

# The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

## *A Lesson From Mulberry Street*

Winter 2001 Vol. 3 No. 4

When we think of networking, what do we think of? We think of meeting new people. Right? This is by no means an innovative revelation.

It is our hope then, that these new people will need what we have to offer. Or at the very least, we are certainly hopeful that these new people will introduce us to still more new people. And sooner or later somebody will need what we have to offer.

So when we say, "I am going to do some networking" we are saying in essence "I am trying to meet someone new."

There is nothing inherently flawed with this logic. Most articles and books on the topic of networking almost exclusively focus on the art or science of meeting these new people and making them productive feeders of business referrals and opportunities for us.

While there is nothing wrong with this logic, it is shortsighted. What about our accountant? What about our high school friend or college roommate? What about the guys at the gym? Focusing exclusively on making new contacts ignores those individuals who we already know -- a powerful and vital segment of our network.

The truth of the matter is that, whether we are 9, 90 or some point in between, we already know more people than we will meet in the next year.

What is so special about people we already know? Simple. If we already know them, then they presumably know us. And if they know us, then it is not too much of a stretch to assume that they also like us and trust us. It is this "know, like

and trust" that is the very foundation upon which a productive networking relationship is built.

Reconnecting with people we already know can be an effective networking strategy. It can jump start a sputtering network or send a productive network into overdrive.

---

The truth of the matter is that, whether we are 9, 90 or some point in between, we already know more people than we will meet in the next year.

---

Consider Theodore Geisel, better known by the pseudonym Dr. Seuss. It was a simple reconnection with an old friend that launched him into becoming one of the most beloved children's authors of the twentieth century.

In the summer of 1936, Seuss decided to get serious about his writing career. Seuss had an interest in doing some lighthearted writing for children, an interest that dated back to his days on the staff of a humor magazine at Dartmouth College.

In short order, Seuss easily completed his first book, *And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*. Getting it published was a different matter, however.

Seuss was told that his story was too different, as it was not like the Dick and Jane stories for children of the time. He was told that the verses were too difficult for children to read. And most troublesome of all, he was told that his story did not have any sort of

moral to help children become better citizens. In all, during the winter of 1936-37, he got 27 rejections.

Upon receiving word of his 27<sup>th</sup> rejection, Seuss headed home to stage a ceremonial burning of the now tattered manuscript. As he grimly walked along Madison Avenue he met up with an old friend from Dartmouth, Mike McClintock.

Seuss shared his woes. McClintock simply smiled, as 3 hours earlier he had become juvenile editor of Vanguard Press. Within 30 minutes, he got Vanguard Press to commit to publish Seuss' work, which launched the Dr. Seuss legend.

There is certainly enormous power in reconnecting with those we already know. This, however, almost begs the question: What is the best way to reconnect? After all, we cannot rely on the luck that Dr. Seuss experienced.

Donna Fisher, in her book *People Power* (1995, Bard & Stephen), has some straightforward advice: Simply call. Labeling this a "Reconnection Call", Fisher indicates that it is made for the purpose of "reestablishing a relationship."

Once we have the person on the line, simply acknowledge that it has been a long time, and then express an interest in catching up. Although it may feel awkward at first, remember our old friend is being reconnected too. So our call will be a welcome benefit to him or her as well.

And to think, people told Seuss that *Mulberry Street* had no sort of moral to help us become better citizens.▼