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## Golden Nuggets of Networking Wisdom

By Bruce Libman

**This month's Golden Nugget is an excerpt from the book,  
*Total Networking Success A – Z.***

# “K”

## is for **Keep an Open Mind**

You never know where your next endorsement may come from. We've already related the story of the salesman at the funeral service and the policeman who knew some of the most successful business people in Manhattan.

Google got started when two guys met in graduate school.

When a business owner contracted breast cancer, she networked with several cancer and other medical support group members and founded a medical record-keeping firm, Medipal Books.

A pet shop owner and a baker spoke at a networking meeting, and within months they were selling their own line of cookies for dogs. A nutritionist and the owner of a corporation that manufactures gaskets and belts for machinery were introduced at a party. Before long, the nutritionist was revamping the business owner's cafeteria menu...as an ongoing project to keep the offerings fresh and new as well as healthful.

The more opportunities you look for, the more you'll find. Of course, you want to concentrate your greatest efforts where you know you're more apt to find synergies and bigger, better endorsements. Just be sure you know where the bigger, better endorsements are. *Don't assume* that's where they are; *don't hope* that's where they are.



This leads us to another reason to keep an open mind. Because a fellow networker, client, or business associate has been the source of plenty of endorsements does not necessarily mean they are winning leads.

Your sales record with these endorsements may be average at best - maybe you could have closed fewer but bigger sales elsewhere. More importantly, these endorsements may have led to one-time-only pluses, whereas you could have established a long-term commitment and relationship using that time and energy with a current client...or one from a different source.

Keep an open mind if a source changes jobs or positions. The endorsements Toni was able to furnish as a manager at ABC Co. may not be as accessible to her, and thus to you, in her new position.

For any number of reasons Joel may have lost his enthusiasm for networking. His list of contacts, his attendance at meetings, and his willingness to be a facilitator may all have changed. If you've been counting on Joel as a main source for new endorsements, you're in trouble.

Keep an open mind when you're the facilitator as well. A young, overeager salesperson may have matured over the past months and now would know how to handle a possible client you would not have referred previously. A promotion at work, a change in career, a new attitude, can mean a fellow group member is ready to take the next step. Now you can be of help and act as a facilitator, even if you were reluctant before.

Think how a marriage, a new child, a move to a new company or neighborhood, a divorce, a big sale or a big disappointment can affect people for better or for worse. We all handle the pluses and minuses in different ways.

A Total Networker looks for changes all the time. Even the best of us is not static or robotic. Hopefully, we're constantly improving our business and social skills...getting better at what we do...trying harder...being more accessible...and opening ourselves up to even greater challenges and accomplishments.

A Total Networker notes these changes, and rewards those who show they've stepped forward. When someone shows signs of sliding there are two things the Total Networker can do: she can offer advice and mentoring or she can step back and wait for an attitude improvement.



In either case, she is being a friend and a facilitator. Some advice and a gentle push could get things in the right direction again.

On the other hand, NOT offering an endorsement could be the best approach, since it could prove a disaster for all three of them (See “T” is for...) should she give it out now. No endorsement beats a blown endorsement every time. BUT, since she is a Total Networker, she’s always ready to be there again with the right endorsement when the pendulum swings back.

The worst thing any of us can do is “what we’ve always done.” Ask the next typewriter manufacturer you meet how that philosophy of life works out.

Remember one more thing about keeping an open mind. Others — the best of the Total Networkers — are keeping an open mind about you!

Bruce is the author of various books including *Total Networking Success A – Z* which can be purchased from the CFL/TNC website: <http://www.totalnetworkingandconsulting.com/online-store>

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