

## From “Wall Flower” to “Networking Diva” in Five Thrilling Steps!

▶ A Reality Vignette  
by Lorraine Rinker

For an extreme introvert like myself, “it” can be the least favorite thing in the world to do. Networking was right up there with “going to the dentist”; but now, I’m a Networking Diva and proud of it!

The reality is; you can do it, you will do it, and here’s how!

1. **Get Over Thy Shy Self!** Turn the pain into a gain by making the most of your curiosity about others. Know that everyone has a “story to tell” (who they are, what they are looking for, etc.), including you. When meeting people, listen and let others tell you their story first. This will break the ice and make it easier for you to respond with your own story.
2. **Start Big Then Go Small!** Exploring is a good thing. Begin by checking out events and mixers hosted by local Chambers, clubs, and organizations that focus on your area of interest. Use your personal contacts for referrals and the internet for research. Once you’ve make the networking circuit, narrow your focus down to just the venues you will attend on a regular basis.
3. **Don’t Worry Be Happy!** Networking should be fun; so when you feel like you just can’t smile anymore; think happy thoughts and SMILE some more! People are more likely to want to talk to you when you’re smiling; so SMILE!
4. **Be Ready To Help Others!** Networking is not only about receiving, its about giving as well. Those who help others will receive help back ten-fold (ancient networking proverb)!
5. **Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up!** Your ability to follow up with people you meet at networking events will make or break any chance of building and maintaining these new relationships. Stay connected and reconnect whenever possible!

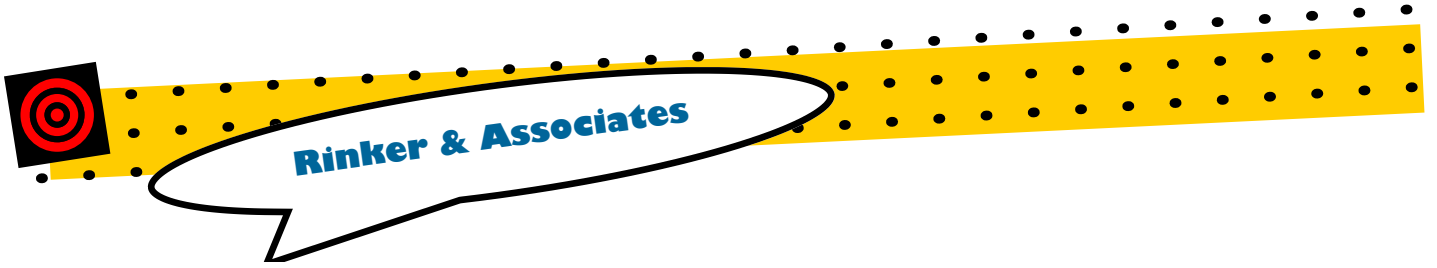
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*Whatever floats your boat . . .  
We help you stay on course!*



## Networking Tips That Will Set You Apart!

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Here's a networking tip that can help you build strong alliances.

**Contact people frequently to offer your help.** . Life is littered with people who only call when they want something. This type of person can't even spell "reciprocate", much less do it. Reciprocity is what is missing in most of today's networking. It's important to give instead of take. Make it clear that favors extended will be cheerfully returned. That way networking is not "begging", but a give and take relationship.

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