? What do you do at XYZ company? How long have you been there?
  - Recreation: What do you do for fun? What are some of your hobbies? Any trips or vacations coming up?
  - Motivation: How did you first get involved with XYZ event/organization [that you’re both attending right now]? What’s been the most beneficial part of joining XYZ?
2. Make the ASK

You should **ask** for what you want/need from the other person
Making the ask

● Examples:
  ● Internship/Job: Would you mind if I used your name when I apply for XYZ internship [at your company]? Is it alright if I send you my resume to look at before I apply?
  ● Mentor: Could we grab a coffee or lunch next week to continue our discussion, you’ve been so helpful? Are there some books or resources you could recommend for me?
3. Get best contact info.

- You should walk away from this encounter with a good way to contact the other person
Contacting afterward

- Examples:
  - Direct phone number
  - Name of assistant should the other person request you go through their scheduler/assistant
  - Email address
    - Be sure to send a quick “thank you/great meeting you” email within 24 hours

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*Kitty’s points begin on the next slide*
Make more progress, faster

“We have met the enemy and he is us.” –Walt Kelly

There are shifts in mindset that we can choose to make now, rather than 20 years from now when we’ve worked up to them.

Are we making incomplete assumptions about how things really work?
Create a joyful space where your talents can keep unfolding for the rest of your life

If *networking* gives you hives, then try *relating*. A time-tested opening line is “Hello.”

Practice giving yourself as much respect and permission as you can stand.

- These are not future rewards for attaining a higher academic degree or position at work; they’re your birthright as a person.
- You have as much “legitimacy” as you need, right now.

Preparedness is good. Sincerity and discernment get better results than defensiveness or arrogance. Crazy leaps can be fun.
Shift #1

A network of professional friends, colleagues, mentors and allies has more potential energy if it’s broader than your discipline, contains weak ties and strong ties, and is not overstuffed with personal friends.

Caveat (and a resource): You can build so much network and collaborate so much that you burn yourself out. The premier expert on how to avoid that is Rob Cross, Edward A. Madden Professor of Global Business, Babson College. See https://www.robcross.org/collaborative-overload/.
Shift #2

It is not necessary to wait for someone more expert than you to create networking space or make an introduction.

1. Remember the respect and permission you’ve decided to give yourself? You have as much legitimacy as you need, right now.

2. They’re all making it up, too.

3. The “proof” of another’s networking proficiency is in his/her life and accomplishments. But guess what? Each person is struggling with different challenges. You’re the expert on you. Back to step 1!
Shift #3

Do not assume that someone you’d like to connect with won’t talk to you because you’re ________________.

This bears repeating.

Do not assume that someone you’d like to connect with won’t talk to you because you’re ________________.
If you want to continue the discussion, please make contact. Good luck!

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