

# the connector

SHEPA LEARNING COMPANY NEWSLETTER

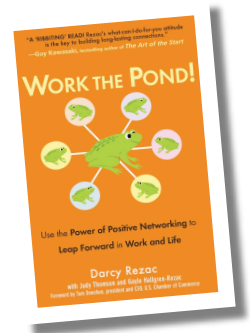
FOR WOMEN (AND MEN) IN SCIENCE | UBC | MAY 7, 2010

BY GAYLE HALLGREN-REZAC & JUDY THOMSON, CO-AUTHORS *WORK THE POND!*

## Practice Positive Networking®

Probably the most important concept we discussed during our session was the power of Positive Networking®. The reason most people do not like networking is because they've been taught that networking is transactional. You do something for someone with the expectation that they do something for you. People think it's about selling yourself, doing sales pitches or elevator pitches. It's not about sales, it's actually about relationships—building long-term, enriching relationships for work, career and life. *Positive Networking*® is “discovering what you can do for someone else.”

- ✓ Most people, when meeting strangers, have some degree of anxiety. Even if **you** feel this way, step out of your comfort zone and act like a host. Put others at ease, and you'll forget about your own anxiety.
- ✓ Because *Positive Networking*® means finding out things about the other person it's a natural conversation starter.
- ✓ Some simple techniques to engage others in a positive conversation can be found here. <http://www.howtotellanyoneanything.com/> Download the sample chapters!
- ✓ The more often you reach out to others, to connect and build your network, the better off you will be. Research shows that people who have strong networks live longer, happier and healthier lives.



*Work the Pond!* is available at UBC Bookstore and <http://tiny.cc/networkingbook>

## Tribal Introductions™

The main focus of our session was Tribal Introductions: How do you answer the question, so what do you do? We know that one size (answer) does not fit all situations, but you DO need to have given some advance thought to your response. Remember the examples we gave you: *“I work in the agricultural division of a multinational. I specialize in experiential work and computer simulation in Fluid Mechanics. I am studying the flow of air around poultry being transported by truck and train.”*

WHAT DID WE IMMEDIATELY THINK ABOUT? Chickens in a truck. This is not exciting, it's not big picture stuff. Here's how to tweak the answer to “So, what do you do?” *I'm a scientist specializing in Fluid Mechanics, the movement of air. Right now I'm using my research to look at ways to improve the transport of poultry. The applications are exciting, everything from the humane treatment of animals to food safety.*

Here is another great example: *I am a control engineer working on my PhD at UBC. I am part of an amazing team that is aiming to semi-automate the process of drug delivery in the operating room. In particular, I am working on guaranteeing the safety of patients under an automatic drug delivery system for anesthesia. It's a mathematical guarantee, calculating the things that could go wrong in surgery, including how much anesthetic is too much, too little, and making sure that we never go above or below the thresholds. It's the first time anyone in the world is doing this.* NOW THIS IS EXCITING, PEOPLE WILL TELL YOUR STORY, THEY'LL REMEMBER IT!



## Ways to Be a Better Networker

**Practice *Positive Networking***<sup>®</sup>. That's when you put the focus on the other person. Relax and ask them questions. Be genuinely interested.

**Remember one word.** When you walk into a room by yourself, knowing you have to start a conversation with a stranger, remember the word "So." So, what's the worst that can happen? You will not be struck by lightning...

**Get business cards and give them out.** While this hardly seems like a secret, it must be because half the people we meet don't carry business cards. Be part of the other half. Stash your business cards everywhere. Put them in the pockets of all your jackets, in your workout bag, in your car, so you'll have a supply at all times.

**Make others feel comfortable.** Remember 80% of people are uncomfortable in networking situations. Have a "host mentality". Talk to the wallflowers at networking events and make sure everyone is included in the conversation. Remember to "open the circle" to others.

**Just say yes!** When you receive an invitation to attend something, go! We can't count the number of times people have told us that something truly amazing happened the one time they had to drag themselves to an event.

**First impressions count.** Establish eye contact when you meet someone, have a firm handshake and ask interesting questions of the other person. Look at their business card: "Tell me about your company, your industry, your role at..."

**The Likeability Factor.** Make sure you telegraph the right message to someone you meet. As you are walking up to a person, make a decision that **you are going to like that person**. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy!

**Travel in pairs.** If you fear going solo to networking events take backup to keep you company. Your tag teammate can be a university colleague, a potential business associate, a mentor, a friend. Use the Glowing Introduction™ which is a short, sweet and flattering way of introducing the person you are with--singing their praises!

**Conversation starters.** Before going to an event, read the newspaper and circle three interesting topics of conversation. When conversation dies at a table, you can say, "Did you read the item in the paper about..." When first meeting someone, small talk is always awkward no matter how skilled you are at networking. Ask simple questions such as what brought you to this event? Are you member here? How about those Montreal Canadians! Yes, you can talk about sports or even weather, but not for too long.

**Follow up fast and be brief.** Reliability builds your reputation— your good reputation. Return phone calls or emails the following day. Keep emails and messages brief and on-point.



### SOCIAL MEDIA AS A NETWORKING TOOL

Watch Seth Godin's YouTube clip on social networking. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0h0LICu8Ks>

### WHERE TO GET BUSINESS CARDS--BECAUSE YOU REALLY NEED THEM!

Ask your advisor or student services and get a card with your university branding. If not, try

[www.moo.com](http://www.moo.com)

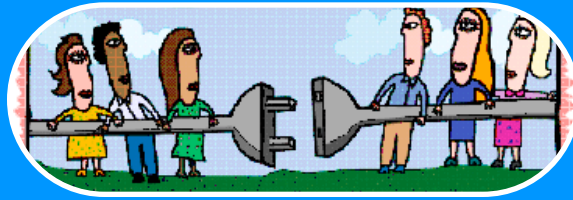
or [www.vistaprint.ca](http://www.vistaprint.ca)

### FIND FELLOW RESEARCHERS

A great site to find out what others are researching (close to 164,000 are registered) is: <http://academia.edu/>

### LET'S TALK SCIENCE

Volunteer at Let's Talk Science Partnership Program--Volunteers work with youth from elementary and secondary schools to ignite science excitement and share their knowledge with eager young minds. <http://www.ubclts.com/>



Want to get a Free Weekly *Positive Networking*® Tip? All you have to do is go to [www.workthepond.com](http://www.workthepond.com)

Feel free to tell your friends and colleagues about signing up as well.

Hey, that's discovering what you can do for someone else!

## The Fine Art of Follow Up

**Follow up with focus.** Get organized. Carry a small notebook, BlackBerry or other handheld device and use it to keep track of things 'you promised' and information about people you've met. For example, if you know their spouse's name, write it down. It will come in handy.



**Invest in a Card Scanner.** One of the best devices for organizing your contacts is a card scanner ([www.cardscan.com](http://www.cardscan.com)). Or use an app that will scan business cards into your phone.

**The personal touch works.** Handwritten notes or cards are meant as a special thank you, congratulations or personal note. The best networkers we know make a habit of sending handwritten notes, and it makes a lasting impression.

**Ask permission.** When you are talking to a person and want to follow up it's a good idea to ask, "Would it be okay if I ... sent you some more information, or followed up with you on that point, etc."

## Haley's 100% Guarantee Story

We talked about the 100% Guarantee and why it's important. We told you this story of Haley Catton, a MITACS student who decided to step out of her comfort zone. Here is what she wrote:

*"I have a story about just how life-changing taking the opportunity to meet a new person can be. Several years ago, I attended a 1-day conference in Winnipeg as part of my job at the time. One of the speakers was a government scientist from Alberta who gave a wonderful and engaging presentation on her research, and I felt particularly inspired by her work. At the end of the day, there was a wrap-up dinner for all the delegates. I saw the speaker from across the room before dinner and thought to myself, "I should go up to her and tell her how awesome I thought her talk was". But, I felt a moment of hesitation – it would have been easy to surrender to shyness by not approaching this scientist. However, I persuaded myself to do it, after all I just wanted to share my excitement for her work. So I approached the speaker, introduced myself and expressed my admiration. We 'clicked' instantly. In fact, after our 5-minute conversation, the scientist said something to me that changed my life forever: "Well, I'm looking for a PhD student, you know." I had not been looking to do a PhD, but the opportunity was golden. Because of that chance meeting with my future supervisor, a mere 10 days later I was offered (and accepted) the most exciting professional opportunity of my life."*

*Happy Positive Networking! Judy and Gayle*