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## AFRAID TO NETWORK?

You are not the only person who doesn't like to walk into a room of strangers and bare their soul. There are many people like you who are uncomfortable opening up to people they've never met, and asking for their help.

In today's interconnected world, you have many ways to reach out to people. For example, you can use email or the telephone. You can use social networking for its speed and ability to meet people you may have not met otherwise. Live interaction with people are important too because they build connections and long term relationships.

If networking is not for you, then it's not for you. Live by what you believe in, accept your belief, and move on. But if you know deep down inside that not reaching out to others is holding you back and keeping you from getting what you want in your career, then it's time to face and conquer your networking demons.

So How Do You Embrace Networking As An Important Business Tool And Not Let Your Fear Hold You Back? Follow These 5 Steps Below.

### **1. Accept Your Networking Fears.**

It's ok to be afraid. And until you can accept your fear for what it is, fear, then it won't go away. Sometimes when we are afraid, we tell ourselves that we are not. We try to talk our way out of our fear and pretend it isn't real or it shouldn't be there. Fear acceptance does not work this way. You let yourself feel your fear and you don't criticize or judge your feelings. You remind yourself that fear is just as normal as your other emotions. You wouldn't give yourself a hard time for being happy, so give the same courtesy to your fears.

### **2. Identify Your Networking Fears.**

What are you actually afraid of? Is it every aspect of networking or just characteristics? Break your fears into pieces. For example, are you afraid of walking into a room by yourself? Are you uncomfortable introducing yourself? Are you nervous about feeling rejected once you make your request or ask for help? Once you know exactly what gives you butterflies in your stomach, then you can learn how to overcome it.

### **3. Choose To Let Your Networking Fears Go.**

There is a choice to make here. Some people hold onto their fears because they serve a purpose. For example, as long as you don't ask for help, you don't have to feel weak or judged. As long as people believe you are fine, then you don't have to face how bad you feel about your situation. Choose to let go of your fears so they don't have power over you any longer. Once your fears are out in the open, they can't hurt you anymore.

### **4. Create Your Networking Plan.**

Some people fear networking because they don't have a plan. If they go to a networking meeting, they don't know who they want to meet or what they want to say. Or, they haven't created a list of networking meetings to go to. Others go onto social networking sites, and don't know why they are there. Some make plans with friends and former colleagues and don't create an agenda, thus the meetings don't go anywhere. Every networking situation or opportunity needs thought, attention, and a focus before you go. If you write down your plan with the steps for achievement, networking will be much easier for you.

### **5. Have Fun Networking.**

Meeting new people can be fun. Catching up with former colleagues can be satisfying. Before you needed help, you may have been a person who kept to yourself. Your career and life was busy, but maybe something was missing. The missing piece was connections with others. No matter how far you go in the world, you'll enjoy it more with great people you can count on and talk to.

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