

The Business Connector

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Thoughtfulness

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We all network. We may each do it in different ways. Nevertheless, we all network.

Generally, we each network to benefit our lives. We network to get a job. We network to get a promotion. We network to get customers and clients. We network to get information that gives us an edge.

Although we network to enrich ourselves, we quickly learn that this does not happen just because we want it to. So we take the initiative to educate ourselves on how to get more from our network.

A consistent message we take away from our readings, the tapes we listen to, and seminars we attend on networking is that if we want to get things from those in our network we need to resolve to give to them first.

Now if we are focused on giving so we get from our network, great. But the fact of the matter is that if this is the only reason we are giving, we are only half way home. To totally surrender to the notion that “Givers Get” we need to give for no other reason than it is the right thing to do.

The starting point or foundation for this mindset is being thoughtful. This is simply the act of focusing on ways in which we can be considerate of the feelings of others (whether we know them or not) and finding ways we can have a positive impact on their lives.

In his book, *Winning Without Intimidation*, Bob Burg discusses the fine act of thoughtfulness. Burg indicates that although this does not necessarily come naturally, being thoughtful is a simple idea that requires no incredible skills.

Drawing on a story by William A. Ward in the book, *The Best Of Bits & Pieces*, Burg maintains that being thoughtful is nothing more than a habit and encompasses such occasional and basic acts as:

- Holding a door open for someone;
- Paying a well deserved compliment; or
- Parking a bit farther from the entrance (leaving closer spaces for those who cannot get around as easily).

These represent just a portion of an almost endless list of examples of being thoughtful. If we focus on being thoughtful towards others, eventually it becomes a habit.

- We simply ask how someone is doing;
- We gravitate towards the person in the room that looks as if they feel out of place; or,
- We allow someone to go ahead of us in line, even though we have other pressing things to do.

Burg indicates that these acts of thoughtfulness may or may not be noticed. But whether or not they are

is not important. What is important, however, is that we continue to be thoughtful. If nothing else, this will warm our soul with good feelings about ourselves.

If we focus on being thoughtful towards others, eventually it becomes a habit or second nature.

Eventually and more than occasionally our thoughtfulness evolves into larger deeds.

- We go out of our way to obtain a referral for someone.
- We devote an entire lunch to introducing two people with no direct benefit to ourselves; or,
- We scour our network for someone who can recommend a reputable plumber for no other reason than a friend needs one.

We need to understand that even though these deeds are more significant, they too may or may not be noticed. Again, this is not important and all we can be sure of is that we will have a warm and fuzzy feeling inside.

What is important, however, is that we have arrived. We are giving not just to get. We are giving because it is the right thing to do – and this is all simply an extension of our thoughtfulness. ✓