

10 For Building RELATIONSHIPS TIPS THAT WORK



BY DR. ALAN ZIMMERMAN, CSP

1. Use the other person's name.

Whether you are passing someone in the hall, entering a meeting room, or greeting a friend at dinner, speak the other person's name. Instead of merely saying "Good morning," say "Good morning, Bill." It makes the other person feel important, and we all want that.

2. Never eat alone.

Successful people grab lunch with friends and colleagues. As career coach Anita Attridge tells "Forbes" magazine, "Lunch is an excellent time to continue to build relationships and network with others." Once again it tells the other person that he or she is important because you are making time for them.

3. Respect the other person's time.

Everybody is busy these days, and many people are crazy busy. So if you ask for ten minutes of someone's time for a brief conversation, stick to your agreement. Don't go past your ten minutes unless the other person gives you permission to go on. That way the other person will look forward to talking to you rather than dreading it.

4. Pay attention to nonverbal cues.

Look for signs that may indicate the person is losing interest or becoming impatient, and adjust your conversation to be more sensitive to his or her needs, expectations or time constraints.

5. Have something of interest to say.

Knowing all about the Kardashians, who is in the finals of "Dancing With The Stars," and what NFL player is in trouble now will not help you get ahead in your professional networks. Consume your actual real-world news in whatever form you choose, and be familiar and conversant in local, national and international politics and events.

6. Adapt your communication style to fit with the other person's style of communicating.

In the book "You Can't Do It Alone: Building Relationships for Career Success," Glass and Brody say, "Mirror the personality and behavioral style of the person with whom you are meeting." In other words, does he or she want the big picture or the details? Does he or she speak quickly or slowly? Does the person want to spend more time on small talk or get right down to business? Honor the other person's preferences if at all possible.

7. Help the other person succeed.

As human relations expert Anthony Robbins points out, "Some of the biggest challenges in relationships come from the fact that most people enter a relationship in order to get something: they're trying to find someone who's going to make them feel good. In reality, the only way a relationship will last is if you see your relationship as a place that you go to give, and not a place that you go to take."

8. Send more notes.

If you've arranged a special meeting with someone, follow up that meeting with a thank-you note. Send a handwritten note thanking the person for taking the time to meet with you. Send greeting cards ... birthday, holiday, congratulations, and sympathy cards. Very few people practice this so-called "common courtesy" anymore, so your note automatically puts you in the top tier of thoughtful, appreciative, professional people.

9. Ask more questions.

If it's been a while since you've spoken to the other person, ask, "What's new?" and be genuinely interested in his or her answer. Notice items displayed in their offices; ask about their weekend. Learn about his or her hobbies and interests and ask about them. Most people appreciate being the center of your attention.

10. Look for ways to be of help, and then do it.

Learn about the problems and issues the other person has to deal with. Find solutions. When you learn the other person needs a service, offer to connect the person to your resources (i.e. travel agents, nanny service, etc.). It may be as simple as saying, "I heard you say that you are looking for a new personal accountant. I'm really happy with the person I'm using. Would you like me to connect the two of you?" Or offer to drive the other person to a meeting you are both attending.

Building relationships is just one of the many topics Dr. Zimmerman covers in his newest book entitled, "The Payoff Principle: Discover The 3 Secrets For Getting What You Want Out Of Life And Work," coming out in late 2014. For more information about Dr. Zimmerman or about "The Payoff Principle," visit his website at www.drzimmerman.com