

# 10 Secrets to Networking Success

By Keith Ferrazzi

1. **You Can't Get There Alone.** For each and every thing you want to achieve in life, whether it's landing a job, earning a raise or promotion, or finding lifelong romance, there'll be at least one person on the other end making decisions. Everything we do can only be accomplished through and with other people. Simply put, success, of any kind, requires relationships.

2. **Business Relationships Are Personal Relationships.** The most common mistake people make when building relationships for career success is treating business contacts differently than personal friends. Just think for a moment about the people you work with on a professional level who are also close personal friends. Aren't they always more forgiving when you slip up and more helpful when you're in need? Of course! I guarantee your work will become easier and more joyful if you make more of your business relationships personal.

3. **Have a good RAP.** Later this year, my company is going to release a workbook to help you build a full-fledged Relationship Action Plan (RAP) for achieving your goals in the next 60 days through the next 10 years, but for now, here's a simple way to get started. First, write down your goals. Then, next to each goal, write the names and types of people who can help you achieve them. Think of (and be sure to take notes!) how you can reach those people and how you can contribute to their success, also. The more specific your plan and the more you put your goals out there, the more everyone will conspire to help you. But if you don't focus on what you want or you don't tell anyone, no one can help you. They can't read your mind.

4. **Build it before you need it.** I can't tell you how many times a friend has called me and said, "Keith, I just became unemployed. I need to start networking; will you teach me how?" My answer: "No. No. No. You need to start job-hunting! You should have been building relationships for the past five or ten years, so now that you need a job, you could make twenty calls and have five job offers waiting for you in a week." The lesson: Start building those relationships today!

5. **Don't be a networking jerk.** When I give talks to college and grad students, they always ask me, "What are the secrets to success? What are the unspoken rules for making it big?" "So you want the inside scoop," I respond. "Fair enough. I'll sum up the key to success in one word: Generosity." The kids are shocked because they thought I'd help them learn the manipulative tricks of the self-centered "networker," the one holding a martini with one hand and scattering business cards with the other. But the time of that Networking Jerk is over! Remember that the #1 key to success is generosity. Give your talents, give your contacts, and give your hard work to make others successful without keeping score.

6. **Be interesting.** While I would say that your relationships are the most critical piece of your personal brand, before you can develop those relationships you've got to have something to say. Just having two arms, two legs, and an MBA won't get you anywhere anymore. If you want to become more valuable in the marketplace and more intriguing to the world at large, you must develop some deep expertise in your mind and root some higher-order passion in your heart.

8. **Never Eat Alone.** This rule is obviously one you can't follow 100 percent, but it's a great way to remember to invite others into the activities you already enjoy doing. I love sharing great meals, but I also enjoy bringing friends to workouts and to church. Share your passions and building relationships in no extra time than you already devote to your favorite activities. Plus, since you'll be energized and fun while doing things you love, others will see you in your best light (instead of in those nasty fluorescents of the office).

9. **Get a buddy.** Just as people lose weight more effectively if they have a workout partner, your efforts to build relationships will be more successful if you team up. You and your buddy can exchange support, guidance, and motivation. And together, you can try one of my favorite tactics—trading networks. Throw a dinner party together and you'll each be responsible for only half the guest list, half the cost, and half the effort. But your circle of friends will become twice the size, and you'll have twice the fun!

10. **If you don't ask, you won't get.** People with a low tolerance for risk, whose behavior is guided by fear, have a low propensity for success. My father taught me that to get what you want, sometimes you must be willing to go out and ask for it. The worst anyone can say is no. If they choose not to give their time or their help, it's their loss. On the other hand, you also have to be able to accept generosity when it's offered. There are times when I can make a big difference in another person's life. I can open a door or place a call or set up an internship—one of those simple acts by which destinies are altered. But too often the offer is refused. People insist on trying to beat the world by themselves, and they continue to struggle. Next time you're tempted by that misguided fantasy of success through John Wayne individualism. I hope you'll remember the first secret. You can't get there alone. We're all in this together.

*Frequently called one of the country's most "connected" people, KEITH FERRAZZI's new national-bestselling book is NEVER EAT ALONE: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time. To learn more from Ferrazzi on building relationships for success, visit <http://www.NeverEatAlone.com>*