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The Quick Connection – Effective Connecting for Effective Results

Maybe you're a veteran of the networking arena and agree you could be more effective. Or, perhaps you're just getting started and would like to better understand how to network productively. "The Quick Connection" is a reference tool to help you effectively impact others and increase your success.

Here's the familiar scenario: Show up. Shake as many hands as possible. Give out and get as many business cards as you can. Tell everyone, "I'll call you" or expect the people you meet to actually call you. Now, consider another approach that over time will get you better results.

"The Quick Connection" can be implemented any time and in any networking arena. The plan is based on three components: differentiate, be memorable and make a difference. If you focus on attending any business environment with all three or any one of the strategies, your success will increase significantly.

Strategy #1 – Differentiate. Being unique distinguishes you from others, especially those that are in the same industry. Remember when you were young and fitting in meant doing the same thing as everyone else in the crowd. Being the same was a way of establishing acceptance. In the business world, the opposite is true. You will have an advantage when you differentiate. For example, initiate conversations with people you don't know. Ask how he/she got into the industry they are in, what trends they anticipate in the future or what they did before their current career. Ask what they find to be their biggest challenge. If you're wondering why this line of questioning, it's because most business people are more eager to share what they do than engage in building rapport with someone else. Find out what a good lead is for an individual you'd like to assist. If you want to get to know another business person, consider extending an invitation to an upcoming networking event as your guest. When you implement strategy #1, the emphasis is off of you

and focused elsewhere. This is not the typical in networking situations.

Strategy #2 – Be Memorable. There are two ways to be memorable – appearance and behavior. In one's appearance consider branding yourself. For example, men can regularly wear unusual ties, different lapel pins or colors that are not the same as every other man! Women have an easier time! Jewelry can easily help a woman be memorable. Barbara Bush wore her infamous strand of pearls, Larry King is known for his suspenders and Mayor Shirley Franklin frequently sports a flower lapel pin. They are absolutely branding themselves.

The second way to be memorable is in your behavior. You must focus on being remembered for the right reason – generosity, punctuality, follow through, sincerity and resourcefulness are examples. Being remembered means leaving positive imprints in everything you say and do. People are watching and will choose to do business with individuals that display consistency and integrity.

Strategy #3 – Make a Difference. You never know who you will meet and the difference you can make in someone else's life or the difference that encounter will make in your life. Replace a simple thank you with I appreciate you. Go out of your way to make a newcomer feel comfortable at a networking event.

Consider shifting the way you currently interact at networking events by applying new strategies. Over time, you'll be amazed how differentiating yourself, being memorable and making a difference will impact your success. Like anything new, being conscientious and consistent will take time. Find out for yourself if the effort will be worth the results.

Bonnie Ross-Parker is the CEO/Founder of The Joy of Connecting – a unique marketing program serving women nationwide.