

Golden Nuggets of Networking Wisdom

By Bruce Libman



Let's Talk NetWeaving

The Skill Sets of NetWeaving

NetWeaving is a “Golden Rule” form of networking which focuses on helping others first, or at least putting others’ needs, problems and opportunities on a more equal plane with those of our own, with the belief and conviction that over time *“what goes around, will come back around.”*

The Golden Rule is all about helping others: *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”* This indirectly implies you wouldn’t mind if someone returned the favor you’ve done for them. So it is with NetWeaving. Your motives are first and foremost to help others, but there’s certainly nothing wrong with doing so in ways which increase the chances that the NetWeaver will benefit in the long run. I like to call it, *“enlightened”* self-interest.

The help you provide others comes in two forms:

- A strategic connector of other people—helping create “win-win relationships between two or more persons, as a *strategic matchmaker*.
- A *strategic resource provider* for others—helping them find solutions to their needs and problems, as well as ways to help them take advantage of ideas or opportunities they have but which, without someone else’s help, will never materialize into anything of consequence.



Think of two people finding things or interests in common, or people they both know which could help one or both of them.

If I was looking to connect someone in the real estate business with someone else, I would normally look for a person in the market to buy a home, or maybe someone who needed or did interior decorating, where they might be able to send business back and forth to each other. But what has become clear to me, is that in a majority of the cases when I'd put almost any two people together they would find things they had in common or ways to help each other, outside of the reason I had thought for matching them up.

Although much of the NetWeaving I and others do has some strategic logic behind it, I have found it's not necessary to be overly concerned about whether there's a strategic fit. Just put two creative, talented, interesting and successful people together and sit back and watch the magic as the positive energy is created and flows. If there is someone you think is interesting and whom you would like to get to know better, chances are others you know would also benefit from getting to know him or her.

The only real ingredient for NetWeaving to flourish is that both people whom you are connecting need to be people of good character, and have the capacity and the desire to help others rather than just themselves.

In the absence of these gratuitously generous human qualities, the inwardly focused person whom you connect with someone else will not be actively looking out for ways to help the other person, and instead will simply be looking for ways to benefit him or herself (i.e., a taker; not a giver). If the other person who is a "giver" ends up connecting the *taker* with someone or providing resources, the other person (i.e., the taker) will not feel any obligation to return the favor the NetWeaver did since they're still all about, "*What's in it for ME?*" Unfortunately, when a "taker" recognizes you, as a connector and a "giver," rest assured, they'll be back for more.

That spoils the concept for the "giver" who hopefully will realize he or she just needs to move on when this conclusion seems obvious, which unfortunately is not always easy to recognize.

You won't be able, nor should you try, to "convert" people to becoming NetWeavers. Generally, people either genuinely derive joy and satisfaction from helping others, or they don't. My rule of thumb is, you give, and you give, and give, and when you see nothing coming back, you just go on to help the next person.

Fortunately, there are many exceptions to this. In fact, some persons who have been very inwardly focused or driven over much of their lives convert themselves when they discover NetWeaving and find the joy which comes from helping others, and become passionate about it. They also notice how infectious and contagious it is.



THE SKILL SETS

The skill sets and the qualities of being or becoming a Power NetWeaver include:

- Learning how to create new habits. Learning how to make them permanent. Understanding that even good NetWeavers can become great NetWeavers with practice.
- Improving your listening and note taking skills. This is critically important for making your NetWeaving effective and especially for enhancing the chances that good things will happen in return.
- Understanding the importance of follow up. Learning to be a better listener and taking better notes will all be for naught if you don't have good follow up.

Learn how to spread the good word about all the positive things that occur with NetWeaving, teaching and mentoring others, or just using the word in everyday conversation, and see how this can have a positive impact on your image, your energy, your business and your personal life, as well as on that of others.

NETWEAVING SKILL SET CHECKLIST

1. Who's the last person you can remember connecting with another person, primarily with their benefit and welfare in mind?
2. Did you ever follow up to see what the outcome of that introduction turned out to be?
3. Did you ever find out if this introduction possibly ended up with another introduction to a third party...or a fourth?
4. Who is the best NetWeaver you know, someone who is constantly connecting other people? Do you notice that their listening pattern is different, listening for opportunities to connect others and help?
5. Have you ever thought of yourself as a *resource* for others? If yes, what things have you done to *position* yourself as a resource? If no, what things should you be doing, or what could you be doing better to help you develop those skills?
6. How broad and deep of a "resource network" have you established—persons whom you would trust referring to your best client or customer—with the absolute confidence that he or she will give exceptional service and that your image will be enhanced from making the referral? If it's only a few people wide and deep, why haven't you been looking for more persons to become part of your "trusted resource network?"

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