

How to Be “Connective”

Lessons from Valeria Maltoni

Few things give you more joy than doing a good deed. Often that goodness comes from introducing someone to something or someone else, and that someone else doing the same -- and so on. We need to do this, and more of it if we're already doing it.

Understanding the importance and power of networks, combined with new tools is our lifeline. We have the ability to transform businesses and institutions as we have the power to do so. I hope you got goose bumps from the video.

That's what true connections can do.

A couple of months back, I wrote a post about follow through, which is the secret to successful networking. In you're connected, now what? I outlined a few action steps and things to remember. And as Dash says, it really is never too late to start, and it's not just about social networks.

Make it a habit, and you will see how quickly it yields results.

1. Believe you can make a difference.

Look at how Dana White built a UFC empire out of his desire to connect with fans.

2. Think of knowledge as a service.

We live in a remix culture, where individuals, industries, and media will thrive by allowing the exchange of ideas. That's where new connections are made.

3. Take risks.

This was one of my points when I talked about passion. They can be small ones or large ones but, by creating new habits, you are inherently exploring new territory.

4. Have a point with your view.

In other words, put substance behind the approach. Do your homework, be prepared to defend and discuss a topic intelligently and willingly.

5. Keep your promises.

This is valid at individual and organizational levels. Coming through, following up helps you maintain integrity of purpose and build credibility.

6. Say it another way.

If at first it doesn't work, assume it's because your question or request was not clear to the recipient. Look for an example, a story, or some other way to make it easier to understand.

7. Show it.

Whether it's support, empathy, or active listening, actually demonstrating it is a faster route than a few well-practiced words. Non-verbals work wonderfully here.

8. Connect actively.

If need be, do it then and there. Forward the message, make the introduction, help people see what they have in common, draw them together.

9. Write it down.

Inevitably, you will get ideas in the course of connecting. Make sure you have a way to capture them - I still do it the 1.0 way, on notepads.

10. Let them know you thought of them.

This is the nice touch that takes very little time. Depending upon your relationship stage and communication channels open, find ways to show you noticed or thought of someone habitually.

11. Be present to opportunities.

Really, you don't need to build Rome in a day, as the expression goes. It's sufficient to be willing to see an opportunity when it presents itself.

12. Think beyond your close circle.

Now that we're talking more about circles, as many experienced professionals know, it is often the people your contacts know who are most interesting, as new connections bring new ways of thinking.

There are many creative ways to connect. As Dash showed, anyone can make a connection with people who have the power to make things happen. That person could very well be you on either side of the connection-making. Want to increase the odds? Start with developing new habits.

