

# The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

## The Greatest Compliment

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Since long about the time we could first grab things with our itty-bitty hands, there has been one thing that has driven us. Whether inspired to do something or not do something, our lives were motivated by compliments.

Accolades such as “You are pretty smart” or “Great work” lit our faces. These words of praise ignited our spirits. For this reason, we sought compliments whenever we could.

Let’s fast forward a few decades and ask ourselves, “What has changed?” Basically nothing. We want people to recognize us for our efforts and achievements. But more than recognize us, we want to hear about it.

We still long to hear compliments such as “You are pretty smart” or “Great work.” Words like these still serve as a “shot in the arm” to our enthusiasm.

As when we were young, there is much for which we can be complimented. We can be commended for our intellect. We can be praised for our appearance. And we can be extolled for our manners.

Despite this, one aspect of our life deserves our maximum attention in an effort to earn accolades: our reliability.

Whether or not we receive compliments for this, we need to ensure that we do what we must to be one to rely upon. Why? Reliability is the foundation upon which all our talents and characteristics rest.

Much like in mathematics where zero times any other number equals zero, excellence in any aspect of our life is meaningless without reliability. A great work ethic will get us nowhere unless we do what we say. Wonderful creativity is critically handicapped by an inability to honor our word. Reliability is everything.

Unlike shooting free throws or kicking field goals, being reliable is not subject to chance. In other words, we either are reliable or we are not. There is seldom middle ground.

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Does this really matter to networking? Absolutely, as reliability goes to the heart of establishing others’ trust in us. And it is this trust that is the third and final foundational pillar of every networking relationship.

Reliability is like a contract. We say to those in our network, “In exchange for your trust, I will do what I say I am going to do when I say I am going to do it.” As not everything is as planned, this contract also states, “And if for some reason I am unable to do this, I will let you know as soon as I know.”

- If we tell someone we will meet them at 5:00, we arrive at 4:50 so as to leave no doubt as to our presence.
- If we tell someone we will call, that is what we do.
- If we commit to deliver something by Friday, we do so on Thursday or Friday, at worst.

People tell us we are smart, we should say thank you. Someone tells us we are hard workers, we nod in appreciation. When we are told we are well mannered, we smile in gratitude.

But if someone says they can depend on us, or if anyone calls us their “go to” person, or if an individual refers to our abilities or character as unfailing, then we do all three. Because when they do any of these they are indicating we are reliable, which is the highest compliment of all. ▼

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