

Women’s Networking Group Embraces the Concept of Heart-felt Connections

By: Tamika Morrison

The face of networking is changing. It has a softer, feminine side filled with joy and well-wishing, with the common goal of people coming together from the heart. Did you ever think networking could evolve into something with more substance? Networking events of old involve superficial introductions, shady pleasantries, and a quick exchange of business cards. Imagine a networking event where people genuinely want to know about *you*, what *you* do and how they can be of *service* to you. That’s exactly what happens at a “Joy of Connecting” networking event.

Bonnie Ross-Parker, a.k.a. *America’s Connection Diva* and CEO of “The Joy of Connecting” says “If you’re feeling mentally and spiritually drained after attending a networking event then your existing NETworking isn’t working.” Ross-Parker shares, “Many women, especially women in direct sales, run into challenges creating continuous warm markets. Once that warm market is exhausted, they are forced to move into a male model of networking called “interruption marketing”. Bonnie designed “The Joy of Connecting”, a female-based model of networking. This concept is based on “permission marketing”, allowing women an opportunity to share what they love most about their businesses with other women who care to pay attention. This is what “The Joy of Connecting” is all about.

This concept, *heart-felt connections*, is working for several Atlanta-area JOC Licensees. They are experiencing growth – not only in their businesses but in their personal lives as well. These women are maximizing connections made at these gatherings and connecting with one another on a deeper level.



Dawn Rowley, owner of Flexible Fitness Solutions, is a certified Physical Therapist and Group Fitness Instructor. She is a JOC Licensee in the John’s Creek area. When asked why she decided to become a part of this networking concept Dawn says, “I decided to become a licensee the very first time I visited a JOC meeting. I was looking for opportunities to share my passion with men and women in my community. Dawn works with clients on all aspects of a balanced fitness program. When asked how JOC fits into her personal and

professional goals, she says proudly, “Aside from the business contacts that I’ve made through JOC, I enjoy the camaraderie that we create together at each gathering. It’s my calling to help others succeed in life and through JOC I’m able to touch the lives of men and women who truly need to focus energy on their health.”



Debbie Fisher is a teen Life Coach and co-host of *The Teen View* radio show with Dr. Katrina Cryder, a teen Wellness Chiropractor. Together they have created an uplifting show dedicated to address teen issues. Debbie says, “Our radio show brings positive media and resources to teens nationwide.” Fisher became a life coach for teens after sitting in her kitchen and listening to her own children and their friends talk about their lives. Debbie says she was divinely inspired to co-create a venue for teens, “They were including me in their conversations – asking me tons of questions. It was one of those a-ha moments!” Debbie and Bonnie met when they trained together for a 60-mile Breast Cancer Walk. Debbie was searching for a women’s

networking group and came across Bonnie's name. She recalls, "I immediately called Bonnie and RSVP'd for her next JOC meeting." Debbie describes her first JOC gathering as a warm and inviting atmosphere where women are supported and making real connections. She says, "JOC allows me to express myself as an individual and gives me the chance to be connected to the "Spirit of Woman."



Heather Stafford became a JOC licensee in October of 2007. She owns Lord & Lady Day Spa in Marietta. Heather says, "I became a JOC Licensee after visiting Bonnie's gathering. I knew in my heart this was the perfect opportunity to network with like-minded women as well as work towards growing my business." Heather felt the entrepreneurial calling at the age of 11. In September 2006 her dream became a reality. Heather admits finding the balance to grow her existing client base has been difficult. "I've had some obstacles building my business. At the first JOC meeting I hosted we all spoke openly and honestly about ourselves and our businesses. I had the opportunity to express my challenges. The women that were in my salon that night gave me the most positive and uplifting advice – they made it clear they would help me succeed in any way possible." Heather says the JOC brings fantastic women together to network and socialize, "Because of the foundation Bonnie has laid for each of us, we all have unlimited opportunities for success."



Dr. Linda Katz has been in the health care business for over 36 years. After practicing as a nurse for many years she was introduced to Chiropractics and moved to Georgia where she opened her practice in Fayetteville. Dr. Katz is a single mother to two great daughters – one of which is a special needs child. With the desire to spend more time at home with her child and an equally demanding need to create financial stability she felt torn. Dr. Katz wanted to provide her child with more suitable education. She was introduced to "The Joy of Connecting" by a friend. She says, "I found that being around other women who had a passion for business, growth and sharing was what I was missing in my life. With Bonnie's help, I had the opportunity to co-own a JOC license. Dr. Katz shares her license with Celine Heckel-Jones, a high school senior. Together they empower and support other women. Dr Katz says, "JOC is a safe haven where you can launch your dreams, get support emotionally and professionally and experience collaboration."



JOC is very proud to be a vehicle that brings women together from all backgrounds and ethnicities. Ghislaine Smith is trilingual. She's French and she speaks Spanish. She and her sister Françoise Labetant were Bonnie's very first JOC Licensees. Smith says, "I was amazed by the JOC concept four years ago. The outstanding ladies that were in attendance, the presentation that Bonnie gave and her professionalism touched me." Ghislaine runs a home-based business called *Gee Success* which allows her to provide benefits to people who would otherwise be bankrupt. She explains, "I'm able to share my passion for helping people through JOC. It's part of my daily life and I'm very proud of it. Whenever I meet someone, I always mention the JOC concept."



Cricket Harrison is a licensee in Buckhead/Atlantic Station and is also a Certified Business and Life Coach. As a coach, Cricket works with individuals, primarily women, to help them realize their dreams and the reality that they *can* achieve them! Cricket had a life-changing experience at any early age. “At the age of 14, I was in a terrible car accident. I was thrown through the back windshield of the car and landed on the base of my neck. To survive that, I knew then there was a higher-calling in my life and one of them was providing counseling and advice.” Cricket decided to become a JOC Licensee because she knew it was a forum for connection. Cricket says, “In today’s world, so many people only look out for themselves. I was looking for more. I realized by hosting “The Joy of Connecting” networking events, I had the chance to impact 25 to 35 women at

one time.” Cricket points out the buzz word today is “RCommerce”. She says, “JOC has been about “relationship commerce” from the beginning. We have always known that the crux of any business is the relationship is has with its clients.” When asked what is a lasting impression she’d like to leave about the JOC she responds, “If I wanted people to know anything, it would be that the JOC is a place for communication, collaboration and connection. The benefits to our businesses are great; however, the benefits to us, as women and individuals are beyond measure.”

The connections made through “The Joy of Connecting” truly come from a deeper place. Heart-felt connections are often ignored in the world of business. JOC women all attest to the growth they have experienced personally and professionally and remain committed to continue the journey. “The Joy of Connecting” has uncovered a true treasure that impacts hundreds of women nationwide and is truly about making heart-felt connections.