Developing Boundary-Spanning Relationships: Learning Through Success Stories

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Abstract
This research addresses the following questions: how do successful professionals cultivate boundary-spanning relationships to develop professional goods; and what lessons can be drawn from their successes? This study uses grounded theory to interpret qualitative interview data from four expert networkers to help demonstrate how successful people in various industries build relationships — and what characteristics these successful networkers have in common. Using grounded theory, five key themes emerged: uncertainty reduction, ingratiation, reciprocity, mentoring relationships and the importance of follow-up. The study of networks has a well-developed body of surrounding literature; however, the current research does little to address how individual actors successfully build the relationships upon which networks are based. Therefore, this qualitative research into the characteristics shared by successful networkers is a positive contribution to the body of knowledge concerning social network theory — and will serve as a guide for those wishing to expand their personal and business networks.
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DEVELOPING BOUNDARY-SPANNING RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

In today’s business world, getting a job does not necessarily mean being able to keep it. Job security is a thing of the past — no longer a guarantee of employment — and when the recession hit, many Canadians became self-employed, preferring self-employment to “no employment at all” (Stoody, 2009, p. 1; The Globe and Mail, 2011). In earlier generations, employees could expect a long career in one job, in one city, in one country. Now, people in North America can expect to change jobs and careers numerous times over the course of their lives (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2010). In an unstable marketplace, where up-to-the-minute information is available twenty-four hours a day, jobs can change and disappear with the stroke of a key. With these economic fluctuations many companies and employees come and go. The art of networking has become essential for ongoing employment (Clark, 2009). And networking is indeed an art, an acquired skill necessary for those hoping to land a new or coveted job, to advance in a tough economy, or to simply be employed at all to pay their monthly expenses. For some people, starting conversations with strangers and building a rapport that could lead to new employment is second nature. For most people, however, meeting new contacts and establishing relationships is not even on the radar. They may search job boards and the web for employment, or consult employment agencies. They may make connections via family, or close friends, but true networking as a tool for employment doesn’t often come naturally. Making specific contacts in search of employment is a learned skill, honed through a process of trial and error (Clark, 2009). This research paper will help to demonstrate how successful people across a variety of industries build relationships from the ground up, and what characteristics these successful networkers have in common. Because of the limited research in networking theory, this study relies on grounded theory to explore the following research questions: How do successful professionals cultivate boundary-spanning relationships to develop professional goods; and what lessons can be drawn from
their successes? The goal of this research is to develop data that will allow me to contribute to the research body of networking and relationship building, as a tool for continued success in an ever-changing employment market.

**Literature Review**

This literature review will cover several areas that pertain to networking: social network theory, reciprocity, uncertainty reduction theory, adaptation mentoring, social influence, weak ties theory and ingratiation. Social networks are structures made up of people, groups or organizations, which are connected to one another in a variety of ways, including shared interest, financial exchange, friendship, family relationships, beliefs and values (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988). Social network analysis examines these social relationships using the concept of nodes and ties, where a node is an individual actor within a network and a tie is the relationship between different actors (Granovetter, 1973; Barabasi, 2002). Research across a wide array of disciplines, including communications, economics, organizational studies, anthropology and social psychology, suggests social networks are active on different scales — from the family unit to the nation state — and have significant roles to play in both individual and organizational success (Granovetter, 1973; Barabasi, 2002). A social network can be depicted using a network diagram, with social contacts (nodes) as dots and relationships (ties) — like friendship, shared interest or financial exchange — as the lines connecting the dots (Barabasi, 2002). Social network analysis and theory have developed over time through the research of those including Albert-László Barabási, J.A. Barnes, S.D. Berkowitz, Stephen Borgatti, Ronald Burt, Mark Granovetter, Anatol Rapoport, Barry Wellman and Harrison White. While this well-developed body of literature can help explain and predict the behaviour of networks, it does not address how people individually cultivate the relationships upon which networks are built (Fom burn, 1982; Wasserman, 1994).
There are many factors involved in fostering positive, lasting relationships. Bove et al. (2011) suggest the foundation of effective relationship building is reciprocity. The authors define reciprocity as “the exchange of good,” meaning that resources, time or energy given by one party are expected to be returned by the other in some manner (Bove et al., 2011, p. 186; Wagner, 1998; Berger, 2005). The concept of reciprocity is the same as the notion of *quid pro quo*, which is an exchange relationship between two people or organizations — a “back-and-forth transaction involving the exchange of pertinent leads and links” (Maiter et al., 2008; Kopp & Hinkle, 2006, p. 130). In layman's terms, this equates to ‘I scratch your back, you scratch mine.’ This “norm of reciprocity” creates the expectation that people will return the favour (Bove et al., 2011, p. 186). Gant (2000) suggests that when someone “supplies a favor, the recipient should be ready and willing” to offer something of equal value in return (Berger, 2005, p.26). Reciprocity helps people feel affirmed that their own actions are socially correct and that the other person shares similar values and expectations (Maiter et al., 2008). Since reciprocity allows people to affirm each others’ values and expectations, engaging in reciprocal behaviours can help networkers build mutually-beneficial, trusting long-term relationships — both in business and in personal life (Bove et al., 2011).

Reciprocity also ties into uncertainty reduction theory, which says that people feel at ease when there is less role ambiguity (Kramer, 1994). In other words, people feel more comfortable when they are able understand one another and know what role each person plays in the social order. Uncertainty theory states that when people do not understand their social environment and are “unable to predict relationships with certainty at their outset,” they seek information to make sense of their surroundings and reduce their uncertainty (Wagner, 1998, p. 404). Organizational scholars relate tension and stress in the workplace with uncertainty and role ambiguity, indicating that uncertainty in work environments can lead to employee disengagement (Kramer, 1994). For networkers, learning to manage and reduce
uncertainty can ease stress and tension during relationship building. According to the theories of reciprocity and uncertainty reduction, networkers can reduce uncertainty and build rapport by being open, honest and forthcoming with personal information (Berger, 2005).

Another key element of human interaction is situational adaptation of verbal and non-verbal communication (Burgoon & White, 2001). In 1971, Ivey and Hurst first began talking about verbal and non-verbal communications as our “best attempt to adapt to [a] specific situation” (p.1). According to the scholars, the human communication process has no definitive end; it continues to flow and adapt to meet our situational and environmental needs. As a result, during dialogue, communicators must adjust to and accommodate one another for conversation to flow (Ivey & Hurst, 1971). For example, communicators must take turns speaking, change their speech and gesture to show understanding (Burgoon & White, 1997). Interaction adaptation theory explains that communicators respond to each other based on perceived needs, wants and expectations — and this process of adaptation affects how communicators position themselves in relation to one another (Burgoon & White, 1997). Interaction adaptation theory argues that adaptation can take four forms: “approach, avoidance, reciprocity and compensation” (Burgoon & White, p. 12, 1997). Burgoon and White (1997) define approach as movement towards the other communicator and avoidance as a shift away from the conversation partner. The scholars suggest reciprocity is when the communicator responds to the other person with similar behavior, mirroring their tone, body position and actions. Meanwhile, compensation is when the communicator responds to the other person with comparable behavior in the opposite direction (Burgoon & White, 1997). Although compensation may happen occasionally, Burgoon and White (1997) illustrate that synchrony, reciprocity and matching are the “default conditions” for human interaction (p. 13). These default conditions for human interaction help explain how successful networkers adapt to their environments and conversations to cultivate boundary-spanning relationships.
Another part of successful networking is mentoring, a process where a more experienced or skilled person teaches, encourages and counsels a less accomplished person as they develop personally or professionally (Fitzpatrick et al., 2006). This relationship can be formal, informal, long term or short term and involves an exchange of experience, knowledge, wisdom and advice (Berk et al., 2005). Kopp & Hinkle (2006) suggest the concept of mentoring has been around for thousands of years and helps provide “role-socialization and a much-needed means of intraprofessional nurturing,” as well as helping with staff retention in organizations (Benson et al., 2002, p.126). Fitzpatrick et al. (2006) provide a number of ways to cultivate these important mentoring relationships. The authors assert that mentors must reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as teachers, their ability to communicate, their work ethics and how they can develop trust and respect in their mentoring relationship (Fitzpatrick et al., 2006). The mentor must also share his or her vision with the mentee, identifying goals and expectations, while being an active listener and providing direction for the mentee. Fitzpatrick et al. (2006) argue that having open lines of communication between the mentor and mentee is the most important aspect of this type of relationship, because mentees need a supportive, engaging environment in which to flourish. By instilling “self-confidence in a protégé,” mentors can positively influence their mentees’ career choices, “trajectory pace and continued success patterns” (Benson et al., 2002, p. 126). As these relationships mature, they often become “more collegial,” allowing mentor and mentee to follow one another’s “accomplishments, successes, [and] keep in touch” (Cooper, 2007, p.35). Through mentorship, successful professionals learn to cultivate boundary-spanning relationships to develop professional goods.

Scholars suggest mentors can have a great deal of influence over their mentees, shaping the path of their education or career and increasing their chances of professional success (Kopp & Hinkle, 2006). Similarly, researchers suggest people can influence those in their social sphere through rhetoric
Social influence is defined as a social-cognitive process, since it highlights the interaction between social cognition, social interaction, social structure and individual cognition (Panzarasa & Jennings, 2002). Holt and MacPherson's (2010) study shows how influential people often follow a similar rhetorical process to that outline by Aristotle — the three-step process of invoking ethos, logos and pathos. Ethos refers to the credibility of the speaker; logos refers to the reasoned discourse of the speaker; and pathos is how the speaker appeals to the audience's emotions (Holt & MacPherson, 2010). By using Aristotle’s rhetoric as the theoretical framework for how people make sense of reality, Holt and MacPherson (2010) demonstrate how sense making is a socially situated and active process. By understanding rhetorical principles and knowing how people make sense of their realities, networkers can appeal to people’s values to cultivate influential social relationships.

Similarly, Panzarasa and Jennings (2002) point out that cognitive and social factors have a direct influence on interpersonal agreements. The authors propose three components for social influence: the individual's mental state, the social interaction principles and social relation structural patterns (Panzarasa & Jennings, 2002). The individual's mental state is an attitude towards practical and theoretical reasoning (Panzarasa & Jennings, 2002). The principles for social interaction are defined as the steps people use to develop and maintain social interactions with others. The literature concerning social influence consists of five main problem areas: group polarization, power, minority influence, persuasion and social conformity (Panzarasa & Jennings, 2002). These five main problem areas are typically categorized as being part of two distinct social influence processes: normative and informational social influence. Informational social influence refers to the influence to accept information, and normative influence refers to the influence to conform to social expectations. This influence to conform is important for people searching for employment, as interpersonal attraction
theory shows that people tend to like people who are similar to them. Burkhardt (1994) points out that people who share similar values tend to interact more in social contexts than people with dissimilar values and attitudes — and organizations tend to hire people who share their attitudes and values. Through these shared values, corporate discourse develops, nurturing and creating organizational identification (Vaughn's 1997). Values consist of both norms and ideals, forming the criteria for evaluating what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. By being aware of the normative social influence of corporate discourse, a networker can fit into his or her environment and effectively build relationships based on shared values.

Normative social influence describes how people tend to conform to their social environments, while Granovetter (1973) discusses what type of environment networkers should build around themselves. The scholar asserts that people should build low-density networks in order to foster a wide array of relational possibilities (Granovetter, 1973). Granovetter (1973) reasons that people with large networks of acquaintances have more opportunities to build relationships and discover opportunities than those with only close-knit friend groups — and weak ties take less time to maintain than strong ties. Granovetter (1973) suggests that, in terms of networking, an expansive network is an asset because people with low-density networks are privy to information from nonadjacent parts of the social body (Granovetter, 1973). People who only have densely-knit friend groups receive limited information — mostly from news sources and from their close friends — and, therefore, are at a disadvantage in their professional lives because they are less likely to hear about job openings and other professional development opportunities. Having a large circle of acquaintances, or weak ties, plays a key role in a person's mobility because weak ties act as bridges to other social circles and information (Granovetter, 1973). If a person cannot find gainful employment within their immediate
social circle, then they can explore options in the social circles of their acquaintances. When the likelihood of employment is low, Granovetter says people should invest the majority of their time developing weak ties to increase their chances of finding a position (Granovetter, 1973). Granovetter (1973) argues that people who only have strong ties are usually the most economically insecure and that weak ties are essential for success in the business world.

Barabasi (2002) expands on Granovetter’s (1973) concept of weak-ties theory in his book Linked, suggesting that if nodes have “less than one connection on average, then our network breaks into tiny non-communicating clusters” (p.18). The scholar proposes that once the average number of links per node increases beyond one, it is less likely that nodes will be left out of the main cluster (Barabasi, 2002). In other words, as Granovetter (1973) suggests, the more ties a networker has, the more likely he will be able to connect quickly with nodes who can offer him work or other opportunities. Barabasi (2002) proposes that highly linked nodes develop more quickly because new nodes entering a network are more likely to connect with highly linked nodes, instead of low-linked nodes, given that highly linked nodes are more accessible. Barabasi (2002) suggests, “we live in a small world where everything is connected to everything else”; by building our own links and navigating the links between highly linked nodes we can quickly access any other node (Barabasi, 2002, p.7).

While Barabasi (2002) discusses high and low-linked nodes, Burt (2005) addresses the concept of brokers — people who bridge the holes in networks. Burt (2005) suggests that brokers are “rewarded” for their gap-bridging work by receiving “positive individual and team evaluations, higher compensation than their peers and faster promotion” (p.7). Burt (2005) also shows that those who bridge network gaps are usually more creative and more capable of creatively implementing ideas; they
connect with a variety of people from different groups and are exposed to a wider array of thoughts and ideas. Burt (2005) brings these ideas together to form the concept of social capital: he suggests that those who bond with similar people and broker network holes between diverse people create social capital by facilitating trusting relationships. Ultimately, as Burt (2005) discusses, networkers who build social capital by brokering network gaps are often promoted more quickly and compensated better than their peers.

While Burt (2005) discusses the power of brokerage, Seiter (2007) illustrates how ingratiation increases social influence. The researcher uses a study of tipping behaviour in restaurants to demonstrate the role of ingratiation (Seiter, 2007). During this study, two female waitresses serve ninety-four couples eating dinner at the restaurant and either compliment or do not compliment the couples on their meal choices (Seiter, 2007). The results from this study clearly indicate that people tend to tip more when they are complimented by the waitresses. Complimenting, or ingratiation, is one of the most used forms of impression management (Seiter, 2007). The waitresses receive significantly higher tips when using compliments to make a good impression on their customers. This study suggests that while ingratiation may or may not help with everything, it can definitely contribute to a person's financial success (Seiter, 2007). Varma et al. (2006) reach a similar conclusion in their study about the influence of ingratiation during job interviews: they find that applicants who engage in “other enhancement,” or complimenting, are perceived as more qualified than those who do not and “[receive] higher overall qualification evaluations” (p.204). Flattery, as long it is genuine, can help subordinates obtain greater rewards from their organizations (Appelbaum, 1998). Ingratiation can increase performance evaluations and also affect “judgments of personal attraction” — in other words, ingratiation can make a person appear more likeable (Gordon, 1996, p. 54). The implications of
Ingratiation as a tool for positive impression management are useful to consider in networking, since a networker can effectively use ingratiation to make a good impression on those around him or her.

The study of networks and how they behave is important work and has a well-developed body of supporting research literature (Fomburn, 1982; Wasserman, 1994); however, the current research does little to address how individual actors successfully build the relationships upon which networks are based. Therefore, this qualitative research into the characteristics shared by successful networkers will be a positive contribution to the body of knowledge around social network theory — and will act as a guide for those wishing to expand their personal and business networks.

**Method and Research Design**

Qualitative Grounded Theory (Perry, 2008) will be used to discover what processes and characteristics successful networkers share, by examining which skills and traits four expert networkers have in common. Grounded theory, which is generally used for qualitative research, begins with data collection, rather than the development of a hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory allows for the collection of rich, descriptive data, which can be formed into a conceptual model used to develop a hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1999).

Grounded theory uses an inductive, interactive and comparative approach where empirical indicators from the data are compared to each other (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). I will conduct this process with the aim of finding similarities and differences between these empirical indicators. By comparing datum to datum, I can identify and locate underlying and emerging uniformities within the empirical indicators, creating coded categories (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Once these categories are created, I can compare the categories with the empirical indicators and with each other as well. In grounded theory, the process compares datum to datum, datum to coded
category and then coded category to coded category (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each part of this process requires systematic note taking, as the logic of grounded theory requires constant checks and comparisons. These checks and comparisons help form emergent categories and keep these concepts grounded in data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Charmaz and Henwood (2008) provide a number of guidelines for using grounded theory, including: initial coding, focused coding, theoretical sampling and saturating theoretical concepts. Initial coding takes place early in the analysis process. The researcher scrutinizes the data for its underlying significance, allowing all possible theoretical implications to emerge (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data is coded line-by-line in order to prevent forcing the data into preconceived categories. By investigating the theoretical implications of each line, the researcher can begin to compare each piece of data. Focused coding uses the most significant codes to examine, compare and synthesize the data, creating tentative categories to analyze and investigate further (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008).

Next, theoretical sampling involves looking for particular data to help develop the properties of an emerging category. Saturating theoretical concepts refers to the point when the coded categories are completely filled in, and the data cannot help develop the categories any further.

I will use grounded theory, as described by Charmaz and Henwood (2008) and Miles and Huberman (1994), in concert with a semi-structured interview process. During these interviews, I will talk with four key networkers from a variety of sectors in B.C.: an academic administrator, a corporate human-resources executive, a key media player and a successful entrepreneur. I will select these interview subjects based on a peer review of their abilities to network with people from all walks of life — by asking notable people in these four industries to recommend co-workers who are known to be outstanding networkers.
DEVELOPING BOUNDARY-SPANNING RELATIONSHIPS

Interviewees will be asked a variety of questions about how they network, including the following: how do you initiate a new connection; if you were to approach someone new how would you introduce yourself; can you give me some examples of where you usually meet people; if you’d like to make a connection, do you get in touch in person, via email, social media or phone; once you’ve made contact how do you follow up and build a rapport; how do you build trust with your contact; how often do you check in with your contacts and what do you use as a reason to check in; can you give me an example of someone you’ve met recently, and where you see that connection going in the future; and can you give me an example of someone you met who changed the course of your life? (See appendix for full questionnaire.)

This study will not exclude participants based on any attributes related to race, sex, age, culture or mental or physical disability. Research subjects will be informed of their right to withdraw, at any point without prejudice, on the consent form they will sign prior to their interview. To protect my interviewees’ privacy, they will be assigned pseudonyms for the purpose of this study. As well, an ethical review has been approved through the Royal Roads University Research Office to ensure this study meets Tri-Council specifications with respect to the safety, dignity and privacy of participants.

After gathering rich interview data by taking notes, recording and transcribing relevant sections of my interviews, I will manually assemble and collate the data using thematic analysis, reducing the data into coding categories necessary to develop a conceptual model that can explain what skills successful relationship builders share (Armstrong et al., 1997; Charmaz & Henwood, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). My initial path will be to code for concepts that speak to my interviewees’ workplace roles, networking methods and the outcomes of their networking efforts, to make connections between who they are, how they make contacts and what professional goods they are
developing through these connections. I will let the data speak for itself, coding without invoking any preconceived ideas about how to best develop relationships (Crang & Cook, 2009). In this way, I can unfold or explicate each concept as it emerges, sorting through all the data that relates to or falls within each category. This study may unearth some interesting and revealing themes that might serve to explain or elucidate further on the power of shared experience, the nature of shared experience or the basis for shared experience.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gareth Hunt</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University Vice-President</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Roberts</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vice-President Corporate Human Resources</td>
<td>Degree and diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Saunders</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Entrepreneur — Networking Business</td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Copper</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Political Talk Radio Host</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Reciprocity</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
<th>Uncertainty Reduction</th>
<th>Ingratiation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gareth Hunt</td>
<td>Mentored by an English Professor during university and the Vice President of a University who went out on a limb and hired him to design a department.</td>
<td>Treat people the way you want to be treated. Show interest in people and they will show interest in you.</td>
<td>Send a follow-up email asking something related to your conversation; send reading material that the person would like; keep the relationship alive with humour by emailing the person a joke that made you think of them.</td>
<td>Suspicious of people who ask him for coffee outright, without specifying a shared interest and wonders what that person’s motive is.</td>
<td>Starts conversations with students and faculty by asking for their opinions about the university’s programs, making them feel valued and appreciated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Roberts</td>
<td>Had a number of If you show It’s about Always tries to help Thank people for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
excellent, influential instructors during Human Resource program. Was mentored by a number of supervisors over the years, which helped her grow as a professional.

“realness” others will show “realness” back. If you share something about yourself, the other person will also share something — “It's reciprocal.” If you put out positive energy, you will get the same in return.

Relationships are give and take: you give a bit, they give a bit.

Facebook is good for follow up because it’s referenceable and helps you remember and learn about the other person; however, it is not as professional, so in a professional capacity it is best to follow up through email.

Sharing information about yourself is the best way to make people comfortable around you.

Gloria Saunders N/A If you're wanting to meet the person who will make a difference in your life, you better be willing to make a difference in their life — it's reciprocal.

Follow up with everyone you connect with because fortune is the follow up.

I believe when you meet someone amazing you shouldn’t let it go.

It's crucial to be fresh in someone's mind. Don't follow up a week from now, follow up the next day.

Follow up with gratitude. Send flowers when appropriate; drop off a toy air plane for their son who wants to be a pilot.

Follow up could be anything to help people “win” and show your gratitude.

I was looked at as a number in the corporations I worked with before and I don’t want to have that reflected in my company. Nothing worse than feeling unappreciated and undervalued. I made a lot of profit for some of these companies that treated me like a number and not as a person. That’s why I now work for myself.

People stay around because they feel appreciated and I go out of my way to make people feel special, powerful and important.

That means listening to people, being genuinely interested in what they’re saying and remembering that.
Jim Copper  

In media there is an exchange between people who want to come on my show to get their message out there and me needing them to share their knowledge with my listeners. It’s a mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationship.

I typically pick up the phone and thank people for coming on the show, ask how they thought it went. Then I will send emails, texts, Tweets or Facebook messages with links to things they might find interesting or to ask their personal opinion on a current event.

Try to learn about people before interviewing them. Want to know what their opinions are, where they’re coming from.

Ask people for their expertise, which people are often flattered by.

Ask a question about something that is important to them to show I’ve taken the time to learn about that person.

After reviewing the data, five main categories emerged: uncertainty reduction, ingratiation, reciprocity, mentoring relationships and the importance of follow up. The interviewees show two ways to reduce uncertainty: engage on a personal level and find a shared interest. They also point out two ways to use ingratiation: be curious about a person’s interests and make them feel valued. Two sub-themes emerged from the data for reciprocity: give people your respect and trust and share information and resources. The sub-themes for mentoring are as follows: find a mentor who you admire and establish a relationship based on mutual trust and dependability. The data also highlights two main ways to follow-up in networking — with a meeting or follow-up with a message.

**Uncertainty Reduction**

The data indicates that uncertainty reduction, which suggests people feel more comfortable when they know each others’ roles in the social order, is one of the most significant components of
networking success. The interviewees show two ways to reduce uncertainty: engage on a personal level and find a shared interest. Dr. Hunt, for instance, says he is “suspicious of people who ask him for coffee outright, wondering: what is their motive?” Instead of calling out of the blue asking for a coffee meeting, he says he feels more comfortable if someone calls his office, explains who they are and presents a legitimate reason for connecting. For example, coming to him with an idea for how a course or program could be improved, or a new course the school should consider offering.

In the same vein, Aurora Roberts, a human-resource executive, says she tries to “help people feel comfortable and relaxed and get to know them a little bit. I don’t start quizzing them from a questions perspective. It’s helping people feel really comfortable and relaxed that’s really important. When you do that, I think people open up.” Roberts talks about engaging with people: “Talking directly to people, from an eye contact and body language perspective — emanating that sort of warmth, versus a cold aloof ‘I’ve got my hands in my pocket and my arms crossed type thing’.” For Roberts, reducing uncertainty is “all about engagement and if you connect with people, then they tend to open up and feel more comfortable. They’ll tend to trust you a lot more.” Roberts says she goes about this by introducing herself, asking how everything is going and making small talk about “current events or the weather... always boring but it works.” Roberts says you can talk about just about anything to help people feel comfortable, as long as it's a general interest topic, like a Canucks’ game, instead of controversial topic. Roberts asserts that “you don’t want to do the politics, religion thing. Basically anything general that you think will bring them into a conversation.” Roberts illustrates the importance of making people feel comfortable when trying to successfully build a network.

Roberts says another good way to build trust and increase people's comfort level right off the bat is to connect online and find out a little bit about the person before you meet them so you
understand their interests and have a couple of topics in mind that the person can speak about with ease. As well, Roberts says it can be powerful to have a mutual friend initiate the introduction because this helps establish trust. For Roberts, it's important to meet in person: “I try to do it in person, through the mingles I’ve gone to, the HR breakfast that happens, and often times it’s reaching out to people that you know but don’t have a lot to do with... colleagues that are potentially going to help with what I’m looking for. So it’s about reaching back to people.” Part of making a good impression is having the ability to remember things you read online about a person, or something a mutual friend told you about the new person you're meeting. Roberts says during these conversations “eye connection is big, the ability to relate to people, have conversations, not be super tense, be able to laugh.” Roberts talks about the importance of having open posture and not being afraid to have an animated conversation. But for Roberts, the best way to reduce uncertainty is by simply opening up to people and showing that you genuinely care about them on a human level. As she says, “I care about people. That comes across. I want what’s best for people — want them to be successful in whatever they’re doing and I’m willing to help people get there. I’m accepting of people and their different challenges. I think I’ve got a level of energy that is positive. I’ve got a belief that people can do whatever it is they choose to do and I encourage them to do that.” And when the time comes to meet with that person a second time, Roberts says the next meet-up goes best when “they remember things or I remember things about them, so you carry on from a previous conversation, as opposed to starting over again all the time.” By remembering details about people, networkers make themselves appear more familiar, thereby reducing uncertainty.

Much like Roberts, entrepreneur and networking business owner Gloria Saunders says she makes people feel comfortable because of the energy she sends out. “I'm very outgoing, bubbly and
effervescent and I eat, breathe and sleep positive everything. So wherever I am, I'm constantly exuding that energy. I'm meeting people every day in the grocery store, at coffee shops, cocktail parties, charity events.” Saunders says she goes out of her way to connect with people on a friendship level and have “super positive” conversations. She talks about letting the conversation develop according to its natural flow, without aiming to achieve anything through the interaction. Like Roberts, Saunders says she doesn't ask work-related questions: “Usually I ask how their weekend was, what have you been up to lately... totally casual conversation. If you instantly talk about business you've set yourself up for disaster. They'll think you're trying to sell them something. They'll put their wall up and just lock up.” Saunders says learning about people before asking what they do for a career — asking about their history, their families — is key to forging a lasting connection. Finding common ground is the first thing Saunders tries to do when meeting someone new, because she says it makes people feel comfortable and important. “Find commonality and build a friendship because those turn into natural business relationships. Don't go at it as a business contact. You want to build a friendship for life... one that turns into a natural business relationship.”

Saunders says connecting is her passion in life and she firmly believes that good networkers are “caring, genuine, honest, accountable, motivating, inspirational.” Saunders gives the example of a life coach as an excellent connector, because their main goal is to help people succeed and make a difference in the lives of others. Saunders says it's this type of individual — someone “who is authentic” — that makes the best networker. In the end, Saunders says “people want to support others who are real people,” not people with superficial personas. “Being authentic to me usually means being positive, but when I'm feeling down, if someone asks, I will be honest and say I'm having a bad day.” Saunders says if you try to “fake it ‘til you make it, people will pick up on your bullshit” and feel
as though they're being deceived somehow. On top of being honest, Saunders says she helps reduce uncertainty by sharing information about herself and by remembering information about others as well: “I know everyone about 90%, know their kids' names, their backgrounds, their business and personal history. I've taken the time to learn because I care.” Saunders says networking is about making people feel comfortable and establishing familiarity: “However I am with my family, I try to be with other people.” By finding common ground and reducing uncertainty, Saunders establishes trust with her contacts. Saunders says if she asks where a person grew up and discovers they spent their childhoods nearby, that commonality is the first step to a trusting relationship. But it's when you take the time to remember things about people that your true colours show. Saunders says “the people who are only in it for business won't remember those things about you because they don't care about you or your family. They only care about business.”

Unlike Saunders, talk-radio host Jim Cooper doesn't believe building a friendship is necessary to make people feel comfortable during business interactions. “From personal experience, I've had people try to build personal relationships with me when it's overwhelmingly clear that they're only interested in speaking with me because I have something they want. And frankly, when I detect that I'm insulted and disinclined to give them what they want. It's disingenuous. You feel like you're being used.” Cooper says he would prefer if someone is upfront about wanting to come on his show to get the message out about global warming, a health awareness campaign or a local event. In his view, “there is nothing wrong with a business relationship being a business relationship,” as long as both people are benefiting. While Cooper may not agree with Saunders about the need to develop personal relationships before business ones, both agree that the best way to engage someone and make them feel comfortable is to simply “walk up and say hi.” Like Dr. Hunt, Saunders and Roberts, Cooper also
believes it's important to find out about what people value, by asking “a question that's important to that person. If you go up to somebody who is an environmentalist, you'll talk about the environment, a politician you talk about politics, an economist, the latest news about interest rates.” Cooper says the perfect way to reduce uncertainty is to engage someone about a topic they're comfortable with, ask for their opinion and openly give your thoughts in return. All four interviewees agree that making your contact comfortable is the first step to forming a positive working relationship and concur that the best way to reduce uncertainty is by being open and honest.

**Ingratiation**

All of the interviewees point out that it’s integral to make people feel important, whether by taking an interest in their interests, or by simply offering a compliment. The data reveals two ways to use ingratiation: be curious about a person’s interests and make them feel valued. Dr. Hunt, for instance, says that networkers have to learn to notice people and show interest in what others are doing. When you show interest in other people's lives and careers, then people will respond and take an interest in you as well. As a self-proclaimed introvert, Dr. Hunt says sometimes he just wants people to leave him “alone to read [his] book,” but that making the effort to take interest in people's lives, their kids and their pets is an important part of his job. Dr. Hunt suggests that “for an extrovert, working a room is a game. For an introvert it is hard work,” but hard work that is necessary. As the Vice-President of a university, Dr. Hunt mentions that he spends a significant amount of time roaming around campus, gathering information about people and learning about any concerns they have with their professors, programs or the university in general. Dr. Hunt says that as someone who is internally-focused on campus life, asking people about the school gives him a reason to connect. By reaching out, asking people for their opinions and acting on student and faculty concerns, Dr. Hunt
shows people that their contributions are important, both to him and to the university he represents. He says he also believes in treating people like human beings and following the Golden Rule: treat others as you wish to be treated. On the flip side, Dr. Hunt says he's always flattered when people ask him to share his knowledge or give his opinion.

Similarly, Roberts says it's important to take the time to make people feel valued and agrees that the best way to do so is by talking to them about the things that matter in their lives — their hopes and dreams — and remembering these conversations. “It’s about remembering people, where you saw people, so you can make them feel important that you can relate back to the conversation you had, or the fact that their name is Suzy Q. That’s a really important part of networking.” Roberts says when you show genuine “interest in what they’re doing, in their challenges, in their opportunities,” you're supporting people and showing them you care. Roberts also makes people feel important by always thanking them for any information they share, saying “I really appreciate it, [and] enjoyed talking.” On the other side of the coin, Roberts says she always tries to make time to meet with people who show interest in her and her expertise. “It makes a big difference, [going for coffee with people who request a meeting]. I’ve done that a few times with people who want to find out about the company, pitch us for business.” Roberts says she also makes an effort to meet with students and give presentations to university classes. Roberts says people are flattered when you take the time to meet with them and share your expertise, just as she — the expert — is flattered when people ask. Roberts suggests directly complimenting people with a well-placed, thoughtful comment about their new shoes or haircut can also go a long way towards showing people you're in tune with them. She feels this positive “reinforcement is good for people.”
Saunders, on the other hand, says that clients “stay around [in her organization] because they feel appreciated. [There is] nothing worse than feeling unappreciated and undervalued. I made a lot of profit for some companies that treated me like a number and not as a person.” Saunders explains that she cares “about people genuinely and you have to have that ability to care. If you're passionate about people it's really easy. If you're not, it's probably not your bag to be going into a meeting to build relationships; you might want to send someone else from your office who is an intuitive conversationalist.” Saunders says that she helps people socialize and makes them feel important by bringing her network out to their events, helping to support their successes. And when the group hasn't seen one of its members in a while, Saunders tries to re-engage that person by sending a message saying, “you're an important part of our network and the team misses you.” Saunders says business is all about teamwork, and it's crucial to make people feel important as soon as possible in the relationship — whether they are an employee or a client. She says that a networker must connect with people on a personal level: “I've always cared for people and I show people that by taking the extra time and going the extra mile. And people appreciate that when you get to know them as a person, instead of for what they do or how much money they make.”

Cooper, on the other hand, suggests making people feel important is as simple as asking someone to share their expertise or knowledge on a subject. He says networking “is all about picking people's brains. I don't think people realize how valuable their knowledge is. But people love to share knowledge. I know I do. I'm the kind of person where if somebody wants to hear what I think about something, I'm more than happy to talk about it with them. And many people out there are the same way. You just have to give them that opportunity.” Cooper says if you take the time to research what people are interested in and ask them to tell you about it, in most cases, they'll be thrilled to do so.
When you value someone's expertise, you're showing them you value them as a person and are interested in what's important to them. “If someone comes up to me and says I'd really like to interview you about your networking skills because you network every day, I'd say ya. I love sharing my knowledge.” Each of the four interviewees shows the importance of making people feel valued, whether for their expertise on a particular topic, or even just for their great fashion sense.

**Reciprocity**

All of the interviewees point out that reciprocity is one of the most important concepts to understand and practice in networking. Two sub-themes emerged from the data for reciprocity: give people your respect and trust and share information and resources. Dr. Hunt continues to emphasize that people like to be noticed, so if a networker shows interest in someone and in their family, then that person will respond positively. Dr. Hunt says that he appreciates it when people show genuine interest in his workplace — the university — because it is his job and his life. He also says when you're working with people, or getting to know new friends, it's necessary to have mutual esteem, respect and trust; when you give someone your trust and respect, they will trust and respect you in return.

Similarly, Roberts says that if one person shares something, then the other person will be likely to share something as well, whether it is information, a favour or a service. Roberts say when someone reaches out to her, she responds in kind because she understands that relationships are reciprocal. As she says, “If you’re open and interested, people will open up to you and, even if there’s nothing you get from that from a job perspective, there’s often awareness and understanding that can help [you in your career].” Roberts also says, “If you put out positive, you'll get it in return. And by going out there in the right mental space, you'll attract good people.”
Saunders agrees that reaching out to people with positive energy is important. “Every good networker has people clapping for them,” because they're always there cheering others on. In essence, if you make people feel comfortable and important, then they will reciprocate. As Saunders says, “You give a bit, they give a bit and it's give and take. In a business network it should be about give and take. It's not just about attracting business.” Saunders believes that people in networks feed off each other. If there is too much take and not enough give from certain members of her network, she does “housekeeping [to] politely remove cancerous cells so they don't bring down the whole ship.” She points out that if people are “super negative and just in it for themselves, not for the team, then they don't normally get very far.” Saunders emphasizes a very important element of reciprocity and networking, saying, “If [you want] to meet the person that will make a difference in your life, [you’d] better be willing to make a difference in their life.”

Cooper also believes in the power of reciprocity. He needs news makers to come on his show and share their expertise; without them, he wouldn't have a show. Cooper’s relationship with news makers is a symbiotic one because the news makers need Cooper just as much as he needs them — he gives them the opportunity to tell their stories to the world. That's what Cooper calls a relationship with “a mutual benefit.” When asked about networking and how to build and maintain relationships, all of the interviewees raised the topic of reciprocity and fostering mutually-beneficial relationships by sharing knowledge, resources and giving a friend or business colleague a helping hand.

Mentoring

Mentoring is also a key theme because half of the interviewees attribute a great deal of their success to their mentors. The data suggests two sub-themes for mentoring: find a mentor who you admire and establish a relationship based on mutual trust and dependability. Dr. Hunt, for example,
mentions his university English professor as a mentor who changed his course in life. Despite many years having passed since he first met the English professor, he speaks very ardently of his teacher, saying he'd been on track to study law when fate intervened. Although he'd planned to be a lawyer, Dr. Hunt ended up earning a doctoral fellowship and studying medieval literature, thanks to the influence of this extraordinarily gifted, inspiring instructor.

A second inspiring person entered his life after he became a professor himself. At the time he'd been using online wave files to show his students how old-English words were pronounced. His phone rang while he was at a conference and it was the VP of his university, saying she had a challenge for him: to design a centre for academic technology, staff the whole centre and have the building designed. She just said she liked what he had been doing with his classes. From there Dr. Hunt became an associate dean, a dean, a provost at one of Canada’s most innovative universities and now on his way to administer at a second major Canadian university. This woman, his mentor, had faith in him — perhaps more than he did at the time — giving him an incredible opportunity. She continues to be both a mentor and a friend. He built an important rapport with these mentors, founded on trust and dependability.

Like Dr. Hunt, Roberts says she had a number of inspiring, valuable instructors throughout her education who helped direct her focus to a specific area of human resources. As well, through her mentoring relationships with supervisors at her first few jobs, she was given more latitude and responsibility to develop within her career. Similarly, Saunders says it's always important to have someone there for you, supporting you through the good times and bad — and the broader your network, the more support you have when the going gets tough.
Follow-Up

All of the networking experts also emphasize the importance of follow-up in building and maintaining networks. The data also highlights two ways to follow up in networking: follow up with a meeting or follow up with a message. Dr. Hunt, for example, says that “the best way to build a rapport starts with exchanging business cards at a conference, and following up with that person to have a beer or coffee outside the conference... or going for a walk. If you hit it off on a friend level, just start talking about your subject of mutual interest.” He says to “send a follow-up email saying something about your conversation, send reading material that person would like, or keep the relationship alive with humour. Send the person a joke, saying 'thought this would make you laugh.'” Dr. Hunt says it is crucial to make sure your reason to re-connect is legitimate and based on a genuine shared interest.

In the same vein, Roberts says that networking is “about remembering people... so you can relate back to the conversation you had” when you're following up. Roberts generally uses email over social media and always strives to be concise; the people who will be the most valuable to you professionally tend to be busy. Roberts says to keep in contact by making a phone call, or sending an email to say “it’s been a long time... how about we go for coffee?” Often times, Roberts says “you meet someone and realize they either know someone who is important for you or who has a knowledge base that is important for you. You just need to make sure that you can log it in the right part of your brain to bring it back at a later stage and end up using [the connection].”

When Cooper meets people, he's doing just what Roberts suggests. He's cataloguing who has expertise in what area, so if he meets the president of an oil company and also knows an activist seeking a ban on oil tankers off of British Columbia's coast, he can get the two parties on his show to talk about the oil clean-up efforts in Louisiana and how we can ensure B.C. waters don't meet the same
Cooper says he'll reach out to people using Facebook “if email isn't an option,” but prefers to email using company letterhead or a business signature block because it's more professional. He'll often use Facebook to reach out to an established contact to ask if they'd like to come on his show again, or just to drop a line and ask what's new. Cooper suggests thinking about your contact's lifestyle before choosing whether to follow-up by phone, email or social media. A busy ministerial assistant or city council member, for example, will likely respond more quickly to an email than to a call, since they'll likely have their Blackberry on the table in their meeting. And while they're unable to pick up the phone and have a conversation, they are more than willing to drop him a quick email agreeing to come on his show later that afternoon.

Saunders says that she follows up with everybody because she thinks that successful networking hinges entirely on being able to build comfortable, mutually-beneficial rapports with others. Saunders believes “when you meet someone amazing you shouldn't let it go. It's crucial to be fresh in someone's mind. Don't follow up a week from now; follow up the next day. Follow up with gratitude... thank them in an email or send them something on a personal level — a thank you card, flowers, a box of chocolates, something based on the relationship you've built. They might have a son or daughter that likes airplanes. Something related to that.... something from the heart.” Another way to connect is to invite your new friend to an event you know they'd be interested in: a show at the IMAX if they're into wildlife; a charity masquerade ball for those fashionistas out there; or a networking event for a young person just establishing themselves and developing their reputation. Saunders says how you choose to follow up should depend on what the person values and how well you know them. Whether you call, text, email, Facebook, or send a card, your communication should show you've been thinking about
that person and are looking for ways to help them out. As Saunders says, “Follow-up could be anything to help people win.”

Discussion

The results from this study illustrate the importance of reciprocity in relationship building, show that uncertainty reduction is one of the most important parts of networking and illustrate the importance of ingratiation in networking success. This study fills in a critical gap in the literature surrounding networking theory, demonstrating the importance of follow-up in networking success. The findings of this study are useful to organizations or individuals looking to cultivate boundary-spanning relationships to develop professional goods — and can be applied in everyday life.

The results of this study support Bove et al.’s (2011) findings, illustrating the importance of reciprocity in relationship building. All of the interviewees indicate that reciprocity is an essential tenet of a good networker. In keeping with the notion of *quid pro quo*, the interviewees point out that networking is about give and take and highlight the importance of sharing information and services. When a networker goes out of his or her way to help someone, then the person they help will usually respond in kind. Similarly, when a networker puts out “positive energy,” he or she will attract that type of energy in return. The interviewees appeal to the “norm of reciprocity” in their everyday business interactions, establishing trust with their clients by reinforcing their values and expectations (Bove et al., 2011, p. 186). In accordance with the literature, my interviewees point out that reciprocity is crucial for building and maintaining long-term business relationships, because it builds trust and reduces uncertainty (Bove et al., 2011).

This study also suggests that uncertainty reduction is one of the most important parts of networking. An inordinately large portion of the data relates to uncertainty reduction and each
interviewee stressed the significance of making others feel comfortable. As Kramer (1994) suggests, people feel uneasy when there is role ambiguity in a relationship, since people like to know where they stand relative to others. When people do not understand their social environment, they will continually seek information to make sense of their surroundings (Kramer, 1994). A good networker provides others with the information they need to reduce their uncertainty and feel at ease. When a networker shares information about where they grew up, how many kids they have, or where they went to school, the other person is able to form an impression of who the networker is and what kind of person they are. The successful networker takes this a step further and establishes common ground with the other person, reducing uncertainty by appealing to the other person's values. My interviewees explain that establishing commonality is vital to the networking process because it makes people feel more comfortable and open. Establishing commonality can be seen as a form of uncertainty reduction; when two people divulge information about themselves, it helps each of them understand the roles they are supposed to play (Kramer, 1994). The interviewees point out that making people feel comfortable is the surest way to earn people's trust and establish long-term business relationships. Some interviewees go so far as to say that the best business relationships blossom out of friendship. The data indicates that a good networker will provide another person with enough information to allow them to reduce their uncertainty and, therefore, negotiate mutual understanding.

This research helps fill a gap in the literature around networking, since this study demonstrates the importance of follow-up. Follow-up is identified as an important part of networking by all of the interviewees, and some even say that they are successful because they are vigilant with their follow-up — sending a gift, a card, or an email in order to remain fresh in their contact's mind. According to the experts, networking is all about remembering people — the details of their lives, what their hobbies
are, or even the name of a pet. As Saunders suggests, sending a note to thank someone for sharing their expertise, or simply calling up to ask how they're doing makes that person feel appreciated and important. Both Saunders and Roberts also say that follow-up increases the chance that you'll be remembered by your contact, so further research in this area could examine the relationship between follow-up and memory recognition.

This study also supports Seiter's (2007) study on ingratiation and its role in impression management. As Seiter (2007) suggests, ingratiation can help impact a person’s financial success. Most of the interviewees explain that a simple compliment will go a long way and that networking is all about making people feel valued. Client satisfaction is related to ingratiation, so a networking expert should use compliments to keep people in their network feeling important and valued (Seiter, 2007). When meeting a person for the first time, a networking expert can also use ingratiation for impression management, giving the other person the idea that they are valued by the networker. My interviewees show that networking is ultimately about making people feel special. Ingratiation can do more than just influence other people's perceptions of you as a networker. It can also encourage people to hire you for a position, sign you on for a contract, refer you to someone they know, or offer you their services. As my interviewees suggest, ingratiation is more than a simple act of kindness; ingratiation changes the way people perceive you and how they respond to you (Seiter, 2007).

This study also adds to the existing literature around mentoring, since the findings show how mentoring helps facilitate career success. Half of the interviewees attribute a large part of their career success to the help of their mentors, saying that a good mentor can change the course of your life and facilitate professional and personal development — by sharing their expertise, acting as a gateway to a large network of professionals in your field, helping you get accepted to a university or vocational
program and acting as a job reference. As Fitzpatrick et al. (2006) and the interviewees explain, the key to a healthy mentoring relationship is trust. The interviewees point out that a good mentoring relationship shares the same qualities as a friendship.

**Conclusion, Limitations, Future Research**

Despite its limitations, this research illuminates a number of important strategies commonly used by networkers to help reduce uncertainty and support the development of personal and business relationships. Some of these strategies include: consciously exuding positive energy; approaching new contacts the same way you’d approach new friends — taking time to get to know people as individuals before discussing business; disclosing information about your personal history, work endeavours and future goals; sharing time, ideas, information and services — and responding with gratitude when others share with you; delivering well-placed, genuine compliments; and assessing new relationships as they unfold, to determine whether your new contacts want to create mutually-beneficial relationships or self-serving ones. This study suggests it is integral for networkers to reduce uncertainty by fostering mutually-beneficial, trusting relationships based on reciprocity: whether at home, in a social setting, or in the workplace, trust is the foundation for all interpersonal relationships. Although this study provides new insight into networking, it is limited to the viewpoints of four networkers from Western culture. Research on networking may provide different results if conducted in different cultures or with a larger number of interviewees. Also, the data is coded by only one researcher, so it is limited by the perspective of a Caucasian Canadian. Future research can explore the strategies used by networkers from various cultures, highlighting the similarities and differences in networking strategies used in different countries.
References


DEVELOPING BOUNDARY-SPANNING RELATIONSHIPS


Appendix

Interview Questions
Can you tell me a bit about your background for starters?
What are some of your interests?
Can you talk me through how you initiate a new connection?
If you were to approach someone you didn’t know how would you introduce yourself? How do you break the ice?
Where do you usually meet people—can you give me some examples?
Would you say you do most of your networking in-person or online?
If online, which sites do you use?
If you don’t encounter someone in person, how do you approach them—email, phone or social media?
How do you know what to talk about with people you don’t know?
And how do you build a relationship without appearing to just want something from that person?
After you’ve made initial contact, how do you follow-up and start building a rapport?
How do you build trust with that contact?
How often do you check in with your contacts and what do you use as a reason to check in?
Can you give me an example of someone you’ve met recently, and where you see that connection going in the future?
Can you give me an example of someone you met that changed the course of your life?
How does your personal networking differ from work networking?
Do you meet more people in a formal or informal setting—say at work vs. at an after work gathering?
Do you meet a lot of people through friends or co-workers, or mostly on your own?
If you meet people through others, do those people doing the introductions have specific qualities that stick out to you?
Do you find you approach people of the opposite sex differently? How does that impact the way you’d approach that person and your rapport with them—specifically trust building?
What qualities do you think good networkers have in common?
Which qualities do you think you possess that contribute to your ability to build successful relationships?
If you were offering advice to someone about how to capitalize on their networks to generate new employment opportunities, increase their clientele, generate contracts etc—what would you say?
Any other questions as the conversation moves along.

Notes: Interview with Dr. Gareth Hunt

Administrators all start out in their own disciplines, doing something they love.

Wanted to do something with languages, so his parents sent him to do a double major in law and administration, so he'd have a backup if he didn't like law.
But then along came an English instructor, who changed his course in life. "In first semester, fate intervened in form of a very fine English instructor, with whom I'm still in touch with ... extraordinarily gifted teacher--just a born teacher. Ability to master anything he wanted and to convey the seriousness of passion with his students." Stanford PhD who dabbled in other activities.... furniture building etc… things with hands." This person inspired him to continue his education-- got a doctoral fellowship and studied medieval literature and language-- went on to teach.

He was using online wave files to teach his students about language and the sounds of old English when the second inspiring person entered his life. His phone rang while he was at a conference and it was the VP of the university he was at, saying she had a challenge for him: would he design a centre for academic technology--staff the whole thing, have the building designed etc? She just said she liked what he'd been doing with his classes. From there he becomes an Associate Dean, a dean, and now a provost. This woman had faith in him-- perhaps more than he did at the time and gave him an opportunity. She is now a mentor and friend--came to visit him on the holidays. So yes, who you know plays a large role in your life.

He built an important rapport with these mentors, build on trust, ethics and dependability. When you work with a team and have mutual esteem, respect and trust in each other you can accomplish anything. If you trust, you will be trusted and things will get done.

You have to go with your gut about people, but try not to judge them too quickly.

Humility is so important--hubris will be your downfall as an academic.

Many academics are introverts--scholarly life attracts them.

Have to learn the skill of networking-- if you notice ppl and show interest they'll respond to you well.

Treat them as human beings--treat them as you would want to be treated. For introverts it goes a step
farther... often you wish ppl would leave you alone so you can read your book, but most ppl like to be noticed -- show interest in their kids and make effort, they respond.

"For an extravert, working a room is a game. For an introvert, it is hard work"

Most contact is with faculty, staff, students-- spends time gathering intelligence and learning about what ppl's concerns are with the school. This gives him a way to connect with people. Largely connects through work tasks--alumni dinners, government relations meetings and events. He's internally-focused on life at the school and what happens there.

He doesn't use social media at all--doesn't know how. Not interested. Too little time in the day to learn all the new stuff. "Maybe I'm showing my generation" but prefers face-to-face contact.

Recruits through word of mouth: "have you heard of someone who would be good for such and such position."

Says academics are cautious people and have "active grapevine" which gets defensive with those with too much self-confidence/arrogance/self-importance

"There are some who get dizzy when they stand on a brick." Arrogant people make bad choices--hubris again.

Is suspicious of ppl who ask him for coffee outright, wondering what is their motive? Instead, call his office and say you have an idea for the university for a program you should consider etc; show genuine interest in the university, because that's his job and his life. Show interest in it and you're showing interest in him.

Once your career is under way it's not as legit to call someone up for coffee to ask about them/their job. If you're just starting out it's different. Then you legitimately have something to learn from your coffee meeting.
The best way to build a rapport starts with exchanging business cards at a conference, asking that person to have a beer or coffee outside the conference/go for a walk if you hit it off on a friend level and just start talking about your subject of mutual interest.

Then send a follow-up email saying something about your conversation, sending reading material that person would like, or keeping the relationship alive with humour... send the person a joke that you "thought this would make you laugh"

Make sure your reason to re-connect is legit and based on a genuine shared interest.

My observations: doesn't network outside of work. Likes to read books and associate with a small group of people. Therefore, networking is very task-oriented, generally around a topic (work related) of mutual interest… the university or literature/music. Likes relationships to evolve naturally out of shared interaction; suspicious of those who seek new relationships outside of traditional settings like academic conferences/mandated work functions. Believes trust and dedication to hard work are best indicators of the value of a connection and are the most important foundations for relationships. Self-proclaimed introvert-- says there's nothing better than analyzing a good book that makes your brain hurt--but he's also extremely chatty. Talked a lot about the importance of being ethical, doing good work. Very no-nonsense about his networking, very serious about his discussions, but very bubbly in conversation.

Interesting how he dominated the conversation from the beginning, asking about me, asking about how I heard about the university, what I liked about it, if I have any problems etc. Made it all about me. Didn't answer my personal questions about him until he'd learned about me. When I said there was lots of traffic he asked about if I had far to come/where I live. The usual small talk banter. Interesting though how he took over the conversation. I didn't actually get a word in to ask him any questions until
probably 15 or 20 mins into the "interview." Felt like he was interviewing me... but he didn't ask any of the questions I would have asked. I would've asked what I'm thinking of doing once my MA is complete/are you from Victoria/stuff connecting on more of a personal level and less of a school level. I mentioned my boyfriend because Dr. Hunt was telling me about how he liked really deep, old literature and I was saying my boyfriend finished reading Paradise Lost and mentioned he's in the MA program too... So Hunt asked what my boyfriend's name was, what school he came from before and said he'd remember his name in case he came across him somewhere. And the way he said it I felt he really was cataloguing my boyfriend's name away somewhere. Clearly has an outstanding memory, and his peers also told me this.

Notes: Interview Gloria Saunders

“I'm very outgoing, bubbly and effervescent and I eat, breathe and sleep positive everything. So wherever I am, I'm constantly exuding that energy. I'm meeting people every day in the grocery store, coffee shop, cocktail party, charity event. That's where I'm meeting people and connecting. Meet so many people on a daily basis.”

“With all of my members I'm constantly out there being involved in as much socializing as possible. I love socializing and I love meeting people. One connection that comes to mind is invited to a private cocktail party for someone who owns law firm, ended up on their roof garden patio and made an instant connection from Director of Juno Awards, who had flown in for business with this particular lawyer who is a member of my network. I didn't know that at the time and I always take people for who they are not what they are. Didn't know who this gentleman was, just that there was an instant connection on a friendship level and instant conversation flowing, super positive. Thought this is someone I want to get to know. It wasn't that night we even talked about the Junos, just an exchange of business cards at
DEVELOPING BOUNDARY-SPANNING RELATIONSHIPS

the end of the night after hours over cocktails talking. When I did a follow up with him, I do follow-ups with everyone because I believe the fortune is the follow up. I don't want to lose track of anyone I meet that is amazing. And it wasn't until the follow-ups, we ended up having meetings every few weeks and then the initiatives on the Juno Awards came up. Natural, positive flow of conversation, not aiming to gain anything. Now contracts from Juno Awards, involved in launch party 2013 Victoria bid help etc.”

“Fortune is in your follow-up. I believe it's important when you meet someone amazing you shouldn't let it go. For any success, business or just friendship— which is where the best business relationships come from — I think it's crucial to be fresh in someone's mind. Don't follow up a week from now, follow up the next day. Follow up with gratitude, thank them in an email or send them something on a personal level — a thank you card, flowers, a box of chocolates, something based on the relationship you've built. They might have a son or daughter that likes air planes. Something related to that — something from the heart. Our organization is personalized and about getting to know ppl on a personal level. I've always cared for people and I show people that by taking the extra time and going the extra mile. And ppl appreciate that when you get to know them as a person, instead of for what they do or how much money they make. That's not even a part of the equation. How many kids do you have, where were you born?”

“Getting to know the person before getting into “what do you do?”

“What I normally do is fold corners of business card if I want to follow up with people. One corner for someone I should follow up with (would like to get to know them better), is something amazing stood out and I just got this great feeling from that person — an intuition that I just have to follow up, I fold both corners.”
“I can read someone based on the energy they're putting out and that determines should I follow up with this person or not.”

“Follow up could be anything to help people win. I'd say really depends on the person, whatever I've felt. They're just getting starting or are already established then I might drag them to a networking function with me or some event I'm going to. Anything where they're going to meet people, or get to come to a VIP opportunity, or coffee. I'm a go big or go home person. So try to do things different than other people — make them feel important, draw them in where they're going to meet a lot of people.”

Find an event that appeals to them and invite them to it — finding common ground.

“Through online communications— send out card campaigns, saying you're valued as part of our team and network, we're always here for you. Putting together social functions to help people socialize and make people feel important. Help get team out to their events to support their successes as well.

Making ppl feel in the loop using social media,”

“Balance to personal and impersonal. When network grows so rapidly, you lose that personal touch a bit and it's challenging to maintain personal connections. I can't give energy to everyone, so social media helps me a lot. Making sure people come to our events. Send out letters if their attendance is weak “the team misses you” to make them feel important.”

“Teamwork makes the dream work. We try to make people feel important because they are. We value them as people first, right out of the gate.”

“If you aren't an outgoing person, you need to surround yourself with people who are more effervescent and outgoing than you to help bring the people to you. My husband, for example, hates networking. He comes and sits in the corner unless I bring people to him. Once the people are there, he's fine talking with them, but he's really shy to just go and draw that group to him. So I bring people to people like
that. I wouldn't be very successful at my business if I had that personality. Personality plays a big role in being able to work a room.

"Instead of being so focused on something you're not good at, surround yourself with people who are good at it. You are what you surround yourself with. Celebrate our strengths, support each others' weaknesses as one big team."

"When I'm in a mood where I don't feel like talking to anyone and have already used all my energy, I usually send someone to represent the team."

"You want to surround yourself by people who are willing to help you and lift you up. I think of people as kites and anchors."

"In Halo, we're all resources to each other. You can't be the best of everything. But by supporting each other, you have hundreds of people who are all strong in certain areas and making not so good at other areas, therefore we bounce things off of each other and use each other as resources. We join alliances and partnerships with people to help people build their businesses, whatever way they need, at discounted prices."

"My passion is connecting. I love it if I can connect people so everyone can succeed. It's amazing knowing someone else is winning because you helped partner them with a resource to get them where they need to go."

It's a bit like match making.

"Positive people, winning attitudes and team players is our copyrighted tag line. It's all about attracting those types of people."

"Relationship building is something you're born with, where you have a passion for it. It's the easiest way to succeed. It's really easy to get a lot of business cards, but what will you do with them. It's not
about quantity, it's about quality. If there's bad vibes, I don't give my card. I think we meet people for a reason, but sometimes you just don't get the right vibe. But if it's someone amazing you want to get to know I get to know them the same way I'd get to know as a friend or like in a relationship.”

“I don't ask questions. But usually I ask how their weekend was, what you been up to lately, totally casual conversation. If you instantly talk about business you've set yourself up for disaster. They think you'll sell them something. They put their wall up and think the person has a sales sign across their forehead and they lock up.”

“I care about people genuinely you have to have that ability to care. If you're passionate about people it's really easy. If you're not, it's probably not your bag to be going into a meeting to build relationships, you might want to send someone else from your office who is an intuitive conversationalist. I'm not saying people that are introverted shouldn't be in that role, and a way to come out of that... if you want to build relationships, social settings where you have people you know around you, connectors with you always and allow them to open up conversations you can jump into, instead of you being the person that's initiating that conversation. That's our signature. Celebrate the strengths.”

“When we meet someone, we build a relationship with someone, ask them to our luncheons, but not make them feel pressured, and allowing people to decide if they want to come.”

“Caring, genuine, honest, accountable, motivating, inspirational. Someone who has a passion for life coaching makes an excellent connector — someone who wants to help people succeed and make a difference. Like minded people flock together. Someone who is authentic; if things are tough in your life, let people know. In the end people want to support others who are real people, not people's superficial persona. People will pick up on your bullshit. Just be you. Don't try to be anyone else.”
“You shouldn't be in business unless you're a strong networker; it will make or break your business. Unless you go out and get yourself a massive loan and hire someone to do that part for you. Or be in a partnership with someone with those skills.”

“Honing in on the relationship building thing is important. If someone goes out and collects a mass number of business cards and sends out a mail merge setting up coffee with all of them and thinking you'll get something out of it, think again because you won't. You get 1% return on that approach. Business networking doesn't happen over night, comes over time you need to have patience. You need to build a relationship with them for a good period of time before you're comfortable revealing about yourself. You want to connect with people who love what you love. You naturally attract whatever you put out there. If you put out positive, you'll get it in return. And by going out there in the right mental space, you'll attract good people.”

“You have to also be selective in networking. We attract all people — men, women, all races, religions but as long as they meet our tag line.”

“Partnering, exchanges resources, not being afraid to share your connections. Help connect people with each other to be successful. The more you put out, the more comes back to you.”

“I know everyone about 90%, know their kids names, their backgrounds, their business and personal history because I've taken the time to learn because I care. I was looked at as a number in the corporations I worked with before and I don't want to have that reflected in my company. Nothing worse than feeling unappreciated and undervalued. I made a lot of profit for some of these companies that treated me like a number and not as a person.”

“Encouraging, complimenting people is really important. You need people clapping for you. Make them feel comfortable and important.”
“However I am with my family I try to be with other people. Being authentic to me usually means being positive, but when I'm feeling down I go into my cocoon but if someone asks I will be honest and say I'm having a bad day. My goldfish died. Whatever.”

“You give a bit, they give a bit and it's give and take. In a business network it should be about give and take. It's not just about attracting business. People in networks feed off of each other. If there's too much take, we do house keeping and politely remove cancerous cells from our network so they don't bring down the whole ship. We usually go to termination as a last resort and give opportunities for people to redeem themselves, but if they're super negative and just in it for themselves, not for the team then they don't normally get very far.”

“Negativity affects the whole network. We've only had one person resign from the network in more than a year. They saw the termination coming.”

“People stay around because they feel appreciated, there is always something new for people to learn and experience.”

Find commonality and build a relationship because those turn into natural business relationships. You have a natural want to help your friends succeed. Don't go at it as a business contact, you want to build a friendship for life, that turns into a natural business relationship.”

“Trust is really important. You have to have trust. We started talking about where we grew up, and I find out we grew up in the same area and you already have started building trust and remembering things about people. The people who are only in it for business won't remember those things about you because they don't care about you or your family. They only care about business. In listening to you I'm genuinely interested in what you're saying, and I will remember that.”
If you’re wanting to meet the person that will make a difference in your life, you better be willing to make a difference in their life.

**Notes: Interview with Aurora Roberts**

Gone university arts degree, went travelling, took practical program at BCIT to take a business administration diploma, and specialized in HR.

In HR for 18 years, diverse; all about taking care of people

“A couple of instructors that I really valuable—from what they knew...I focused in that area.”

“I try to help people feel comfortable and relaxed and get to know them a little bit. I don’t really start quizzing them from a questions perspective. It’s really more of a helping people feel really comfortable and relaxed is really important. And I think people open up. If you share something, they share something. So it’s about finding common ground in communications.”

“You can usually find it. Talking directly to people, from an eye contact and body language perspective—emanating that sort of warmth, versus a cold, aloof vibe—I’ve got my hands in my pocket and my arms crossed type thing.”

“It’s all about engagement and if you connect with them then they tend to open up and people feel more comfortable. They’ll tend to trust you a lot more.”

“Introduce myself, say “hi how are things going,” small talky stuff, current events, weather always boring but it works. It could be the Canucks game—general interest versus controversial. You don’t want to do the politics, religion thing. Basically anything that you think will bring them into a conversation. Could be you appreciate what they’re wearing... reinforcement I think is good for people.”
“Because I’m in HR, I tend to meet most people at work, through interviews, business negotiations, if I’m trying to find out additional information I will call people and say can you point me in the right direction, this is what I’m trying to do. With our expansion [business expansion] it’s sort of “hi this is who I am,” can you help me with ________. If you’re real with people, I think they tend to respond with realness back.”

“I meet people through work and through the non-profit I’ve been with for 2 years. I meet people through my husband’s work. We socialize fairly regularly.” But not an active networker.

“It’s about remembering people—where you saw people—so you can make them feel important that you can relate back to the conversation you had or the fact that their name is Suzy Q or whatever. That’s a really important part of networking.”

“I don’t do a lot of mingles on the basis of trying to meet people, but I have gone to HRMA (Human Resource Management Association mingles).”

“Usually on the phone for work. I find I try to get the connection online to find out who they are, but then I like to talk to them because I think it makes a bigger difference. If someone is doing an introduction of me, I will do an email introduction to say this is who I am and what I’m looking for, do you have time to talk. But with time zones, I haven’t always been able to do this with the firm’s expansion.”

Getting an introduction from someone else helps establish trust “especially when you’re coming from an area of relative ignorance.”

“I try to do it in person, through the mingles I’ve gone to, the HR breakfast that happens, and often times it’s reaching out to people that you know but don’t have a lot to do with...colleagues that are potentially going to help me with what I’m looking for. So it’s about reaching back to people.”
“And I always try, when someone reaches out to me, to respond, because I know it’s reciprocal.”

“It makes a big difference, [going for coffee with people who request a meeting] I’ve done that a few times with people who want to find out about the company, pitch us for business. And we try to do the same thing for Camosun College and UVic as far as maintaining a profile.”

Email used over social media, except for “LinkedIn. Sometimes I post on LinkedIn. I don’t usually use Facebook, I go there to see pics of my nieces and nephews. I’ve had people reach out to me on LinkedIn, I’ve posted stuff on LinkedIn.”

Usually posts: “Positions, new jobs.”

Also participates in conversation boards on the HRMA website about topics “good use of sharing information. So on those distribution lists.” Sometimes talking to new people in those conversations.

“Try to figure out if there was a mutual person we should use to initiate conversation, then phone them and say I’d like to talk to you about xyz... do you have 10 minutes to schedule a time. Ideally meet with them in person, if that’s of interest to them.”

Use concise communication because people tend to be really busy.

“Thank them for information, really appreciate it, enjoyed it. Keep up in responding to emails—really important from a timeliness perspective. Sometimes you lose contact with people and the commonality you used to have wasn’t there. Sometimes it’s ok to let relationships die.”

“Someone who used to work with me—we always do bday’s. She takes me for my bday, I take her for hers. Do couples’ movies and dinners with other friends.”

How to transition from work relationship to friendship: “A lot of times it’s taking the work thing and making it more social. [Going for drinks].”
“You need to take that step of saying, “How about a movie tonight, or how about dinner because I don’t feel like going home or whatever the case is. So you’re putting yourself out there and you’re risking a little bit because you could be shot down, but if you can communicate and check that it’s not unwelcome then it’s probably ok.”

“I’m an executive where I am, but if there’s a new staff member I’d like to get to know. You have to step it up and take the risk.”

Building trust: “By being truthful, sharing about yourself, being comfortable looking like an idiot, or saying you’ll never guess what I did—just screwed up. Being genuinely interested in what they’re doing, in their challenges, in their opportunities, and checking what you’re saying” to make sure you’re not giving directives, “but supporting them through whatever they’re doing and offering suggestions. Respecting other people’s space.”

“I’m not really a salesperson. I can sell ideas, if I’m committed to them. I can sell companies I’m employed for and recruiting for.” But otherwise, no.

“From work perspective” check in with people when have something to tell them, or “giving them an update about something... this is what I’ve been working on.”

“How to keep in contact... usually a phone call, just an email to say “it’s been a long time... how about ______” makes you realize you need to do it [visiting] more than you do.”

“Facebook is good because it’s referenceable. You can remember things about people [using it].”

“The relationships with people I just really like will probably be fostered through [ICO] and as long as the relationship is built, it will keep going. Some of them I would [bring on to my company].”
“Often times when you meet someone and realize they either now someone who is important for you or that has a knowledge base that is important for you, you just need to make sure that you can log it in the right part of your brain to bring it back at a later stage and end up using it [the connection].”

“I had some amazing bosses. My boss at MoneyMart hired me for a position, then I was given a lot of latitude to grow within HR. I did work with some cool people. When I left school there weren’t a lot of HR jobs, but once I got one, I stayed on at that company, got a promotion and a whole bunch of cool things happened from that. The boss was more of a mentor role.”

What makes ppl good networkers: “Eye connection is big, ability to relate to people, have conversations, not be super tense, be able to laugh. Ideally they remember things, or I remember things about them, so you carry on from a conversation, as opposed to starting again all the time.”

“They’re memorable and I would be memorable to them so we can pick it up [conversation up] again.”

“I grew up with sisters, so I think I relate more truthfully with women than men, but enjoy men’s company more. Women can be not real—that really superficial type. It’s making sure you have commonality. I was the tomboy, so I have that comfort level. Not a super girly girl, so sometimes it’s harder to relate to girly girls.”

“If there were two people in a room I didn’t know [man and woman] I’d probably go up to either one of them and shake their hands, and introduce myself. I’d probably approach the person that looked the most welcoming.”

Welcoming = “open posture, eye connection, animated in speaking.”

Which qualities allow you to relate well with people: “I care about people. That comes across. I want what’s best for people—want them to be successful in whatever they’re doing and I’m willing to help people get there. I’m accepting of people and their different challenges. I think I’ve got a level of
energy that is positive, I’ve got a belief that people can do whatever it is they choose to do and I’d encourage them to do that.”

Advice to someone: “talk to as many people as you can, find out about as many businesses as you can, do your research, but by the same token if you’re open and asking questions, people like talking about themselves. If you’re open and interested people will open up to you and even if there’s nothing you get from that from a job perspective, there’s often awareness and understanding that can help [you in your career].”

**Notes: Interview with Jim Cooper**

“I usually start with a phone call or email, if I wanted to get a talk show contact I'm a big fan of just calling somebody up and talking to them on the phone. Emails are nice to communicate, but I will generally only use email if it’s somebody I already know and have an ongoing working relationship with, like someone in the ministry or a contact I've developed because email is very impersonal. And when I do write emails to someone I don't know I usually take the time to write it more like a letter. I will structure it in a much less colloquial way than you'd see in emails between people who know one another. Always make sure to thank the person for their time, use formal language—but not so formal as to be stuffy or snobby-- but you get what I mean.”

“I always treat everything on a case-by-case basis. Depends on the relationship. For some people I know it's in their best interest to come on the show and get their message to the public, so those people I don't feel so bad about asking for their time — it's reciprocal. However, there are other people— it's usually the guests who want to come on are the ones you don't want to have on all that often because we don't want to look like we're representing any special interest. We try to strive for balance.”
“Usually I just send messages every now and again, maybe I'll pick up the phone and discuss current events, or say I'm thinking about doing a talk show again soon, nothing in stone right now but just wondering if there's anything going on you think we should cover — tapping into their expertise because they have something to offer.”

“I would use Facebook if email isn't an option, but I tend to view Facebook as a less formal means of communication, and therefore, I don't want to use the word unprofessional, but my person thing is that an email or letter sent with company letterhead or signature block from your business account is much more professional than a little message typed on Facebook. I would use Facebook maybe to drop a line to an already established contact, or I would use it to say “hey wanna come on the show again to talk about this?” Yesterday, actually Carol James was on and we had a network contact to go to. And I keep notes on what is the best way to get a hold of people. Some respond faster to emails than phone and visa verse. If someone is very busy, like a ministerial assistant, busy council member or university professor, I'm more likely to send them an email because I'm cognisant of the fact that they will have that blackberry on the table in front of them in their meeting. And while they're unable to pick up the phone and have a conversation, they are more than willing to keep that little red light blinking, open their email and say “oh hey, _____ wants me to come on his show today and will type me a five word message “in a meeting, love to come on the show will talk to you in a bit. Once again, that's something I usually do with an established contact.”

“I try to cultivate all the relationships in my professional circle that I can because quite frankly no one knows what the future holds and I'll never make an enemy when I could make a friend. We can all help each other. With networking it's all about who we know and that is the way the world functions. So if I
have the opportunity to foster a positive relationship with someone, regardless of how valuable I perceive they'll be in the future, I usually take that opportunity.”

“Very social person. Every report card I ever had in school said I was a very capable, bright student, but would get better marks if he didn't spend so much time talking to people. What I've done is taken that natural desire I have to be friendly, to talk with people to talk about issues and have capitalized on that trait and turned it into a successful career.”

“If someone doesn't want to talk to you, they won't, so you don't want to trick them into saying something as a reporter because you don't want to sacrifice that relationship down the road. At the end of the day, if they really don't want to talk to the media, we leave them alone. There are other ways to cover a story. But I will go to them and say, we're talking to so and so and so and so and so and are going to ask for their input, and would be happy to have your input as well. But if you'd prefer the record be dictated by someone else—someone who disagrees with you—then that's what's going to happen because we need your comment. We won't not do the story because one party doesn't want to comment. Now we will bend heaven and earth to try to get both sides into a story but if that one person doesn't want to come on, that's just life.”

“ I walk up and say hi. If I want to talk to someone, there's usually a reason. So I walk up and ask them about that topic. Ran into local politician at a recent social function and he just happened to be a member of a party in BC that's seeing strife. And I said, this is what I'm hearing, what's your take. No they didn't break caucus confidentiality, but it's a perfect start to the conversation... saying what do you think about this issue? Ask a question that's important to that person. If you go up to somebody who is an environmentalist, you'll talk about environment, a politician you talk about politics. Economist, latest news about interest rates — hey what do you think about them?”
“All about picking ppl's brains. People and knowledge are a resource. I don't they realize how valuable their knowledge is. People love to share knowledge. I know I do. I'm the kind of person where if somebody wants to hear what I think about something, I'm more than happy to talk about it with them. And many people out there are the same way. You just have to give them that opportunity.”

“From personal experience, I've had ppl try to build personal relationships with me, when to me it's overwhelmingly clear that they're only interested in speaking with me because I have something they want. And frankly, when I detect that I'm insulted and disinclined to give them what they want. It's disingenuous. You feel like you're being used. On the other hand, if someone comes up to me and says I'd really like to interview you about your networking skills because you network every day. I'd say ya. Just like I have with you. Whereas if someone said let's do lunch and then half way through they pulled out a notebook and a blackberry to start recording me and said oh hey by the way I have a project for school... I asked you here today to talk about networking, I'd be like, now hold on, why couldn't you just tell me upfront. There is nothing wrong with a business relationship being a business relationship.”

“I have news makers who want to get their news out to the public, and listeners who want to hear from the news makers. Now I have to balance those interests so that listeners get what they want and those on my show get the chance to talk to the public. And I believe there is a mutual benefit when that happens. And I'm not talking about shaping people's minds and telling them what to think.”

“I've never had social phobias, but I know people that do. It's like any fear, it goes away with practice. Like jumping off a diving board. But don't turn down those opportunities because there are opportunities everywhere. You know someone who might be able to help you out — don't be afraid to ask for a bit of their time. Many people are flattered. I remember when I was first getting into radio, one of our assignments was to ask for an hour of someone’s time for an informational interview. I
remember thinking why would anyone that important want to give up an hour to talk to me? And I was surprised to see that not only did they say yes, but they were glad I'd asked.

“The whole human race works from relationships. Sure we have processes for everything, but at the end of the day, relationships have an immeasurable value in pretty much everything—every government, every corporation. I'm always the kind of person that will work to make friends.”

“Above all, with the work I do. If I had one directive it would be that I am fair. I'm merely providing scrutiny when I ask people the tough questions. For example, that way people know that when I ask them a tough question, I'm not trying to pick on them, there's no ulterior motive, I'm not playing favourites. I ask a question to get the truth and people respect that. I was invited to the Prime Minister's residence for a garden party. I asked why—I didn't think I was particularly favourable to Ottawa, and they said well, you’re really fair to us (and I don't give the government an easy time of it on my show) but I try to give credit where it's due and try to be fair without spinning it.