

DEVIANT THINKING PODCAST

Episode 23 -
Networking is
Not A Dirty
Word



Transcript

See show notes at: www.deviantthinking.com/podcast/023

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Welcome back to The Deviant Thinking Podcast. I'm your host, Jennifer Thompson, and today, as always, we'll explore career advice that breaks the rules. Today's podcast is all about networking, and I'm here to tell you that networking is not a dirty word. I see so many people get a visceral reaction when I tell them that to get a great job networking is necessary, and that is a learned response. It is not what really needs to happen. So in today's episode, we're going to explore networking to its fullest and I promise we'll make it fun. But before we get started, I want to tell you about the special that I have going on for the month of May. If you are interested in my resume writing course there's so many people out there right now who have had time to think have had time to explore their careers. And for some of you unfortunately have been furloughed, so even more time on your hands. So I've had a lot of people ask about resumes lately, and I want to do my part to help people out. So for the month of May I'm offering \$150 off of my resume masterclass, it's the first time that I have ever offered such a high discount. So it is a perfect time to get going. My resume class works just like working one on one with me, it follows all of the same steps I use to work with my one to one clients to give you a really remarkable resume. So definitely consider that take some time to check it out. I promise you, it will create a remarkable resume for you, to get this discount, all you have to do is type remarkable in the coupon code and we'll put a link to that as well at the bottom of this podcast. Now back to our regularly scheduled podcast on networking. So I'm feeling a bit sassy this morning as I think about networking, because networking is that topic that when I'm coaching career clients that they hate, they hate for us even to talk about networking. They totally see it as a four letter word. And I'm

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here to tell you that networking is not that at all. We have this image of networking as being a used car salesman who's slimy and trying to get something out of someone else. And I promise you, that's networking gone bad, and that is not what we're talking about today. Networking is about growing, authentic relationships, building partnerships and helping other people out nothing slimy there. So in today's show, I promise you that I will not make a suggestion that you show up at your local Chamber of Commerce. meeting or in a church basement to do networking. Those can be great events if you want to hang out with some friends, but they are not great, true networking events. Actually, I'm kind of against events. That idea alone is there's so much pressure on it. Why would you go to a networking event? It creates an artificial scenario that most people are really uncomfortable with. So what do we do instead? Well, let's talk about what real networking is. Again, real networking is about giving, it's about supporting others, it's about being there for people that you care about and having them care for you. So that's what networking is. So if we focus on that, how do we become really good networkers? Well, the first area focus is on giving. And what does it mean to give in networking? Well to give in networking often means sharing information, sharing connections, helping people when they need it. And it's shows up in very different ways for each person, it may be sharing an article that you find, it may be sharing insights that you have, it might be collecting information, and putting it together in a way that makes sense to help someone out. This sounds time consuming, and I have a lot of people kind of push back on that. But once you get into doing it, it really does help. And you find that when you start sharing things, other people start sharing with you and you start building that collateral of goodwill between each other and that's really what networking is all about.

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So I've talked about that. theory of giving. But I want to share what it really means because I hate failure. I like to see it in true application. So great example that I saw over the last two weeks was with my husband, Allen and his business. Allen is really seen as an expert within his industry, and he had a few people reach out to him. There's a lot going on in the world right now, folks, if you hadn't noticed, there's a lot of uncertainty. And because Allen has been this expert within his industry for years, he had a few people reach out to him and ask like, what are you seeing right now? How do you think things are going to go forward? So instead of just kind of blowing it off, Allen actually really dug in. He said, You know, this is a great prompt for me to sit down and take some time about what's happening in my industry. And he created a report on what is happening into in his industry. He looked up government records to find information. He scrolled through trade journals. He used his own insights. He looked at what some of his friends and colleagues were saying on their posts on things like LinkedIn and Facebook. So he kind of used all of his resources and his vast network to gather information and distill it down into a report. Then he shared that report with three very different industry partners that he works with all three of which you asked him for his insights, one of which is a client of his that is looking to book a large amount of business with him over the next

year. Well, that's awesome, right? He's just shared great insights and built his status with them as somebody who can provide not just quality product, but great business insights. So he's building that network. So that is exactly what Networking is another person he shared it with is more on the vendor side of things. It's a partner that he works with. And with that partner, he shared all the insights in in that very same conversation, that person said, you know, that project we worked on a year ago, that really didn't go anywhere. I've been thinking about it lately. And I actually think that we can move forward with it, let's go back into trials on it, we've got the time right now, because kind of the business is off, and we might really be able to move it forward. If that moves forward, that could be millions of dollars of business for his organization. So totally makes sense. And he wouldn't have got that if he didn't share those insights. And in the same way for one of the other organizations that he does a lot of work with, it's prompted entire conversation on marketing, that again, may change their business direction. So again, he's added value there. So just willy nilly put something out there. He actually really took his time to dig in, and really built that, that connection with those other folks. He is now a trusted expert. And I promise you, if things change, and he needs work, or he needs information, those are going to be the people who are first in line to help him. Because he's always been helping them. They are going to be the ones to think of him when there's consulting jobs that need to be done. There's going to be the ones to think of him just to connect and give him ideas for his own business because he's been giving. So I think that's a really solid example that any of us can do. You know, if you were an accountant, and right now, oh, my goodness, all of these different options with the cares package and things happening with our government is offering different money for different businesses and you can share your insights on that. What do you learning what do you know today? How can it impact business? What could be things that businesses could be doing to take advantage of this situation? any insights that you see if you can see them and share those within

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your network appropriately, can really help you build that network, in the same sense, reach out to others as well and ask them their opinions. People love to be asked for help. That sounds so crazy, but that's the other part of networking is the receiving side of it. People love to help. They love to share their insights. And this is something I've had to figure out in my career was that asking for help does not make you look weak. It actually makes you look stronger, in that it's a disservice to others to not allow them to help you. I know when I help someone out, I feel awesome. It makes my day when I can help someone out, so who am I to not give somebody else that pleasure by not asking for help? So it was a real mindset change, for me to say, asking for help is absolutely not a sign of weakness. It's actually helping other people express who they are, and allow them to be seen as experts. So networking is that give and take. So give generously. That information that Allen provided, yeah, he might have been able to charge for it. But he was not going to charge enough for it by any means to reap the benefit that he could

receive by giving it away. So don't ever worry about that. Share your information freely. I share my information every week on this podcast. And I promise you, it comes back tenfold. So be generous with the information, you have your insights. And that's one way to build a really great network. Alright, let's go on to the next way. To be a really great networker, I promise you that you are going to quit hating networking. And this is one way absolutely to quit hating networking. And it has to do with reaching out and connecting with people. you genuinely like, Oh my goodness, right, scary. But so many people are hesitant to do this, especially if they haven't reached out in a long time. I think we all do this, we get busy in our lives, and we don't reach out and do the networking we think we should do. And then we get this shame of like, Oh my goodness, I can't call this person because I haven't talked to them in 10 years, and they're just gonna think I'm out to get something. Well, I'm here to tell you that most people actually really love hearing from people in their network and again, we go back to point number one that giving, if you can show up and give something when you contact someone new is even better. And this week I had a pretty neat experience. I had a friend of mine, his name's John. John, if you're listening, yes, I am talking about you. And John's been a podcast follower. He's been a friend. We were in an organization together. Oh, my God, way too long ago. I really want to tell you, I started it when I would. The organization when I was 21 years old, and met John soon after that, but it really has been probably 10 years, since we've chatted. I follow his work on LinkedIn. I share his posts. I'll make a comment every now and then vice versa, like I said, he's been following this podcast, but have we really sat down and talked in 10 years? No. Well, John reached out this week and he said, you know, Jennifer, with all of this going on in the world, you know, aka the COVID stuff. I don't know if my jobs is secure more, and I've decided I've neglected my networking way too long, so I'm making a point to reach out to my friends within the industry and around my industry, and really learn what's happening. I was thrilled to talk to John one, it was great to hear what he was up to, you know, there's been many nights John, John and I, we used to go to conference conferences together, you know, we'd sat drinking beer till the late hours of the night chatting, and I've missed connecting with him. So it was great to connect and hear what he's doing here where his career has gone. We've all grown so much since then, and really learn about him. Then, I was able to figure out how to help him to again, I love helping people most people do. So it's a great opportunity. He asked for help. He's like, you know, who else can

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I talk to? Which is a great network question. When you're talking to folks ask about others that they think you should connect with, you know, I mentioned to a joint friend I said, well, have you talked to George? George is a really good connector. He usually knows what's going on in the industry. And your to your industries are really close to each other, but exactly the same, he might be a great connection. And I was like, yeah, if you need to talk to George right now, I'll absolutely do that other people within my network that I knew need to share with him because that's part of me building good

collateral, I share great people with him. When I need something, he's going to come back and share things with me as well. So as part of the strategy of connecting with people, really be deliberate with who you're connecting with, go through your LinkedIn, go through your proverbial Rolodex, and who in your career have you really connected with who have you enjoyed working with who do you know and reach out to them and make a plan to do that, you know, if you don't plan to do this, it just doesn't happen by accident and connect with them on a really human level. See how they're doing people need to be checked in on right now. I mean, we're all little stir crazy being at home, it's a great time to connect, people actually have more time to connect than they have in the past. So really good opportunity. So have a plan of connection, who you want to connect with. And then also be really clear on how they can help you. I will say nothing drives me crazier than a conversation that doesn't have kind of a clear objective. And John was really clear when he called me he shared he shared clearly he said, You know what, I have neglected my my networking and I'm picking it up, right? I'm picking it up. He told me exactly why I currently have a job, but I'm not sure if it's stable. So I'm putting out feelers to see what's happening in the industry and learn more very clear objective, I'm trying to learn more. So it was easy for me to say here are some people to connect with your some organizations to look at that offer up jobs and offer up insights within within your industry that you may not be aware. Very, very clear. And then the key here is, don't forget, when you've talked to this person, you know, you've talked to this person you want to connect with, ask them what they need. Again, it's that given take Adam Grant talks about it, and give and take is important. You've got to go in both both directions. So make sure you ask them, what do they need? How can you help them? Well, for me, I need referrals all the time, John follows my work, really natural thing for me to say, you know, John, if you know anybody else who's out of work, or you need help with your resume, give me a call and let me help with that, that's how you can help me. So it's a mutual benefit to have that conversation. So make sure you're connecting to these people, that you figure out the mutual benefit, don't make it just all about you. Make it about what you jointly can do together. And, and then follow up to, I can't wait to hear what John's doing. I can't wait to know six months from now, what's going on with him? Is his company stable? Has he decided he really loves where he's at as he decided he needs to move, you know, keep me informed so that I know how again, how I can can be helping you and keep me up to date and in the process because I'm invested now and his future I want to want to know what's going on. So consider that as well. When you're networking with people as make sure it's not a one and done. Especially if you're trying to rekindle that network from the past. You know, you can be remorseful you can say I'm sorry, we haven't connected for a long time, but then don't drop the ball, again. Make sure that you keep connecting with people because they do want to help you I can't like I said I can't wait to know what what happens with John his career and and hopefully I have an impact on it and I really get to help him out. And again, I get those feel goods of helping out a friend. Again, when looking for people to connect with, there are a group of people out there, they're called super connectors. And these are a great place to start super connectors love to talk with people, they're great place to start as well because they often know how to be really good networkers and they're a great place to practice.

So if you're a little rusty on just calling someone out of the blue, think of that person that knows everyone. That super connector, often

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they're your salespeople, your vendors. They are often very involved and organizations and industry organizations. And often again, they're just the person that you think of it that everyone knows. Well, they're collectors of people and they They're thrilled to hear from you. So they're a great place to start. So don't hesitate to talk to those people. People are their value that that's how they get through life. That's how they build their own expertise is by knowing people. So it's never an inconvenience to connect with a connector. So great place to start. So start there. Like I said, Look through your LinkedIn profiles of people that you're connected to think about those people you loved working with, and think about who are those super connectors and start there when you're networking? And have fun in these conversations. Don't put a ton of pressure on yourself. Be curious. I love the word curious. Be curious when you talk to people, because that drives again, that authentic connection, because we don't want sleazy networking here folks, it's not all about you. It's about building authentic relationships. So that leads us on to my third and absolutely favorite piece of networking. And that's recommendations. You need to be recommending others. Again, that's building that collateral that you need, and that trust with others. And recommendations are a great way to do that. So how do you give a recommendation? Well, there's a couple key ways. One, LinkedIn is fabulous. You can give a recommendation to anyone and it will live on their LinkedIn profile for ever. And it makes you look good when you give recommendations. So how do you decide who to give a recommendation to well, think of those people who've impacted your career, who you loved working with? Have you gone out there and hold them that they did an awesome job? To give a good recommendation, you want to be honest. So again, look at who is in your network. That you really did love working with and be honest, share why you loved working with them share what they did above and beyond. But I want you to go a little bit further because again, good networking is about that giving. So think about where they are in their career and what do you think if they need to move to their next level? How can you be generous with that? And a really good example of that is if you have somebody who you've worked with, maybe they've worked under you, is really trying to break through to a management position. And they've never had direct reports. So there's cut, they're kind of trying to break that glass ceiling. Well, one of the best things you can do is talk about their leadership abilities, how you loved how they lead a project, how they were very organized and keeping people moving, how they motivated people and how you would trust them to lead anything. Well, that endorsement means the world to them. It takes away any question that someone would have about their leadership ability. So you've really done them and amazing service because you didn't just think about what you needed. He thought about what they needed to and gave them some really great insights on kind of moving forward in their, in their own career. Also, again, with with all this, what's going

on, people are feeling really down, they're starting to doubt themselves and getting a recommendation and mean, it makes all the difference in the world. And you can be that champion for them so that they do feel good about the work that they're doing. So it is a great time to give a recommendation. When you give a recommendation. Again, make it personal. be fun, be memorable. You know, don't try to make it such corporate speak.

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That kind of sounds like bullshit, folks. Be honest. with who they are, have some fun, put your personality into it, because one of the great things about giving great recommendations is that it is also a reflection on you. You look generous, you look like a better human being, because you cared about others. So have fun, let it reflect your personality. So giving an actual recommendation on LinkedIn is one way to do it. But another way, which is much more subtle is kind of commenting and things that folks do. And I'm talking a lot about the social media side of things. Because right now I'm assuming most of us are stuck at home. And this is kind of the medium that we we have to communicate is is through things like LinkedIn. So on LinkedIn, one example is this week, a friend of mine, Jeremy posted that he's looking for some freelance work over summer. Well, Jeremy and I worked together years ago at a major corporation. We've been good referral partners to each other over the years, he has referred me to a few jobs, I've referred him to a few jobs. I have not sat down and had a long conversation with Jeremy probably in seven years. But that doesn't mean I don't love the work that he did. It doesn't mean that I didn't think he was fabulous at his job. So when he posted that he was looking for some freelance work, absolutely shared his post. Not only did I share his post, though, I also made sure to say that he's great at what he does, and that anybody would be lucky to pick up some work that he's, he's done. And he's free and available now lucky for folks, so really to jump on it. Again, great building of relationship between him and I love Jeremy love the work that he does. It's authentic, there's no bull crap going on whatsoever. And, you know, I imagine he feels good you know, he, he knows yeah, the work I do is valid. And I feel good too, because again, maybe somebody in my network really needs the work that he's offering. And if I can connect those folks, bonus for both people. So think about that as well. If somebody is out there sharing their work, tell them how good good it is. It doesn't have to be this formal recommendation, it can be a casual recommendation. So let's go back and review about network. I hope that you've figured out that networking is not a dirty word, and hopefully the three tips that I've shared today will really help you adore networking and allow it to be fun. The thing you have to do though, folks is practice, I can give you great advice, but if you don't get out there and try it, it's going to remain painful. So get out there and think about first of all giving How do you give How do you share articles? How do you share insights, who can you help because that's going to build great networking. Second thing, reach out and connect with others. Don't be ashamed. If you haven't talked to somebody in 10 years, they haven't talked to you either. They don't have that. So reach out to them. build that

relationship today and make sure that you continue. And again, the more you do this, the easier it becomes, the more fun it becomes, is every single person you call going to have the time to connect with you is every single person going to be thrilled that you call

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maybe not

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their loss? Most people are going to be thrilled so reach out to have some fun connecting with others. And then the third thing, don't forget to give those recommendations whether formal recommendations on LinkedIn, or the more casual endorsements of folks. Both of them are great ways to connect with people and make people feel great. Then you've built that collateral so that when you need help, you can reach out to folks in the future and That they think of you you're top of mind. So that if you need them for the next job or referral, the next sale, any of those things that again, you're top of mind, they have respect for you. And they trust you because you've shown up even when you didn't need something. So networking is not a dirty word, make it fun, make it exciting and really enjoy connecting with people. I want to challenge everyone to connect with at least three people in the next 10 days that are in your network and use one of these options so giving insights and articles helping connect with others and seeing what what they're up to, or giving a recommendation. So I challenge each of you to connect with three people and one of those ways and really take this to an actionable level. I promise it will make networking fun. Well, that wraps up today's podcast, I want to remind you again about that sale going on and resume master class. I really invite you to check that out. I want everyone to stand out and have a remarkable resume. I want it to be authentic. I want to share your story. That's one of the things that we do and a Hell Yes! Resume is it tells the story of you. It allows you to be really inclusive with who you are, and I think it makes a resume that's very different from other people. So definitely check that out. Again, it follows the same process that I use with my one to one clients, and allows you to get a really really fabulous resume. That coupon code for that \$150 off is remarkable. REMARKABLE there we go. Remarkable to type that in as the coupon code when you go to checkout and it will take \$150 off of that resume class, and that's good for the month of May. So time is ticking. Get on that because it will really help you out. And if you love this podcast, take a moment and head on over to iTunes and give us a great review. Those reviews really do mean the world to me. So thank you so much and until next time, be Deviant.