

The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

The True Spirit Of Networking

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Green beans get a bad rap (at least from those under 10).

While they may not taste like candy, they are really great for you. They are loaded with nutrients, vitamins and lots of other words the spell-checker would not recognize.

Attorneys get a bad rap (at least from non-attorneys).

Yes, a small few literally chase ambulances. There are, however, many, many more who defend the innocent, protect the environment and work to preserve the free enterprise system.

Networking gets a bad rap (at least from those who do not truly understand it).

Certainly, there are those who deploy abusive tactics in the name of it. Thus, the word itself often conjures up images of loud-mouthed, glad-handing people looking to either sell you more than you want or con you into buying something that you do not really need.

Networking has nothing to do with poor salesmanship. In fact, it is the polar opposite. It is about two or more people working towards their mutual benefit. And, while the word itself is a verb, it is more than just an action. The true spirit of networking is really a state of mind.

This then begs the question, "What is the true spirit of networking?" In a

nutshell, it is about focusing your habits and attitudes on finding deficiencies in the lives of others and then trying to fill them.

Those deficiencies vary from person to person and even situation to situation. It may be a lack of quality business referrals. It may be a lack of information. It may be a need for additional contacts. Whatever the case, the true spirit of networking is about eagerly seeking to help others.

The true spirit of networking is really a state of mind.

With that, some of you may be sitting up in your chair and thinking, "Hey, that's me. I love what I do. I am eager about doing it. And what I do helps other people. Thus, I embrace the true spirit of networking."

Do not be confused. A great enthusiasm toward what you do is a powerful thing. It ensures that you serve your customers or clients at an exceptionally high level. However, that is not really altruistic.

Eagerly servicing a client or customer is a wonderful thing. No matter how much passion someone injects into the process of servicing clients, it is nothing more than a business transaction – being compensated for services rendered or products sold. It is a far cry from the true spirit of networking.

The true spirit of networking is not limited to what you have to sell. That is simply providing someone pleasure or alleviating pain *through the goods or service you have to offer*. The true spirit of networking is where you look to help another – provide them pleasure or alleviate pain – *through any means available to you*.

The true spirit of networking is about helping by giving of your resources, time and talent. It is completely absent of keeping score or maintaining a tally of what so-and-so has done for you. It is about helping and not looking back with wonder or expectation of "what's in it for me."

The true spirit of networking is about helping simply because it is the right thing to do. Certainly you cannot help but believe that the goodness you have heaped onto the world will make it back to you somehow.

Nevertheless, you know that the only thing that you are guaranteed for sure is that warm feeling inside that is best described as a curious mix of pride and satisfaction.

The true spirit of networking is about helping others wherever you can, whenever you can and never worrying about what it means for you. After all, in the true spirit of networking you need to remember that it is not how you help someone that matters most. What matters most is the spirit that moves you.▼