

The Heart and Art of NetWeaving

By Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

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I will always be grateful to **Nancy Richardson**, whom I met at a National Conference in Dallas, Texas only two months after 9/11 – the Saturday before Thanksgiving, 2001.

According to Nancy:

“Although I met Bob through some NetWeaving which he did for me that had a great impact personally, and professionally in the Insurance & Financial Services industry, myself and others at Xerox Global Services quickly recognized how this concept could equally apply in a business relationship-building context. We have embraced this NetWeaving concept and witnessed it in action, helping stimulate sharing and brainstorming in facilitating our key executive workshops and councils, as well as internally within our company. We are proud to be an important part of this project which we believe will positively impact the entire business community”.

- NANCY RICHARDSON, former VP, Xerox Global Services, USA

The story of how Nancy created one of the most memorable events in my lifetime is included at the end of this e-book. Don't miss the “**General Norman Schwarzkopf and Nancy Richardson**” story as evidence of the value of NetWeaving, and a perfect example of how, “***What goes around. . .does come back around***”.

“AFTER READING ABOUT NETWEAVING, I REALIZED THAT I’VE BEEN DOING THIS ALL MY LIFE, JUST WITHOUT A GOOD WORD FOR IT. I APPLAUD MR. LITTELL’S EFFORTS AT SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THIS ‘WIN-WIN’ FORM OF THINKING, WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BENEFIT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE”.

Arthur Blank, Owner of the Atlanta Falcons and Co-Founder, Home Depot

After you read this book, if you’ve liked it and found it helpful to you personally and professionally, I only request that you make a donation either to a charity of your choice or to the “Pay It Forward Foundation” (www.payitforwardfoundation.org).

Checks can be mailed to: The Pay It Forward Foundation
Kerry Taylor, Executive Director
1295 Descanso Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Please email the Name of the Charity and Amount you choose to donate to: chiefnetweaver@gmail.com for our records.

Re-Introduction

When NetWeaving began, I had no idea that over the next decade it would become a global phenomenon and partly that's due - thanks to permission from Catherine Ryan Hyde, author of book, "**Pay it Forward**", on which the movie classic of the same name was based – to the fact that NetWeaving is now known globally as the '**business**' version of "**pay it forward**".

Actually, even before the word, NetWeaving came about, the concept started with a term a good friend of mine, **Geoffrey Kridel** and I called, "**Do A Favor Marketing**" (DAFM). In order to trademark it, we changed it to "Do A Favr Marketing™". One day, during a brainstorming session for the company we had formed, "**The Enrichment Company**", as we were discussing '**weaving**' enrichment into the process, the word "*NetWeaving*" popped out of my mouth and as they say, the rest is history.

Originally though, we were talking about creating a '**favor factory**' - an index of places to go for reference resources of all variety. I was a little worried that there was this fairly new company who was already ahead of the curve in providing those kinds of resources and information named, "Google", and so luckily the direction we chose was really more directed toward making 'connections', while also 'weaving' resources and reference sources into the formula.

In the very early days, I was almost exclusively involved in my insurance consulting practice and Geoffrey was doing his own thing and there was nothing coming in in the way of revenue so for both of us, what we had thought was going to become a 'business', had to become a 'hobby'.

Around 1999, I decided to write the first book on "NetWeaving" called "**Power NetWeaving**". And although I had written or contributed to many articles in the financial services industry and co-authored a book on "cross-selling" for Property & Casualty agents to sell more life insurance, I had no visibility in the 'general' business book market.

My wife actually was the one who pointed me to a book, "**Power Networking**" – co-authored by Donna Fisher in Houston, Texas. and I saw several principles and concepts in her book which related to NetWeaving. I called Donna and asked if I sent her my manuscript, done up to that point, would she edit and add her own comments and observations and that book, "**Power NetWeaving**" was published by National Underwriter in 2001.

This book was largely an explanation of the two primary skill sets of NetWeaving: Learning how to become a better '**connector**' of others with their needs rather than your own, and secondly, learning how to '*position yourself*' as a gratuitous '**resource**' for others – no-strings-attached – so you would establish yourself as the 'go-to' person, even when it had nothing to do with your own field or industry.

A good portion of the book simply detailed living examples of persons I had known who were involved in financial services – insurance professionals, CPAs, Attorneys, and Financial Planners who had been doing one or both aspects of NetWeaving without a word for it. One of the best examples is also featured in this book – Mark Schooler (page 63).

But in 2000 as I was beginning to speak to various groups on the concept – mostly networking groups, service clubs, and some job-seeker groups, I began to recognize something I had totally missed while writing the first book.

I had put great emphasis on the belief that the action steps of NetWeaving – making ‘connections’ for the benefit of others and providing gratuitous “resources” would eventually come back around to benefit them but I began realizing that I had missed the “**HEART**” of NetWeaving.

As you practice the skill sets and action steps of NetWeaving, you not only are helping others, but there are two IMMEDIATE benefits that come back around to benefit you as the NetWeaver. First, since you’re just ‘practicing’ the Golden Rule in a real world context, it actually elevates your image in other peoples’ eyes. And that’s even more true as you become an Ambassador of the concept and spread the word to others and within organizations, companies, and groups of which you’re a part.

But secondly, scientific evidence shows that the euphoric feeling you get after you’ve really helped someone is real. And so every act of NetWeaving ENERGIZES you, and makes you better at everything you do.

So hopefully this “Re-Introduction” of NetWeaving will help you see that NetWeaving isn’t just some warm and fuzzy philosophy and concept that warms your innards but doesn’t really make much of a difference in people’s lives. It’s “**ACTION**” oriented and the more you do, the better you get at doing it, and the more you want to do. I hope by reading this book, or re-reading the modified and expanded version, if you already have read it before, that it will make you want to do more of it and thereby improve your NetWeaving skills.

Then just watch how your business and/or your career grows! Over the years, NetWeaving has inspired two motto’s which serve to remind me that your good deeds will in fact come back around to benefit the NetWeaver as well because:

“Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen.”

“When you open the door for someone else, you never know who YOU will meet as a result.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND TRIBUTES

By now, in addition to **Nancy Richardson**, whom I thanked previously, the number of people I should acknowledge and to whom I should pay tribute would number in the hundreds and even thousands. So rather than risk leaving someone out and hurting feelings, I'm going to just name a few individuals who, without their help, NetWeaving would never have come to where it is today.

First I want to recognize my wife **Carolyn** who put up with me as for more than the first ten years, almost everything I did pertaining to NetWeaving, went to charity, including the proceeds from the sale of the original edition of the book. But Carolyn now, as a fairly new but highly successful real estate salesperson, practices "NetWeaving" on a daily basis. I still remember one friend up here at Big Canoe where we live who, knowing Carolyn, said, *"Don't kid yourself Bob, Carolyn's a much better NetWeaver than you will ever be."*

Then there's my friend **Geoffrey Kridel** whose creative juices and friendship helped us to nurse "**Do A Favr Marketing™**" to a point where NetWeaving could be born.

And once again, had **Donna Fisher**, not agreed to collaborate with me on the original book, "**Power NetWeaving**", who knows if the concept would ever have had enough sticking power and recognition as a concept.

Then, my friend, **Catherine Ryan Hyde**, author of "*Pay it Forward*" who recognized NetWeaving as a way that 'pay it forward' could be practiced in the real world, especially in the business world, and allowed me to label NetWeaving the '**business**' version of "**Pay it Forward**": You introduce and host a meeting for two others. Then when at some point in the meeting, they usually turn the tables on their NetWeaver host and ask, "*How can we help you?*", you simply ask each of them to just "Pay It Forward" and 'host' a meeting for two others. It's magic and watch what happens after you do that!

And finally, someone who is the best walking-talking promoter and advertisement for NetWeaving a human could ask for – **Jeffrey Gitomer** (www.gitomer.com). His Foreword follows but I still remember the email I received from Perth, Australia with a copy of a syndicated column of one of Jeffrey's articles. When asked about '**networking**' Jeffrey wrote, "*My good friend, Bob Littell, is the only person I have ever met who totally 'gets' networking. He has named his concept of networking 'netweaving' (www.netweaving.com). Bob is all about finding leads and opportunities for others. Bob is all about giving for the sake of giving, not giving with the intent to receive.*"

And once again thanks to hundreds, if not thousands of others, who have helped move this concept to where it is today, and I hope you'll continue the journey with me as it grows to even greater heights in the future and as hopefully we train an army of "**NetWeaving Ambassadors**" to be out there spreading the NetWeaving message.

FOREWORD

By Jeffrey Gitomer

Taken from an October 11-17, 2002 Atlanta Business Chronicle column –
“*How to NetWeave your way to Sales Success*”

As an impressionable youth, I watched my dad bring people together that he thought could “*do business together*”.

“*What do you make, Pop?*” I asked.

“*Nothing and everything son. They don’t pay me, but I will often be rewarded by them or others in many ways,*” he said.

“*I don’t get it, Pop.*”

“*If you give to others without measuring, you get repaid without ever asking for it,*” he stated as though it were a law of the universe.

“*Oh,*” I said, without really understanding.

“*You’ll get it later, son,*” he promised.

My dad repeated his philosophy for years. Helping others at every turn, and bringing people together. And was often rewarded.

By osmosis, I have done the same thing. Never really thought about the right or wrong of it. Never even questioned the validity of it. Just did it. And have often been rewarded. Very often.

Then I came to find that someone had named the process: NetWeaving. Bob Littell from Atlanta has even written a book about it. Cool.

Bob invited me to be the guest of honor at two NetWeaving events. One sort of public, held after one of my seminars. And a more private, smaller event held the next evening at a more upscale location.

At the first event, about 150 people were there putting a spin on the traditional “networking” process. “What can I do for you.” rather than, “What can you do for me.” Great concept. And it worked. After a brief lesson and introduction to the concept of NetWeaving, people were engrossed so deeply that no one wanted to leave.

The second, smaller event was held at the fabulous Spa Sydell,. An incredible day spa in midtown Atlanta that puts a new meaning to the word “pamper.” It’s scientific skin care combined with Spa services of every description.

About 50 people of some influence and character (I guess that includes me) came together to see what they could do for one another.

The results were fantastic.

People spent hours trying to involve themselves in others' needs. To give of themselves first.

Wanna NetWeave? Start with your BEST, Your best friends, your best contacts, your best influencers, and even your best prospects. Throw a party. Doesn't have to be big. More like a social gathering with a message and a mission: help others first.

The good news is that people who think it's a crazy idea won't show. The better news is that everyone who does show for the event will be eager to participate. The best news is that you will have business and opportunities thrown at you left and right.

Think about the power of it. In traditional networking, you show up to "work the room" and try to make a few contacts. At a NetWeaving event, all the people in the room are trying to make connections for you. Wow. Wow.

In a nutshell, NetWeaving is connecting people and positioning yourself as a resource to others – often on a totally gratuitous basis – just with the belief to know that "*what goes around, comes around.*"

The interesting part is that when you become involved in NetWeaving, you get into a new business frame of mind. It makes you aware of the needs of others and at the same time challenges you to draw on your full range of contacts. The challenge is as great as the reward.

Like anything else, you have to practice the process outside the event in order to master it. Bob Littell is the current master. He's an insurance guy who doesn't sell insurance. He creates opportunities for other people to succeed, and then people buy from Bob.

Proof? I've seen it personally. And in two events, I've never see so much power in a room. Not necessarily powerful people, but rather people with the power to help others. It's a business sight to see. And when someone offers their help, you can't help but want to help others.

My philosophy of business has always been "**give value first.**" People read my articles and want more. Been doing that for eleven extremely successful years. Plan to continue that process for the next twenty-five years or so, and then I'll quit. The net result of my column is that I make hundreds of friends by helping them. Friends that one day may turn into business. That's NetWeaving.

Chapter 1

THE SKILL SETS OF NETWEAVING REVISITED – THE NETWEAVER’S CREED

*Do not go where the path may lead,
Go instead whether there is no path and leave a trail.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

NetWeaving is a “Golden Rule” form of networking which focuses on helping others first, or at least putting others’ needs, problems and opportunities on a more equal plane with those of our own; doing so with the belief and conviction that, over time, “*what goes around, will come back around.*”

The Golden Rule is all about helping others: “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*”. That at least indirectly implies you wouldn’t mind if someone returned the favor you’ve done for them. So it is with NetWeaving. Your motives are first and foremost, to help others, but there’s certainly nothing wrong with doing so in ways which increase the chances that the NetWeaver will benefit in the long run. I like to say that NetWeaving is done out of “***enlightened self-interest***”.

The NetWeaving help you provide others comes in two forms:

- Being a strategic connector of other people – helping create “win-win” relationships between two or more other persons, a *strategic matchmaker*.
- Being a strategic resource provider for others – helping them find solutions to their needs and problems, as well as ways to help them take advantage of ideas or opportunities they have, but which, without someone else’s help, will never materialize into anything of consequence.

One of the most interesting and important discoveries I’ve made since the first book (“*Power NetWeaving*”) was released, and since I’ve matured in my understanding of the concept, involves the *matchmaking* which one does (i.e. connecting other people). My revelation was that a NetWeaver does not need to be anywhere near as *strategic* as I once thought necessary in order to have a positive impact. I used to overly worry about whether or not these two persons whom I was bringing together would find a good strategic fit so they could discover ways to help each other.

Would the fact that one of them was in this business or industry, and the other person was in this other business or industry, make strategic sense from a standpoint of whether or not they could find ways to be of help to each other?

Would it be almost certain that the two persons would find things or interests in common or discover people they both knew and didn't realize? And would the connection I made or the resource that I, or someone in my network provided, be of real value?

For example, if I was looking to connect someone in the real estate business with someone else, I would normally look for someone potentially interested in buying a home, or maybe someone who needed or did interior decorating, where they might be able to send business back and forth to each other.

But what really began to be clear was that in the majority of the cases, when I'd put almost any two **'good'** people together (both 'givers'), *they* would find some things they had in common, or ways to help each other, often totally outside the reason I had thought for matching them up.

Although much of the NetWeaving which I and others do has some strategic logic behind it, I have found it's not necessary to be overly concerned about whether there's a strategic fit. So long as they both are mostly 'givers' and not 'takers', just put two creative, talented, interesting and successful people together and sit back and watch the magic as the positive energy flows. If this is someone you think is interesting and whom you would like to get to know better, so would many other persons benefit from getting to know him or her.

Can't stress enough. The only real ingredient for NetWeaving to flourish is that both people whom you are connecting need to be people of good character. . .be *givers* and not *takers*, meaning they have the capacity and the desire to help others, rather than just themselves.

In the absence of these gratuitously general human qualities, here's what often occurs.

The inwardly, self-focused person whom you connect with someone else will not be actively looking out for ways to help the other person and instead will simply be looking for ways to benefit him or herself. If the other person who is a *giver* ends up connecting the *taker* with someone or providing resources, the *taker* will not feel any obligation, or worry about returning the favor the NetWeaver did since they're still all about, "*What's In It For ME*"? Unfortunately, when a *taker* recognizes you as a *connector* and a *giver*, rest assured, they'll be back for more.

That spoils the concept for the *giver* who hopefully will realize he or she just needs to move on when this conclusion seems obvious, which unfortunately is not always easy to recognize.

You won't be able, nor should you try to *convert* people to becoming NetWeavers. Generally, people either genuinely derive joy and satisfaction from helping others, or they don't. My rule of thumb is, you give, and you give, and give, and when you see nothing coming back, you just go on to help the next person.

Luckily, there are many exceptions to this. In fact, some persons who have been very inwardly self-focused over much of their lives, convert themselves when they discover NetWeaving and learn the joy which comes from helping others. Some become passionate about it as they also notice how infectious and contagious it is.

THE SKILL SETS

The fundamental skill sets and the qualities of being or becoming a Power NetWeaver include:

- Learning how to create new habits and how to make them permanent, , , understanding that even **good** NetWeavers can become **great** NetWeavers with practice.
- Improving your listening and note-taking skills. This is critically important for making your NetWeaving most effective and especially for enhancing the chances that good things will happen in return.
- Understanding the importance of follow up and follow through. Learning to be a better listener and taking better notes will all be for naught if you don't have good follow up. And later you'll learn that the greatest NetWeavers not only 'follow up' but they use their creativity to 'follow through' in ways that surprise and delight.

The first book, "**Power NetWeaving**" was about the *how-to's* of NetWeaving, and how various persons in several areas of Financial Services had been applying NetWeaving skill sets, just without calling it that. This book re-emphasize these *how-to's*, but goes on to expand on the '**art**' of NetWeaving, but go on to explain the '**heart**'. That involves learning how to become an ambassador of the concept and how to spread the good word about all the positive things that occur with NetWeaving. It also includes teaching and mentoring others, or just using the word in everyday conversations, and how this can have a positive impact on your image, your attitude, your energy, and your business, as well as on your personal life, and on that of others.

NETWEAVING SKILL SET CHECKLIST

1. Who are the last two persons you can remember **connecting** primarily with their benefit and welfare in mind rather than your own?

2. Did you ever follow up to see what the outcome of that introduction turned out to be?
3. Did you ever find out if this introduction possibly ended up with another introduction to a third party. . .or a fourth?
4. Who is the best NetWeaver you know, someone who is constantly connecting other people? Do you notice that their listening pattern is different, listening for opportunities to connect others and help?
5. Have you ever thought of yourself as a *resource* for others? If yes, what things have you done to *position* yourself as a gratuitous resource provider? If no, what things should you be doing, or what you could be doing better to help you develop those skills?
6. How broad and deep of a “*resource network*” have you established – persons whom you would feel comfortable referring to your best client or customer – with the absolute confidence that he or she will give exceptional service and that your image will be enhanced from making the referral? If it’s only a few people wide and deep, why haven’t you been looking for more persons to become part of your ***Trusted Resource Network?***

Chapter 2

IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS CAN BE CHANGED OVERNIGHT

*There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why. . .
I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?*

ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Not long after the original book, “*Power NetWeaving*”, was released, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, unfolded. In fact, I was scheduled to be making a presentation on NetWeaving that fateful morning to the Professional Women’s Roundtable in Pomona, California. The meeting organizer didn’t know whether or not to cancel the meeting, but since 30 women (and one male guest) showed up, they voted in favor of having it, and asked me to go ahead and speak. I’m glad I did because I discovered things at the meeting which helped me recognize the true “**heart**” of NetWeaving.

Looking back, there was something almost surrealistic about that morning – riveted to the TV in an almost obligatory fashion, feeling compelled to share the grief, watching the scenes on the TV of the planes crashing into the twin WTC towers being replayed over and over again. For all practical purposes, the entire country was in a numbed state of shock. It was only several days later, as our horror only slightly subsided, that the scope and magnitude of the disaster really began to sink in, and the impact that 9/11 was going to have on our lives from that day on.

I ended up stranded that entire week in San Diego, so I had a chance to reflect upon reactions to a number of talks I’d already given on NetWeaving, as well as the feedback and reactions to the first book. This, combined with what I’d observed at the meeting in Pomona, helped me begin to recognize what I now call the “**heart**” of NetWeaving.

In a way, the events of September 11 exposed the real “heart” of our country. The patriotic national outpouring and a renewed focus on helping others, revealed not only the country’s ability to survive a tragedy of this magnitude, but it also helped illuminate the benefit that NetWeaving could have for those negatively impacted by the devastating economic ripple effects which would begin to compound what was an already slumping economy.

Firemen have always played a critically important role in our society and have been appreciated to a certain degree. But, after September 11, there was a marked change in people’s attitudes toward firemen. They were seen in a more ‘*heroic*’ light. You might even say

the entire image of firefighters has been elevated and given a *halo* which made all in that chosen profession *heroes*. In the aftermath of 9/11, our appreciation rose to near adulation.

And not only was the image of firemen elevated to those of us watching the events, their own self-image and pride for their profession received a huge boost. Although not as common as back then, even today you occasionally see a fire engine on its way to some emergency with a big American flag mounted on top of the fire truck.

Out of the dust, the rubble, and the death, and the reaction to those who conceived and perpetrated the deed, there emerged an American spirit that transcended the fear and anger we all experienced. We all felt better seeing that kind of spirit being exhibited by others – the singing of God Bless America wherever we turned; the flags everywhere; President Bush and Mayor Giuliani exuding a resolve that we will defend our way of life. The attackers may have taken thousands of innocent lives and destroyed office space greater than all of Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, Georgia combined, but we would endure. They hadn't dented the American spirit and in fact actually they had made us all more resilient and more appreciative for what we have and some of what we had been taking for granted.

New Yorkers who had previously earned a reputation for being callous and insensitive, gained a much softer and humane image as a reaction to the countless acts of kindness and bravery being reported. In a somewhat shocking reversal, New York City tied that year with Charleston, South Carolina, for the *friendliest city* in the country.

Another image reversal we saw involved President George W. Bush. In the week prior to the terrorist attacks, he had an approval rating of right around 50%. Within weeks after the event – seeing him standing in the ruins with firemen beside him emotionally touched by the families' collective tragedies, and giving speeches which revealed a *passion* which thereto had been cloudy at best – his approval rating soared to almost 90%. A year later, in spite of a still slumping economy, continuing terrorist uncertainty, as well as an imminent war with Iraq, his rating was still very positive.

I don't want to make any kind of direct comparison between the aftermath *halo effect* bestowed upon those firemen who rushed into the burning towers to save lives, or the overnight positive image rebound of President Bush, with the image transformation which happens to those who make NetWeaving part of their daily lives and who help spread the word about the concept. But there is definitely an enhancement of one's image. . .and in many cases, it's instantaneous. To a somewhat lesser but still important degree, we've discovered that the real power and the *heart* behind NetWeaving, involves more than simply being a NetWeaver to and for others. It's all about becoming a **vocal proponent** of, and an **advocate** for, NetWeaving and helping spread the word of the benefits to others,

Those persons who introduce NetWeaving to others are not only seen in a positive light, but NetWeaving creates a positive force for good, the kind that only comes from helping others.

This can be as true for someone who introduces the NetWeaving concept to a single individual – connecting two other people – as it is for someone who takes NetWeaving into a company or entire service organization, or helps use it to raise funds for a non-profit or to form a “**NetWeaving Enrichment Group**” of some kind. More on that later.

This **give-first** concept, which focuses on helping other people solve their problems; fulfill their needs, or capitalize on their opportunities, with little or no regard for how the NetWeaver will benefit, earns that person an elevated status, or as we euphemistically refer to it - a **halo** for the NetWeaver.

When someone introduces the concept of NetWeaving to an individual, a group of people, or to an entire organization or company, and then helps educate them on the various aspects of NetWeaving, we refer to this person who has become a NetWeaving *vocal advocate*, a *mentor*, or a *cheerleader*, as a “**NetWeaving Ambassador**”.

And there’s even better news! When more people NetWeave and when everybody NetWeaves more often, it spreads within a group or organization like a ‘virus’. NetWeaving truly is contagious – the *more* people do it, the *more* they enjoy doing it, and therefore *more* people are doing *more* of it, and doing it *more* often. And there’s a positive energy force associated with NetWeaving, similar to the kind you find within a group working on a charitable project such as building a house with Habitat for Humanity.

As has been stated before, I don’t believe NetWeaving is necessarily done out of pure altruism. A NetWeaver’s genuine motives are to help someone else, but there is also a firm confidence and belief in the law of reciprocity and that ‘**what goes around, does come back around**’. But regardless of what may come back around down the road in the form of some returned favor or referral, those who spread this Golden Rule concept immediately benefit from a heightened energy level and prestige which enhances their image in the eyes of others, while experiencing an increase in their own self-confidence and sense of pride and accomplishment.

“Yes”, images CAN be changed overnight. . .but do those changes last?

As the time frame from 9/11 widens, most of us are a little disheartened to see our country slipping back into some of our old ways – less overly patriotic; less caring toward others. We believe that Netweaving can help supply a positive reminder for helping others, 365 days a year. We’re all human. . .and although there are Mother Teresa’s in the world whose altruism is pure and without an ounce of self-interest, most of us are not that perfect. How can we be motivated to do good for others on a daily basis, while at the same time not beat ourselves up for *hoping* that our good deeds will somehow be rewarded? NetWeaving can play a role.

Because NetWeaving involves helping others with simply the confidence and belief that by doing good for others, good things will happen in return, is why we say that NetWeaving is done out of **enlightened self-interest**.

In order for someone to become a NetWeaving Ambassador, he or she first must become adept at the NetWeaving skills: being a genuine connector of others, and/or a gratuitous resource provider for others. For more information and examples of ways to do this, you might want to also read “*Power NetWeaving*” available for purchase at Amazon.com

After the ‘art’ of NetWeaving skill sets have been developed and mastered – persons can then begin practicing some of the aspects of becoming a NetWeaving Ambassador – the ‘heart’ of NetWeaving - which entails becoming a vocal advocate and champion for the concept – mentoring others and actually speaking and/or writing on the concept themselves.

SIX STEPS TO BECOME A NETWEAVING AMBASSADOR

Here are the six key steps to becoming a NetWeaving Ambassador:

1. Memorize or learn to paraphrase “**The NetWeaver’s Creed**” which summarizes what NetWeaving is all about (see www.netweaving.com for downloading copies). Also take the “**NetWeaver’s Aptitude Assessment**” quiz at the website to establish a baseline for how you currently stand as a “NetWeaver”. Retake it after 6 months and you’ll be surprised how you will have improved in several of the areas where you were weaker.
2. Learn the analogy between solving a jigsaw puzzle and NetWeaving (Chapter 4).
3. Learn to explain how NetWeavers train themselves to listen with a second pair of ears and to be tuned in during every form of communication with a second set of antennae for solutions to the other person’s needs, problems, and opportunities (Chapter 5).
4. Learn how to introduce NetWeaving to friends, family, neighbors, existing and prospective customers/clients, and most importantly how to ‘host’ a NetWeaving meeting (Chapter 8 – Referrals and Hosting).
5. Then finally, learn how to encourage persons for whom you ‘host’ meetings, and with whom you connect by phone, to just do what you have done and PIONTTO (i.e. Pass It On To Two Others) or what has now been accepted globally as the ‘business’ version of “Pay it Forward” (Chapter 8 – Levels of Referrals and Hosting).
6. Learn how to take NetWeaving into groups and organizations to which you belong and learn how it can transform superficial conversations into meaningful relationships over time (see Chapters 9 and 10 on creating NetWeaving Enrichment Groups and holding different NetWeaving events).

Chapter 3

THE PRIMARY WEAKNESS OF TRADITIONAL NETWORKING : *SUPERFICIALITY*

Truth is not always in a well. In fact, as regards the more important knowledge, I do believe that she is invariably superficial. The depth lies in the valleys where we seek her, and not upon the mountain tops where she is found.

Edgar Allan Poe

One of the first things I noticed as I began making presentations and giving speeches about NetWeaving was the way people seemed to immediately ‘warm up’ to the word and the concept. And often their affection was followed by some remark about their dislike or distaste for networking and/or the concept in general, as being too shallow, manipulative and superficial.

Almost everyone needs more business. The concept of ‘networking’ which I prefer to label as “*building a network of contacts and relationships*” is a worthwhile goal for anyone who is in business or just walking through life. What turns most people off about it is the traditional way most people network.

Also some people, especially more analytical types, don’t like the idea of doing something they consider to be self-serving.

The way I distinguish the two terms – networking, and “NetWeaving” – is that networking (done correctly) is primarily done with the idea in mind of building or adding to your own network, whereas NetWeaving is based on the concept of helping others build or add to their own network for their benefit. NetWeaving is done with the confidence and belief that your actions will eventually benefit you in ways you could never have dreamed possible, with outcomes that far exceed those of traditional networking.

There’s nothing wrong with ‘traditional’ networking where the goal is to find ways someone else can help you. Let’s face it, if you’re in business for yourself or in a sales role, or you’re in a job-seeking mode, or just trying to get something you need, it’s natural that you’re going to be looking out for your own self-interest. But carried to the negative extreme, traditional networking can be obnoxious and annoying.

I believe that in the long-run, and often even in the shorter-term, your Net-Weaving activities will not only yield greater results, but the spinoff advantage of increased energy and image enhancement from having helped someone, will pay off in ways you don’t actually realize as you’re doing it.

The other problem arises when people 'mix' "NetWeaving" and 'networking'. When you put any strings to your "NetWeaving" (i.e. "*I'll scratch your back so long as you agree to scratch mine*"), it removes any feeling of obligation on the other person's part to return the favor.

IT'S THE RELATIONSHIPS, STUPID!

It's really not magic or brain surgery. The most successful people in the life are not necessarily the smartest. They aren't even necessarily always the ones who are best able to identify persons' needs and problems, and suggest or provide solutions. The ones who almost without exception, end up at the top, are those who know how to build and maintain relationships with others, and the pinnacle of relationship building is 'trust'.

Getting along with people requires getting to know the other person at a certain acceptance level and to a certain extent, learning or trying to learn, how to walk in their shoes. But getting to know someone well takes guts because it means breaking through the superficiality which exists at most levels of communication.

To some degree, we must recognize that maintaining our distance in initial conversations – staying at a superficial small-talk level – is a protective mechanism that most of us use to help overcome our initial feelings of awkwardness when meeting new people.

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN IN A BUSINESS CONTEXT?

Back in the 60's and early 70's, the big thing was "*What's your sign*"? (your horoscope) In many ways, this was also superficial and shallow, but in some positive ways, it armed people with an opening question which begged for more conversation: "*Oh, so you're a 'Gemini. So that must mean you. . . .*"

Nothing is wrong with starting out with small talk and almost any topic which leaves the other end open for the other person to easily respond is a great way to *start* communicating.

The real shortcoming of traditional networking is that people tend to remain at this very superficial level and never really break through the ice and get to know the other person. And even when they do begin to penetrate the superficiality, too often communication plateaus at a level just below where a meaningful relationship could begin to be formed. The relationship-building process ends.

Too many networking groups and functions are characterized by superficial conversations and obligatory exchanges of business cards, leaving attendees with a false sense of satisfaction. I call this *grazing for leads and/or solutions*. People roam around from person to person. . . group to group; have short conversations, try to establish if the other person is a prospect for what they have to offer, or if the other person can help solve one of their burning

needs or problems. And when they determine there isn't a match with their need or problem, it's on to the next person or the next group.

And even when there seems to be a match and you each exchange business cards promising to follow up the next day, that often doesn't happen. You get back into your daily routine along with whatever your most pressing issues were the day before, and that's what grabs hold of you again. Days and even weeks go by and as you come across the person's business card you met at the previous event, you barely remember what the person looked like, let alone the exact nature of the product or service they were offering or the details of the conversation.

Any leads which are exchanged in this environment are almost always *bottom of the barrel, no risk ones*. These are the names of persons the referrer doesn't consider to be that valuable. If the referral connection doesn't work out, they conclude it won't reflect negatively back on them since there wasn't a strong connection or recommendation in the first place.

The real truth is that unless a meaningful relationship is established and until trust is built, it's unlikely any potentially valuable leads will be given.

NETWEAVERS HAVE A RIGHT TO BE NOSEY

In order to become a "power" NetWeaver, you must become adept at asking probing questions and being a good listener. But also you must have good follow up and follow through skills. Being a good note taker and following up in a timely manner in order to retain the information you've gathered are the starting point. But, **following through** is one of the real keys to moving the relationship to the next level. It's the **quality** and the **creativity** with which you follow up that's so important and which separately the MOST successful from the moderately successful. More on this in Chapter 6 on 'building trust'.

If you take the attitude that you don't want to be considered too nosey by asking too many probing questions, you will probably never become a skilled NetWeaver. There are of course privacy limits, and especially cultural differences to be aware of which would tend to be limit your questioning in certain circumstances, but just being 'curious' about other people and wanting to know who they are? . . .how they got to be where they are? . . .where they came from? . . .what they value the most in their lives? will seldom get you in trouble and will usually make YOU the great conversationalist.

When you truly believe in what you're doing and in the value of NetWeaving, the fear goes away because you're on a mission of helping others.

But in order to allow the other person to know your motives and realize that you aren't just trying to be nosey, it's often good to preface any penetrating questions with a little description of what NetWeaving is all about.

A typical NetWeaving introduction might go something like this:

NetWeaver: *"Steve, have you ever heard the term, NetWeaving?"*

The response most often will be 'no' or 'maybe' since the term is becoming well-known.

NetWeaver: *"NetWeaving is a Golden Rule and a Pay It Forward form of networking which puts the other person's interests FIRST, or at least on a more equal plane with our own. A NetWeaver is someone who is constantly looking for ways to connect people or to supply them with the information or resources they need, and is doing this simply because they just enjoy helping other people."*

Often, the first response from the other person will be something like: *"What a great word and concept". . .* or, *"I think I've done a lot that over my life."* It's good if you can encourage the other person to talk about a situation in which he or she acted as a "NetWeaver" because it will help lock the concept into their subconscious.

Now that you've set the stage, you can say something along these lines:

"In order to be the best NetWeaver I could be for you, it would help me if I knew a little more about you. That way I'll be better able to recognize anything which might be a good solution for any of your particular needs, problems, or opportunities."

WOMEN HAVE AN ADVANTAGE – THEY'RE BETTER NATURAL NETWEAVERS. . .BUT

One day a friend of mine who was familiar with the NetWeaving concept whispered something to me, very humbly, but sincerely. He said, *"Bob, you know your wife, Carolyn, is a better NetWeaver than you will ever be."* And I agreed.

As I was sharing this opinion that women are better natural NetWeavers than men, my wife commented that it was due to women's more 'nurturing' nature – maybe something biologic or genetic going on there.

On the whole, human beings tend to have to work at becoming social animals. As children, some of us tend to adapt more easily on the playground. And while the boys are playing soldier, or sports, or video games, girls seem to more easily be forming groups and to be more engaged in activities which involve more socialization and communication. Actually

this is changing fairly dramatically as little girls are more often playing competitive sports and are also engaged in video games, texting, blogging and online activities.

Nevertheless, women's higher socialization quotient, combined with their better listening skills and more experience drawing information out of others, makes them more natural NetWeavers.

But ironically, even though women are *generally* better 'natural' NetWeavers than men, most of them have not taken advantage of their superiority in this area to translate it into career enhancement and success.

Many women – especially those who are more extroverted, and who are willing to step outside their comfort zone – can use NetWeaving to accelerate their careers, especially within larger companies and organizations. They can do this by honing their NetWeaving skill sets, and especially by becoming known as a *connector* by helping managers and executives within the company develop an **external** network outside the company.

By learning how to apply the NetWeaving skill sets on a regular basis, and by expanding their awareness of potential business opportunities for their company or organization – to become a **rainmaker** -- they can develop an internal NetWeaving reputation which will open up many new doors and opportunities they could never have dreamed of before.

WOMEN AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO NEED TO STEP OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE

Have you ever thought of what is one of the key purposes behind playing games like charades or other kinds of improvisation? It forces us out of our comfort zone. Sometimes we purposely hang around outrageous people because they say and do things which tend to force us out of our more comfortable habits and ways.

In a similar way, more traditional networking tends to keep us within our own comfort zone, even if that means being more self-centered and looking out only for our own best interests. We tend to keep our conversations at a superficial, non-threatening level, partly because we're on a mission to develop business for ourselves, and we see that as a straight line strategy – "*Is this person a prospect for me*"?

So part of your NetWeaving journey is to be bold and courageous, which frankly is so much easier than you would think – simply because you're doing it with the primary thought of how you can help someone else. But don't worry, *what goes around, does come back around* and your courage will often be rewarded in ways you could never have imagined.

THE THREE KEY QUESTIONS

In NetWeaving, we like to arm people with three key questions which help people open up in a business context:

1. *“Tell me how you create revenue in your business, both for your company and for you? The better I understand how you actually do both of those, the better I will be able to help you. What does a **best** prospect for you or for your business look like?”* A good way to follow up on this first question is to ask, *“Tell me the story of how you landed your biggest account, or landed your best client or customer?”* This not only gives you insights into the process he or she goes through to make a sale or to create a client, but it will be more memorable for you since we remember stories much better than we do facts.
2. *“In a business, family, or personal context, what is your most burning problem, need or opportunity with which I (we) might be able to help you?”*
3. *“What is your ‘strategic advantage? As I’m attempting to sell you to someone I know, or at least open a door you, how do I describe you in ways that differentiate you from others doing the same, or nearly the same thing?”*

A FEW OTHER QUESTIONS TO BREAK THROUGH THE SUPERFICIALITY

Another question that is good if you’ve developed a trusted relationship, and one that elicits some interesting and revealing responses is – *“If you’ve reached the point in your life where you’ve begun to explore more about what your life has meant, and what you want to leave as your legacy, what would it be, and is there any way I might be able to help you create or develop it?”*

Here’s another one that’s fun: *“If you WEREN’T doing what you are today, and assuming money were no object, what would you be doing and why?”* Another way of asking the same thing is, *“What are you most passionate about?”*

A final fun one which also often surprises is, *“What’s the most unusual or even daring thing you’ve ever done where you TOTALLY had to step outside your comfort zone?”*

SOME ADDITIONAL NETWEAVING EXERCISES

- Do you agree with the statement that most networking conversations tend to be very superficial?

- If you agree, why is this? If you don't agree, how have you been able to break through the superficiality which typically exists? Have you been NetWeaving without realizing it?

Here are some ways to break through the superficiality:

- Learn to listen differently - more closely - and to be more curious about others and subjects you know little about.
- Shift the conversation to something of meaningful substance where people are learning and growing.
- Try introducing the topic of NetWeaving into the conversation and watch how it elevates the dialogue.
- When people understand what NetWeaving is all about, and they see that your intentions are to help, watch how they open up.

Chapter 4

THE JIGSAW PUZZLE ANALOGY – WE ARE ALL WALKING, TALKING, JIGSAW PUZZLES

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Think of the last time you walked up behind someone who was working on a jigsaw puzzle. As you began looking for a possible fit for some of the remaining pieces, you probably spotted the location of a couple missing pieces which the puzzle solver had overlooked. Why? Because you brought a new perspective to the table along with a different approach to problem-solving. Brain researchers even say the neurons in our brain connect in unique ways and those connections allow each of us to see things differently.

Has someone ever showed you a “Rorschach” sketch of the old woman/young woman and asked you what you see? In a large group, part of the group will swear that it’s the nostalgic side-view of a coquettish young lady looking away. The other group will swear it’s a picture of an old hag with a big nose looking down. Instead of a necklace, they see the line of her mouth.

What’s also interesting is that we can only see one perspective at a time. As our eyes begin to focus on the old lady rather than the young woman, we lose sight of the reverse image and the opposite is also true.



The aftermath of this revelation is similar to how we feel when someone points out the obvious fit of a missing piece to the jigsaw puzzle. We have a hard time understanding why we couldn't have seen what the other person saw.

PSYCHE: Fun www.psych.usyd.edu.au

WE'RE ALL WALKING, TALKING JIGSAW PUZZLES. . .WITH PIECES MISSING

When you get right down to it, each of us is a *walking, talking jigsaw puzzle* with some of our pieces missing. Some of these are in the form of needs that are going unfulfilled; some are problems in need of solutions. Some are ideas or opportunities – a few which hold great promise. But, without help from others – operational, management, or technology expertise; money or moral support – they may never see the light of day, or certainly may never reach their full potential.

A number of years ago, I was asked by the CEO of a company, with whom I was doing a lot of business, to help some friends of his who were moving to Atlanta from out-of-state. He was becoming the new CEO of a large technology company. My wife and I took him and his wife to dinner, drove them around the area to show them several housing possibilities, and referred a realtor to them.

Guess who was later called when some significant life insurance was needed? Over the years since this book was first published (2001), I could now give you dozens of stories of how I, or someone I know, has helped someone locate his or her 'missing puzzle pieces', and how it has come back around to benefit me or them in amazing ways.

A truly skilled NetWeaver understands a person may not always recognize a need, problem, or opportunity. Sometimes the NetWeaver must act in the role of educator, enlightener, and motivator, and once there is recognition, switch roles to that of the NetWeaver.

The missing pieces can sometimes be found by being introduced to a **person** who can help find the solution. In other cases, it may be **information** or some other **resource** (e.g. a helpful website) which can best solve the puzzle. You should always think of both categories – people as well as information or resources.

FINDING OUR OWN MISSING PIECES – LEARN TO DO DOUBLE-DUTY

It shouldn't be surprising that most of us spend our lives simply trying to locate the missing pieces to our own business, family and personal jigsaw puzzles. It's only natural that we would first look out for our own and our family's interests'

NetWeaving encourages us to do double-duty and 'multi-task'. While we're out there looking for our own missing pieces, we can train ourselves to be looking for others at the same time.

We are all uniquely qualified to help other people find the 'missing pieces' to their puzzle. A skilled NetWeaver is constantly on the lookout for ways to bring people together in win-win relationships, or provide them with the information and resources which they may need.

FOCUS IS THE KEY

When you're working on a jigsaw puzzle, you are totally focused. You're looking for color and tint matches; for patterns and designs in the shape of the puzzle pieces and in the context of the 'big picture' you're trying to re-create.

You're looking for clues of all kinds to discover just the right location for the missing piece. The same is true when you're NetWeaving.

Once you've identified someone's need, problem, or opportunity, you go into a problem-solving mode. Solutions are out there for all of our needs, problems, and opportunities, if only we are able to cast our net wide enough to include those who are most willing to help.

QUESTIONS ARE KING

There was a well-known insurance personality, Roger Zener, who used humor as his primary sales tool. It also helped that he looked and sounded like Jonathan Winters, but he had one saying which may have been more powerful than his humor. He would say, "*When in doubt, ask a question.*"

I would advise young people just coming out of college that learning how to ask questions instead of making statements is the most powerful and effective way to actually get your point across.

Another good friend, **Amy K. Hutchens**, who did her Master's work at John Hopkins in brain research, tells us that when we ask a question, it puts us in a different mode than when we make a statement to which someone is simply going to react – yes, no, or maybe.

*"When you ask yourself questions, or are asked questions by others, the question itself will trigger your brain's synapses and these synapses will wire and fire to create meaningful connections that provide you with an answer to the question."*¹

By forcing ourselves to go through a series of questions as we are attempting to help someone, we personally experience the same process. It triggers new thoughts and modifications of existing ideas which lead us in new directions.

¹ "*Brain Brilliant*", Amy K Hutchens (AmyK Publishing International, 2002), p. 42

Whenever I'm stumped on any problem or situation, I sit down and start writing as many questions as possible using all the key question-inspiring words:

who, what, when, why, why not, where, which, will, how, how much, if, if not, does this make sense?

Back in the '50's when I was a kid and it was safe to ride a bicycle delivering newspapers at 5 o'clock in the morning and when people often paid you each month with loose change, I can remember keeping all those coins in a big jar. And when it would get pretty full, I'd dump it out on the bed and of course the first thing you wanted to count was the 'quarters'. And when you thought that you had found ever last one of them, you would discover there were 5 to 10 more still there, hidden among those nickels, dimes, and those pesky pennies. And then when you were positive you'd found them all, there would still be 2 or 3 you missed.

It's the same with questions you ask yourself as you're attacking a problem or situation, or for that matter, writing an article or a book. When you think you've asked every possible question and your temptation is jump into tackling the problem, or writing the article or the book, force yourself to ask 5 or 10 more questions. Then when you're sure you've asked every possible one, ask two or three more. And not surprisingly, some of the ones you force yourself to ask at the end, will turn out to be the very best ones, helping lead you to a better solution, or to a thought you would have missed if you had caved in and started writing earlier.

BECOMING A BETTER CONNECTOR FOR OTHER PEOPLE (A STRATEGIC MATCHMAKER)

Here some other questions which can help you as you're attempting to help others find the missing pieces to their business, family, and personal jigsaw puzzles:

- **What are the names of some people whom you would most like to meet?** – You'll be surprised that you may either know him or her, or more likely you may know someone who knows that person well and who can make a favorable introduction.
- **What is the most valuable introduction or connection anyone ever made for you and why?** – You should recognize that you have been the recipient of many valuable introductions over your lifetime. If you haven't been on the receiving end, you may want to ask yourself why that is.
- **What are your key interests outside of work and is there someone who would be an interesting contact in that area?** - Some of the most interesting connections you will help people make have nothing to do with business initially, but when people find things that they have in common they tend to bond more quickly and then are open to

working together more closely. Why do you think so much business is transacted on the golf course?

- **Do you find you have a fairly easy time making meaningful new relationships with your hectic business and family schedule, or is this more difficult than it used to be?** One of the biggest ‘myths’ I run into a lot is that NetWeaving is great for younger upwardly mobile types trying to establish new connections, but not so great for established executives, managers, and business owners who already have established networks. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Most people enjoy making new connections, especially creative and successful people. *Variety* truly is the spice of life and meeting new people and establishing new connections and relationships is what keeps people young in mind and young at heart. Gerontologists have also discovered that maintaining an active life of ‘socialization’ and ‘relationship building’ is one of the key components in predicting long life expectancy.

BECOMING A BETTER RESOURCE FOR OTHERS (A VIRTUAL SERGEANT BILKO, OR RADAR IN MASH)

- *“How can I help you?”* This is the simplest NetWeaving question and yet in many ways, it is the most powerful. For some of the best NetWeavers, this is the only question they routinely ask.
- *“What do you consider to be some of your most valuable information resources and sources you count on?”* This can not only open doors for new resources which you can add to your resource inventory, but may also introduce you to parties who can become part of your trusted resource network.
- *“Of the websites, books, and articles which you keep for reference, what are some of the ones you most rely on and why?”* This is similar to the above question, but it may bring out different responses.
- *“Of all of the great ideas you’ve had or heard about over your life, or great mentors you’ve had, what would you say are the one or two most important ideas or lessons you’ve learned?”* **Wow! This one will make you grow wiser.** Another way of asking something similar: *“What would you consider to be the secret of your success over the years in your business and your personal life?”*

ASSEMBLING A “TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK” (MADE UP OF “BEST OF BREED” IN A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRIES, PROFESSIONS, AND SPECIALTIES) – YOU ARE IN A RECRUITING MODE HERE AND YOU ARE IDENTIFYING AND “QUALIFYING” POTENTIAL RESOURCES

- *“What are some of the best ways you’ve seen or that you’ve practiced to provide “exceptional” service in your business, practice, or industry?”*
- *“In your opinion, which companies that you do business with do you most admire for providing exceptional service during and after a sale? How do you translate that into the way you run your own business?”*
- *“Is there anyone who comes to mind who already has a ‘Trusted Resource Network’ and whom you routinely call because you recognize this deep and qualified network they have at their disposal?”*

A JIGSAW PUZZLE REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

You are talking with a friend who confides that her job is insecure due to problems with the industry. Her income is below where she really wants it to be in order to adequately contribute toward the family income. You ask a series of NetWeaving-type questions and are impressed with her answers.

Nevertheless, whether due to procrastination, fear of the unknown, a struggling economy and tight job market, she is resistant to make a move. You, who know, trust, and respect her abilities, learn about a job opening at a company where you know someone fairly high up.

You suggest she write a job description of what she would really like to be doing based upon her strengths, and you help by reading it and making suggestions. You see her strengths to be a good match with the skill sets required for the company concerned.

You go one step farther. You tell her about the opportunity, have her send you her resume, and send it on to the person you know within the company, along with a letter of recommendation of your own. Your contact gets her resume to the people conducting the search.

You also make an initial overture, testing the water by sounding your contact out with your friend’s background, and offering to act as a reference source. You might even ‘host’ a meeting to introduce the two parties.

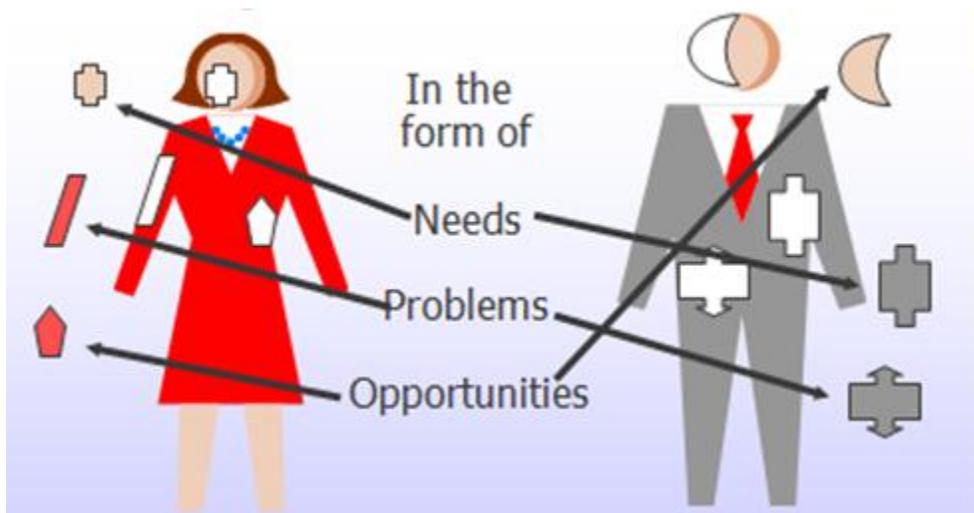
Your friend lands the job and within two years becomes a senior vice president of the company. Pipe dream, you might say. Not so. I’ve done it on several occasions and have known many other real life stories very similar to this because there are NetWeavers out there doing this as you read these words.

LEARN THE JIGSAW PUZZLE ANALOGY

It never fails. Every time I make a presentation on NetWeaving and I give the jigsaw puzzle analogy, referring to each of us as “*walking, talking jigsaw puzzles with pieces missing*,” a smile appears on people’s faces. It really is a great way to graphically illustrate what NetWeaving is all about – being on the lookout for another person’s missing pieces while we’re out there searching for our own.

So practice telling this jigsaw puzzle analogy story as a way of explaining what NetWeaving is all about. In no time, you will find that you’re getting good at it.

And watch the smile come across a person’s face each time you tell it.



Chapter 5

LEARNING TO LISTEN AND TO BE ATTUNED WITH TWO PAIR OF EARS AND TWO SET OF ANTENNAE – NETWEAVERS LEARN TO LISTEN

*We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen
Twice as much as we speak.*

- EPICTETUS

In addition to the superficiality of traditional networking, the other main weakness is its *unilateral* focus on “*What In It For ME?*” (WIIFMe). When most people are in a networking mode and mindset, they’re tuned into conversations on only one channel, and they’re listening for the answer to only one question – “*Is this person a prospect or candidate for what I need or for what I have to offer?*” Or “*Can this person help me?*” And if the answer to that question is “*no*” or “*probably not*”, a person in a networking mindset tunes the other person out, or just leaves, looking for greener pastures.

Don’t get me wrong. We all need new business. We all need solutions to our needs, problems, and opportunities and so there’s nothing wrong with networking with our own needs *primarily* in mind.

But there’s a different mindset when you’re NetWeaving. The NetWeaver is listening with two pair of ears and is tuned in with two set of antennae. With one, he or she is still listening for whether this person with whom they are talking is a potential prospect for what they have to offer or someone who can solve a problem, or fulfill a need they have. After all, as we’ve said over and over again, there’s nothing wrong with traditional networking. But with the other pair of ears or set of antennae, the NetWeaver is listening and trying to tune in for opportunities to help the other person find some of his or her *missing pieces*.

The three key questions which people (you included) can train themselves (yourself) to ask in virtually every conversation – phone, email, or in person:

- *Is there someone I know who would benefit from meeting or knowing this person?*
- *Are there resources which I have, or which someone within my Trusted Resource Network has, that I/we could provide to this person – ‘no strings attached’ – just as a way of building a relationship?*

- *Has this person impressed me so much that I should, first, find a way to help him or her, and then ask them to become part of my Trusted Resource Network?*

Training yourself in every form of communication – in person; on the phone; on the internet – to consistently ask yourself these three questions - is the essence of becoming a skilled Power NetWeaver. It has also been proven as a great way to enrich a relationship which is primarily what accelerates trust.

You might be asking, “*How am I supposed to genuinely be listening to what the other person is saying, while at the same time, searching for and retrieving a suitable match from my mental rolodex, whether that’s a person’s name or a possible resource?*”

Fortunately, it’s much easier than you might think, and with time and with practice, it becomes second nature.

It’s a little bit like when you do anything for the first time. It stretches your existing mental capacity. When you move into a new neighborhood, everything is foreign to you. You must concentrate on how to get home and which turns to make. If it’s a complicated subdivision, you probably make a mistake a few times. Then, as you repeat the route over and over again, and as your sense of direction begins to fill in the familiarity of the surroundings, you can almost (not really) put the return-home drive on auto-pilot and concentrate on other things. The next thing you know, you’re home. Some of us find we get some of our best ideas when we’re doing something which requires our *attention*, but not our *complete* concentration.

You’ve heard the statement many times about what a small portion of our brain we actually utilize and this NetWeaving exercise can actually make us better at everything we do. And frankly, as I get older, I would prefer to be solving these kinds of jigsaw puzzles in my head – matching people with other people – and matching people with the resources and information they need or would just find useful – than trying work an ordinary jigsaw puzzle or some other memory or concentration game. Like these exercises, NetWeaving will keep your mind alert, while also give you the great satisfaction from having helped someone.

LEARNING TO LISTEN IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE – THE OTHER HALF IS RETENTION

I have found that unless I take notes while someone is talking (i.e. lecture) or very shortly after hearing information (i.e. from a conversation), AND re-write those notes which often are incomplete, I will not retain it very long – often less than 24 hours. And I’m not alone. Statistics vary but many agree that we only retain about half the information that we hear almost immediately after having heard it, and less than 20% of it longer term.

Have you ever wondered why telephone numbers are divided the way they are, into actually 3 separate sets: Area Code ('XXX') and then the first three numbers ('XXX') and then after (-) the last four numbers ('XXXX'): (123) 456-7890. It's because this makes it easier to remember.

I'd like you to try an '**unscientific**' experiment for me, but one which in my experience makes an incredible difference for remembering someone's phone number immediately after having heard it. Instead of focusing on the phone number in the regular way, I'd like you to try starting with focusing on the LAST four (4) numbers.

In most cases, we can easily remember most Area Code numbers, so if you start with remembering the LAST four numbers, I have found that it's much easier to then add the FIRST three numbers for recall. That then makes it easier to remember the entire phone number. See if it's just me or if this helps you as well.

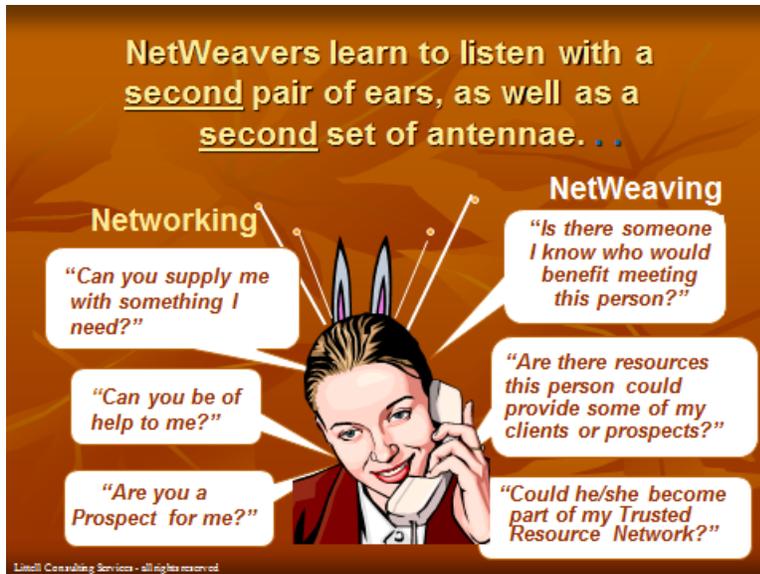
Another one of the keys I have discovered is that I only need to write key words down as I am listening (or very shortly thereafter) to someone explain what they do, or other information, rather than worrying about complete sentences. If I come back to my notes within the first 24 hours or less, I am surprised as how much I can retain. The key words trigger your brain to recall many more of the specific details. But even better, as I have said above, if you will 're-write your notes, you will be amazed at the increase in long-term retention.

From this point on, don't collect a single business card from someone with whom you genuinely want to get to know better, without writing a couple of key words or a key fact on the back of his/her card concerning your conversation and write them out into sentences later.

This lesson about how quickly we forget and the importance of following up is central to what we have learned from a project I helped create at the Buckhead Club in Atlanta and which was started a decade ago and continues today.

A long time ago, Bill Nordmark, a member of the club and even then, wise far beyond his years, heard a talk I made on "NetWeaving" and volunteered to help form a group called "The Buckhead Eight" (putting eight members together at an 8:00 am breakfast at the club to get to know each other better). We created a 'council' who would meet quarterly to assess and tweak the program. Each council member agreed to act as a 'host' (together with one other council member) in every meeting. Jeff Goldworn, the club manager, was totally supportive and today the program continues as "Member Connect" with the same idea of helping members get to know other members below the superficial level, and then encourage them to have separate meetings to build the relationship.

In addition to questions that would help members identify ways they might be of help to another member, other 'open-ended' questions were designed just to get to know the person at



a personal level, and just as a 'human being'. A couple of the ones I've used which I've found to be effective include:

"Could you name someone – other than a spouse, a parent or a grandparent, who did or said something very early in your life or your career, that had a significant impact, and to a certain extent made you the person you are today? It could have been a teacher, a coach, a minister or rabbi, a mentor, or someone else."

"If money were no object, and if you could be doing anything you really wanted to do, what would it be and why?"

If you create a group similar to a "Buckhead Eight" now known as "Member Connect" for yourself or in an organization or club to which you belong, I would recommend that you assign someone to be the 'note-taker'. Then circulate those notes as soon as possible following the meeting and ask each person to make corrections and to add any important points about themselves which the note-taker may have omitted, or which the person at the meeting may have forgotten to mention or maybe didn't stress enough during the meeting. Then the final notes are circulated. These make a big difference in retention, and in helping encourage people to set up subsequent meetings.

There's a two-fold reason to form a 'council' to oversee the program. First, it's to keep the way each of the meetings is run consistent. The second is so that the council member(s) present at the meeting can prevent one person from monopolizing the conversation and making sure that every person gets to participate. Also often the 2nd council member will often act as the 'scribe' to take notes at the meeting leaving the other participants free to just listen.

In several groups we've formed over the years (including "**NetWeaving Enrichment Groups**" to be discussed later and our newest "**NetWeaving Ambassador**" certification programs), after several meetings and several months later, we have a reunion party. That way, individuals from different groups get the opportunity to meet others who have been involved in one or more meetings and often new connections are made which result in new relationships.

Learning to be a great NetWeaver first involves the skill sets of NetWeaving – being a connector of others as well as a gratuitous resource provider. So, admit that our brain needs all

the help we can give it – therefore necessitating that we take notes within a fairly short time after meeting someone. Ask to yourself - the questions and answers to any or all of the three (3) NetWeaving questions:

- Is there someone I know who would benefit from meeting or knowing this person?
- Are there resources which I have, or which someone within my Trusted Resource Network has, that I/we could provide to this person – ‘no strings attached’ – just as a way of building a relationship?
- Has this person impressed me so much that I should, first, find a way to help him or her, and then ask them to become part of my Trusted Resource Network?

AND then to reach your full NetWeaving potential, you **MUST** learn the importance of **creatively** *following up* AND *following through* to move the relationship to the next level.

Chapter 6

How To Build Relationships And Establish Trust – How Trusted Relationships Are Formed

Trust dies but mistrust blossoms.

- SOPHOCLES

The more I've worked with the concept of NetWeaving (over a decade now), and observed the positive effects it has had on business and personal lives it has touched, the more convinced I've become that NetWeaving can actually have some positive impact *on our entire world*. And just 'google' the word 'netweaving' to see how it is now spreading exponentially.

That has become even more apparent to me in the years since 9/11, with the continuing terrorism and international turmoil, increased bickering among political parties, the economic collapse of 2007 – 2010 which is still stubbornly hanging in there at the time of this writing – late summer of 2013, as the 'two-party brinkmanship' over the debt ceiling. We as a country, and as an international community, must figure ways to pull together, rather than just react to the next tragic event which almost certainly will occur and somehow find ways to become 'civil' again.

As a lifelong student of human nature, I'm also convinced that we aren't going to reach some Utopian level of acceptance and willingness to first look for ways to help each other.

In an idealistic world, everyone would be looking out for **everyone else's** interests in addition to their own. Realistically, we look out for our own and our family's interests first, and we tend to pay lip service to our altruistic intentions. We shouldn't beat ourselves up too badly for this. It's just the darker side of human nature and something most of us try to improve upon over our lifetimes.

But what if it could become almost universally accepted that Netweaving could become an enriching '**self-serving**' universal form of currency, whose deposits plus interest, will accumulate and someday will mature in the form of a **more peaceful world?**

That said, assuming all NetWeavers have pure intentions and motives is similar to the hammer analogy: It can be used to build a house or kill someone. I don't worry whether or not this could happen with NetWeaving. It will happen. Charlatans have been around since one caveman tried to convince another that a square stone wheel would actually work better than a round one.

There will be pretenders (especially as the concept continues to grow in popularity and visibility) and others who will mask themselves as NetWeavers and as NetWeaving Ambassadors, but who in fact are using the word and concept as a way to artificially paint themselves in an altruistic light. As in everyday life, we must learn to celebrate genuine NetWeavers and when recognized, disassociate ourselves from 'false NetWeavers'.

Admittedly, this can be easier said than done; I've been fooled by some of the best. Legitimacy, credibility, and consistency -- proven over time -- are the only real judges. The best way to guard against NetWeaving's false prophets is to watch the way they live their lives and look at how they treat people. Forget about what they say; only look at what they do and what others say about them.

TRUST-BUILDING AS A SALES APPROACH

Many books have been written on relationship-building as a sales technique. Whether getting people to buy something or hire or contract with someone for services, achieved by creating a sense of trust, can be viewed from many different perspectives. With many sales systems, establishing trust is seen as a means to an end – the avenue to success – and the ethical considerations are omitted.

You may feel that creating trust by using a variety of methods and techniques, and with your own interests in mind, is manipulative and deceitful. I'll leave that up to you. I've just learned that relationship-building in a NetWeaving context eliminates most, if not all, of the negative aspects and ethical conflicts. At the same time, it creates results in the long run which tend to be as good or better than those conducted through a more 'what's in it for me' sales and marketing approach.

THE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING PROCESS – THE PINNACLE IS TRUST

You've heard that when we first meet someone, we make judgments about the person, based primarily on her or his physical appearance: dress, mannerisms, as well as things which we don't fully understand. Whether you want to call them 'body chemistry' . . . 'body language' . . . or just 'vibes', there are some people who have a natural advantage in looks, appearance, charisma, or some other form of radiated charm and appeal which touches us.

A few years ago, as a former chairman of a national organization, I was invited to a past chairman's breakfast at which our keynote speaker for that annual meeting was going to be present. At each of the tables, set for eight persons, there was one chair left vacant. When our speaker came into the room, he went around and spent about 10 to 15 minutes at each table.

The speaker was General Colin Power, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff, and former Secretary of State. It was only a short time after he sat down and said a few words that you felt as if you'd known him your entire life. He just had an aura and presence about him which almost immediately made you want to like and trust him.

Call it charisma, presence, demeanor, or whatever; maybe it's genetic or at least partly so, but there are some people who just start out with an advantage on the relationship and trust-building side over the rest of us.

Hopefully though, with constructive input from others, whether it's learning how to dress appropriately, or how to eliminate some of the 'blind spots' which others can see, we can avoid some of the most obvious things which turn other people off. But in most cases, relationship-building starts when someone opens his or her mouth.

Every so often, a new idea or new concept comes along which is so simple and so universally accepted, that it takes off. That what has happened with NetWeaving and I believe much of it has to do with the way it helps accelerate the 'trust-building' process.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS, STUPID!

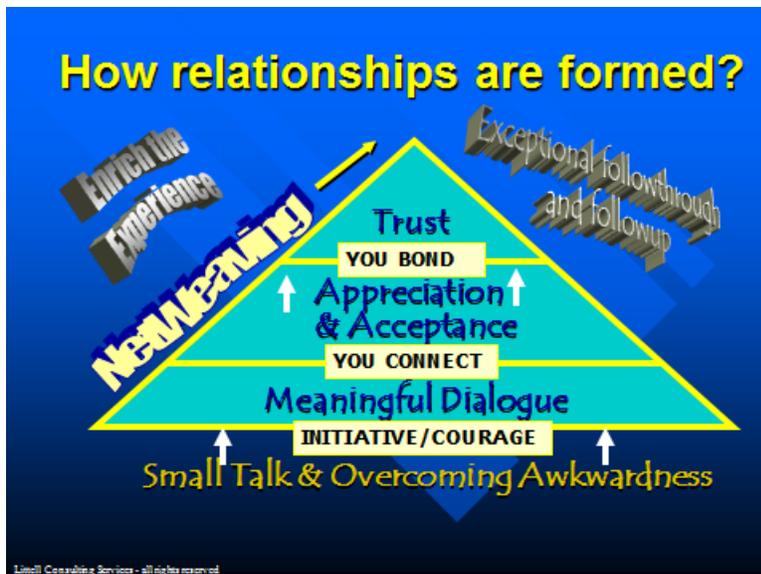
As I analyzed the process of NetWeaving more and more, and studied and interviewed those people whom I or others identified as "Natural NetWeavers", I began to develop a new view of how relationships are formed and nurtured.

The pinnacle of all relationship-building is **'trust'** and yet trust isn't established overnight. As previously stated, I do believe some people have a built-in advantage in building trust, sometimes almost instantaneously.

Nevertheless, there's hope for the rest of us as well. NetWeaving can play an important role in helping anyone get better at establishing meaningful relationships and eventually building and maintaining trust over time.

If you look at building trusted relationships as a **'process'**, think of it as a pyramid. Below the base of the pyramid are those things that we don't completely understand – body chemistry, vibes, appearance, etc. which may attract us to someone without us understanding why, or actually have the opposite effect.

The question becomes, are there ways that the process can be accelerated from the time we first meet someone, to the pinnacle of relationship-building – where we attain and then maintain trust? That's where NetWeaving has been proven to excel.



HOW DO YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISH TRUST?

Most relationships start with verbal communication. As noted, some people start out with an advantage whether that be by appearance or charisma, but by and large relationships begin when people begin a dialogue. And almost all dialogue begins with

some form of small talk. Most of us need small talk to overcome the awkwardness that we feel when we meet someone new, especially if it's one-on-one or within a small group.

The biggest single problem with most traditional networking and which goes on at most business networking events, or just in social or business gatherings, is that the conversations tend to stay at the superficial level and never really progress beyond that. Sure, maybe there is a brief discussion of, *“What do you do for a living?”* and maybe some talk about the industry, or your job in particular, but the point is that little conversation takes place which actually helps establish or nurture some kind of a growing relationship.

IT TAKES INITIATIVE AND COURAGE TO MOVE TO A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE!

I came up with the word **“initiative”** to describe the way that in the midst of this awkward, superficial “small talk” stage, if someone lifts the level of conversation and moves it to what I refer to as **“meaningful dialogue”**, the relationship-building really begins.

Following one of my NetWeaving presentations, during which I explained this step in the process, Pat Haley, president of National Personnel Recruiters, and a great NetWeaver, suggested I add the word **“courage”** alongside of initiative. After all, almost all of us feel somewhat awkward during this first small talk stage. It takes a little bit of courage to elevate the discussion since there's always the chance that no one else will follow their lead and begin contributing at that higher level.

It is at this stage that the value of NetWeaving really becomes helpful in facilitating and speeding up the relationship-building process. Since NetWeaving is all about helping others – connecting people with other people, and providing them with the information and resources they need, focusing on the problems and the needs of others not only promotes meaningful dialogue, but it encourages those listening to want to do the same.

It's similar to what happens in a traffic jam when cars aren't moving and someone is courteous and let's someone in from a side street who's been waiting for some time. Look back in your rear view mirror, and you'll notice that others follow suit and do the same once someone has taken the initiative. It's the same with NetWeaving. It's contagious! The more people who do it, the more who will follow their example and do the same.

A GREAT WAY TO ELEVATE A CONVERSATION – ONE-ON-ONE – GLP

Here is a great way, when you are engaged in a 'small talk' conversation, to elevate it to one of 'meaningful dialogue' where you can move it to the next level. I call this **GLP – Global – Local – Personal**.

My first advice is to always try and have the other person describe what they do first and ask them to describe two or three of the challenges facing – their industry as a whole. . .their company. . .and possibly this person's role in tackling those challenges.

- **Global** - their industry – meaning within the context of their entire industry – national and international
- **Local** – their local company which may or may not be the same division or mission within the larger organization
- **Personal** – what do they wake up at night worrying about in their role?

Global “*Name* so John/Mary, you said you are in the Widget industry. I'd love to learn a little more about that industry. If you had to describe the 2 or 3 major challenges confronting your industry today, nationally or globally what would they be and. . .

Local & Personal . . . *what are you doing within your own company and in your own role to overcome these, or have you figured some solutions no one else has thought of, which you might be willing to share?”*

YOU CONNECT OR DECIDE TO DISCONNECT

Simply having a meaningful dialogue does not necessarily mean you're going to connect with everyone in the discussion. In fact, based upon a person's attitudes or responses, you may make the decision to *disconnect*, meaning you really don't care if you ever see that person again. But keep in mind – we all have our bad moments. Sometimes giving someone a second chance in a different context and under an entirely different set of circumstances may let you see him or her in a completely new light and totally change your opinion.

If you are involved in a conversation, and if you are the one who shows the initiative and courage to shift the dialogue toward helping others, you are in most cases enhancing your own image as you focus on their needs and problems. This may just be one of the best and fastest

ways to help other people decide that they would like to connect with you, so long as the help offered genuine and without any hidden agenda.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS RAISES THE LEVEL OF APPRECIATION AND ENRICHES THE EXPERIENCE

As other people observe you shifting the conversation to them or to others in the group, they subconsciously raise their level of appreciation for you. You are not only solidifying the connection you make, you increase the chances of gaining their ‘acceptance’. You may or may not realize that what you are really doing is ‘**enriching the experience**’.

Several years ago, a good friend of mine passed away but I’ll always remember one day we spent together. Jim and I began our careers in the life insurance business in Denver, Colorado at about the same time. We were so poor back then that we used to take turns going down five flights of stairs from the small office we shared to put coins in the parking meter to avoid parking lot rates.

We both loved the outdoors and hiking. On one such hiking trip in the Colorado Rockies, we went up what would best be described as a rock chimney. It was a narrow opening that we had to crawl up, not knowing if at some point it would prove impassable, or worse. At some points with our backs against the opposite wall, we had to sort of shimmy up. We weren’t sure exactly how far we had to climb but we knew there was an opening because we could see light coming from the top. We also didn’t know if at some point it would narrow to a point that we would have to turn back. Isn’t a lot of life like that?

After several grueling hours of exhaustive climbing, we crawled out into what might best be described as a scene right out of the *Sound of Music* (you know the scene, “*The hills are alive. . .*”). It was now mid-afternoon on a spring day, beautiful blue sky, breeze blowing across our sweaty bodies; wild flowers everywhere you looked, pure mountain air mixed nature’s fragrances. Still today, I can literally close my eyes where I am, and instantaneously be right back there. The ‘experience’ had a profound impact on almost all my senses – sight, feeling/touch, sound, and smell. If I’d have eaten a dandelion I’d have hit every sense.

AmyK Hutchins, the authority on brain research mentioned earlier, tells us that the more senses you touch, the better our recollection of the event, or even that meeting you are in.

Also, AmyK tells us that her research shows that what people most recall from a meeting is not necessarily what you said or not even necessarily what you looked like. What they are most likely to retain will be the ‘experience – how you made them feel – about you, but even more importantly, how you made them feel about themselves. When you both touch multiple senses and make them feel good about you and about themselves, you are **enriching the experience**.

That's another reason why putting the skill sets and action steps of NetWeaving into your daily activities, as well as serving as a NetWeaving Ambassador and spreading the good word. You are increasing the chances people will remember you in a positive way, while also inspiring them to practice NetWeaving in their own lives.

THE PINNACLE OF RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IS TRUST

It would be unusual if this entire process would take place during one conversation or one encounter, but it can and does happen, especially if you the NetWeaver are facilitating the process. In most cases, somewhere along the way, the person involved in the conversation decides they like what they hear; they *connect* with what you're doing and saying; they gain an *appreciation* for the quality of the person they've seen in action, then they *bond* with you.

Even if it takes a second meeting (or longer) to truly establish trust, the basis for a lasting relationship has begun.

TRUST ERODES WITHOUT FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

But once trust is established, it doesn't mean it's there for good. All relationships need healthy doses of reinforcement and encouragement. In the absence of follow up and follow through, the 'trust' that was there can quickly erode. Feelings about the person may change rapidly, and be seen as insincere, and performed only to make a sale, or to get the person to agree to help in some way. In this particular context ("*The Pyramid of Trust*" building), 'following up' simply means staying in contact and continuing to look for ways to be of help. The best way to do this is to continue connecting the person with those who he or she would benefit meeting, or by providing them with additional information and resources which would be of value.

One warning: You can overdo this so make sure to space your 'favors' and also be aware of and sensitive to the responses (or lack thereof) you receive.

But here's an entirely new way to look at these two important concepts – "*Following Up*" and "*Following Through*". As I have progressed over more than a decade on my NetWeaving journey, I have learned the importance of these two terms.

Personally, I like to consider "**following up**" as a time-oriented activity. You have met someone with whom you want to build a trusted relationship, So, within 24-48 hours, you follow up in some way – email, personal note, phone call. Sadly, I'm absolutely baffled by how few people even take that first step.

But in my experience, the real Super Stars across all fields not only "**follow up**", but they also "**follow through**". I like to describe *following through* in terms of the "WOW Factor". You

ask yourself, “**What could I do in the way of ‘following up’ that would make that new connection I’ve just made say, ‘WOW, no one has ever done THAT for me before.’**”

It’s the ‘**quality**’. . .and even more importantly. . .the ‘**creativity**’ with which you ‘follow up’.

In fact, I wrote an entirely new book called, “**Raising Your R&R Factor – How Referable & Recommendable Are You?**” which covers some of the ways you can create the WOW FACTOR.

As stated at the beginning of this e-book, you hopefully have liked what you’ve read downloading this book, “*The Heart and Art of NetWeaving*”. We hope you will then agree to donate a minimum of \$20 to the charity of your choice or to the Pay it Forward Foundation (www.payitforward.com), .

But please make sure to email me with the charity you select and the amount you donate; send it to me at chiefnetweaver@gmail.com so we can keep track of the monies we are able to raise through these two e-books.

CONCLUSION – A KEY FOR ALL INDUSTRIES

Learning more about NetWeaving will hopefully inspire more industries to get back to the basics of genuine relationship-building. It’s the leaders of companies who totally buy into the “Servant Leader” concept and principles who are most likely to promote NetWeaving within their company. By encouraging all employees, especially those in business development, to help other people without an immediate concern for how they might personally benefit up front, many of the problems within the business world and society in general would disappear or become much less serious.

Not everyone will buy into NetWeaving. They don’t need to. Only a small percentage of the population needs to do it in order to have a dramatic impact on everyone. That’s because it truly is contagious and with a strong core of people doing it, it will become the thing to do, and a way by which people will be inspired to live their lives and run their businesses.

Something else that’s important to recognize as a NetWeaver is that there’s a new category I’ve learned about since I first wrote this book. I learned about it from my friend, Larry Mohl, the co-author with Melissa G. Wilson, of “**Networking is Dead**”.

You’ve heard the statement, “*The world is made up of Givers and Takers*”, but in their book, Larry and Melissa introduce a new term - an “**Exchanger**” and here’s how they describe one:

*"Exchangers are definitely Givers, but they are also good at making requests for support and then **exchanging opportunities** that create a more sustainable model for ongoing **mutual** success. Exchangers are also good at **discerning** who would be other great connections – other Exchangers to whom to introduce you, to help you grow your network."*

This was a big help to me because, like many others who are pure 'givers' and who are terrible about asking for help themselves, this helped me recognize that when you don't allow those whom YOU have helped to reciprocate and find a way to help you, you are depriving them of the same joy and satisfaction you received from helping them.

A FUN STORY OF NETWEAVING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Several years ago, my wife and I took what had to have been one of the greatest trips we've ever done – heli-hiking in the Canadian Rockies. Canadian Mountain Holidays (CMH) owns three lodges in the Bugaboos and initially just was using them during the winter for Heli-Skiing for which they are booked solid year after year. Ski enthusiasts like to ski where there are no one else's tracks except for the few persons in their own party. CMH found they needed to keep the lodges open year-round for maintenance, etc., so they began attracting hikers during the off-skiing months.

You assemble in the morning with your group – organized by conditioning, hiking skills, and exercise tolerance. They pack a lunch for you, and then the helicopter picks you up and takes you from base camp to 8,000 to 9,000 feet from where you start hiking. It might have taken you all day hiking to get to this beginning point where you already have spectacular views.

On the bus ride up, there happened to be one gregarious character who stood out from the others. Although we didn't realize it at the time, it would be the start of a relationship that still continues today, more than a decade later.

As we learned, Alex Tilley was there for the scenery and adventure. If you have ever heard of a Tilley hat, you already know who Alex Tilley is. He invented a superb (the world's best, many say!) broad-brimmed canvas hat which has both an ordinary chin-strap, as well as another strap which fits snugly at the back of your neck so that the hat will not blow off in a strong wind. I ran into a friend back in Atlanta who had just passed his Tilley hat that he had worn for many years (they're guaranteed for life) down to his son as a rite of passage.

Alex, founder and chairman of **Tilley Endurables, Inc.** (go to his website and click on his e-catalogue at www.tilley.com), was there taking photos which would be appearing in his next catalogue.

I have been around NetWeaving long enough to spot a 'natural NetWeaver' when I see one and I could tell Alex had been NetWeaving all his life and this explained much of the reason for his success.

A year or so later, Alex invited us to come stay with him and his later-to-be-wife Hilary (a brilliant metal sculptor: hilaryclarkcole.com) at his home in Muskoka, a couple hundred miles north of Toronto. Other than the fact it was -10 degrees with a wind chill factor or -30, we had a fabulous time. I asked Alex for a real-life story about his NetWeaving experiences and he gave me a good one:

Several years ago at Rotary, Alex sat beside Jack Parker, then 86 years old. Alex spoke to him of the challenges he was having managing his growing business. Jack told Alex that at age 31, he had been the worldwide president of Thermos, and since then had managed many companies. He also told Alex that he was bored.

"Why not come and give us a hand," Alex asked. "Love to, and I'll work for free! See you Monday!" Jack replied.

Jack, Alex says, *"is the smartest of all of us when he's here at our world headquarters."* He shows up early three days a week, sits in on meetings and gives Alex and his company a lot of solid guidance.

Alex added, *"We're becoming 'world famous in certain parts of Canada' (now the hats are known all over the world) so I'm often asked by young entrepreneurs for suggestions on getting started. I usually turn them over to Jack, who, with his vast experience, listens carefully, then gives them helpful advice with usually a touch of constructive criticism, but leavened with encouragement."*

Jack benefits through the joy he receives from giving, and the recipients of his wisdom stand a much better chance of succeeding than they would otherwise have. *"She was going to lose her shirt!"* was one of Jack's comments to Alex about a young woman's business plans. *"Because of what he advised me, I'm redoing all my projections"*, she later told Alex.

Alex says, *"It's heart-warming to be of service to others, isn't it?"*

Approach every potential connection you make with an open mind and with the thought that this next person(s) may become a life-long friend(s) and someone who can help you grow in new ways you never experienced before. Hopefully the reverse will be true in what you can offer them and bring to their table. That's NetWeaving in a personal sense but it's also one of the real joys in life – creating new, healthy and meaningful human relationships.

Alex later told me: *"Jack enjoyed his time with us so much, that after he died, he had some of his ashes scattered on our business' front lawn. Can there be a greater compliment?"*

Chapter 7

Why Don't More People NetWeave, And Why Don't People NetWeave More?

All right everyone, line up alphabetically according to your height
- Casey Stengel

NETWEAVING ISN'T RIGHT FOR EVERYONE

If NetWeaving is such a “win-win-win-win” concept, how come more people don't NetWeave, and why don't those do *some* of it, do *more* of it?

First, although I hate to admit it, there are some people who I don't believe will EVER get it. It may be that they're just wired differently and/or they're just too much focused on “*what's in it for me?*”. Or, they may be so ‘short-term’ in their thinking that they don't want to allocate any of their time to something which doesn't seem to have the guarantee of an immediate payoff, which NetWeaving actually does, but they miss it.

There is actually a growing body of scientific evidence that there exists something they call, ‘*the helper's high*’, which is an endorphin the brain emits when you help someone and which makes you feel good.²

But what's really sad is that those who are so self-absorbed, they only focus on their own needs, problems, and opportunities, they also miss out on some of the very biggest payoffs which come over time – only after strong relationships are built. The benefits NetWeaving – back and are often cumulative.

My first motto for NetWeaving has been, “Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen”. But after many years of making introductions for other people with only their needs in mind, a second, and possibly even more powerful motto has emerged:

***“When you open the door for someone else,
you never know who YOU will meet as a result.”***

I have story after story of amazing things that have come back around to benefit me, directly or indirectly as result of introducing two people to each other. In too many cases to

² http://www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org/news/pdf/doing_good_deeds.pdf

mention, that act has opened the door for me to meet people whom I NEVER would have known, had it not been for my NetWeaving actions.

WATCH OUT HANGING AROUND WITH THOSE WHO JUST DON'T GET IT

Unfortunately some well-intentioned NetWeavers fall into a trap of NetWeaving with and for people who just aren't into *giving*. The fact that the NetWeaver gives, and yet nothing is coming back, just makes him or her want to try that much harder. At some point, after the NetWeaver has given and given, and sees nothing coming back, they either need to accept that fact the person for whom they've been NetWeaving isn't and probably will never be a 'giver' and move on. . .OR to vocalize their feelings to the non-giving person. In some cases this can have a profound impact, but in my experience, in most cases, "*what you see (and experience), is what you get.*"

There's an admonition in the Elton John/Tim Rice song "*Circle of Life*" which is very appropriate in understanding one of the principles of NetWeaving: "*Don't take more than you give.*"

In life, you find that there are givers and there are takers, and then there are all shades in between. Natural NetWeavers are heavy on the giving side because they find that the more they give, the more they seem to benefit in return. They just totally believe in the law of reciprocity and that somehow – in some kind of way – *'what goes around, will come back around'*.

On the other side, there are those who either are those who either are way over on the taking side, or when they give, it's almost always with an obvious or implied string attached. But there are also '**some givers**' who Adam Grant in "*Give and Take*" describe as '**matchers**', and referenced earlier, Larry Mohl and Melissa G. Wilson, in "*Networking is Dead*", describe as '**exchangers**', who are primarily '**givers**' but who are very deft at giving in ways that enhance and increase the chances that their good deeds will come back around.

Those who are pure takers never really learn to listen with a second pair of ears because they're too focused only on how they can benefit. And unfortunately, some of them are very good at being '**disguised**' NetWeavers. They talk the talk, but *don't walk the talk*. Sometimes the only way you know is that you just keep giving, but you don't see any actions on their part to do something positive in return. When this becomes apparent, you need to just move on.

BUT FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO AND ENJOY HELPING OTHER PEOPLE

What about those people who genuinely like helping other people and who may already be doing some NetWeaving, but who could be doing much more?

First, if people aren't aware of the basics of NetWeaving, they won't even realize when they're doing it. Since they don't recognize NetWeaving, even when they're doing it, they tend not to do it on a daily or even semi-regular basis. But when they learn the three skill sets of NetWeaving (ie. 'connector' . . . 'resource provider' . . . 'building a Trusted Resource Network'), and practice them regularly, and they experience the rewards from doing so, they become more effective with their NetWeaving and they start doing it more often.

A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

I saw a great example of this as I was kicking off a 'user's group' meeting for Xerox with NetWeaving as the 'collaboration' theme. I not only saw how well this concept was received but I saw how it inspired various parties attending the meeting (in some cases, direct competitors) to be more sharing and open – understanding that by helping others, they were in turn being helped. After hearing about the NetWeaving concept, some of the participants - rather than 'keeping their cards close to their chest' - actually called back to their company at the end of the first day, and had materials shipped overnight which they shared at the 2nd day of the meeting. What also made a difference was the way the persons running the meeting 'reinforced' the word, and openly promoted the concept through the two-day meeting.

A SPECIAL CASE WITH ATTORNEYS AND CPA'S

Of all the professions, attorney, and CPA's are most ideally positioned to be NetWeavers for their clients. CPA's in particular, because of their need to have knowledge of the clients' total tax picture which often includes their personal savings and investments as well, are even more 'potentially' able to act as a strategic connector for their clients. Not only do they know more about their clients than the other advisors, but CPAs tend to have the highest level of trust. Yet few attorneys and even fewer CPA's do much if any strategic "matchmaking" – offering to put some of their clients together to find ways that they could be of help to each other. They consider it to be too big a 'risk'.

In both cases, most attorneys and CPA's have an overriding fear that if they were to connect two of their clients, and something were not to work out as planned, they would somehow be held responsible, and they'd lose both of them as clients.

And yet attorneys and CPA's take risks every day in their practices – giving tax and legal advice, and attorneys drafting legal documents. When they begin to understand that NetWeaving just involves taking a different kind of risk than they are used to assuming, some of them – not all – begin to change.

NetWeaving simply involves "*relationship risk*". Yes, there is risk. But by passing up the golden opportunity to connect some of their clients with other clients, or even a client with someone they just know and trust who isn't even a client, they miss out on all the positive

outcomes which could benefit their clients, and eventually come back to benefit themselves, especially from the ‘word of mouth advertising’ their clients would do for them. And by simply asking if making such connections would be considered of real value, they eliminate almost any chances of being held responsible if the connection doesn’t work out.

In addition to this I’ve also heard from some:

“I don’t think it’s professional for me to actively suggest or arrange connections with or among my clients and prospective clients.”

Thanks goodness some of the best and most successful attorneys and CPA’s I know not only disagree with this statement, but feel just the opposite. Connecting others, and acting as a gratuitous resource for others, not only is in line with rules of professional conduct, but it is a form of ‘servant leadership’ Putting the needs, problems, and opportunities of others first, not only pays off in the long run, but it is contagious. The more people do it and see others doing the same, the more others start doing it as well.

One of the best and easiest ways for CPA’s and attorneys to play the matchmaking role is to put on a client appreciation event (a breakfast, lunch or dinner) where ‘advance’ information about NetWeaving is sent out as part of the invitation. This way, they understand that the main idea is to have conversations with other clients and invitees present and look for ways they might be able to help each other:

- Make new connections and provide contacts the other person might find valuable.
- Provide resources (either their own, or those from others in their network) which would be value.

CEO groups are also beginning to catch on to NetWeaving. To some extent, when YPO (Young President’s Organization – for persons who have become president of their company prior to age 44) was formed, they were all about NetWeaving without calling it that.

Another CEO group in Dallas, Texas was actually founded with NetWeaving in mind. They asked for permission to use the trademarked name “Netweavers” and that group became CEONetweavrs (www.ceonetweavers.org) with chapters now in Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, and expanding to other cities at the time of this writing. The mission of the organization is based upon ‘servant leader’ concepts and principles and not only to look for members to help other members with connections and resources, but be a good ‘servant’ to the community.

It’s long been a mistaken belief that CEO’s have all the contacts they could possibly want. That may be true in some isolated cases, but groups such as YPO, WPO, Vistage, the CEO Roundtable, and several others have demonstrated the value of forming strong

relationships with other CEO's who can act as a sounding board and can become a great way to expand their resource base and their Trusted Resource Network.

People pay tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars to join exclusive country clubs. At least part of the reason they do is access to power, figuring that people with the money to join will be influential contacts for business and social purposes.

NetWeaving can accomplish the same thing – just without the high entry fee. Your dues are paid by helping connect other people and by sharing your talents as well as those with whom you have developed trusted relationships within your own network. As you become known as a connector and as a creative, helpful resource, you build the reputation as a 'go-to' person, and that opens doors to future wealth and genuine satisfaction.

THOSE WHO SAY THEY'VE DONE A LOT BUT NOT MUCH HAS COME BACK AROUND

I have to put those who have told me the above statement, or something similar to it, into two distinct groups.

The first group is mostly composed of person who think they're NetWeaving but they're really not. It is obvious to everyone (other than themselves) that, by their actions, words, or some combination thereof, that they're networking and not NetWeaving. They're connecting people or providing resources to someone else, with an understanding that they are expecting something in return. . . the old, *"I'll scratch your back, but only if you agree to scratch mine."*

When this is done, guess what, the other party doesn't feel any real obligation or even desire to return the favor. In some cases, they are actually turned off to the point that it destroys the relationship, since they see it as disingenuous and a form of disguised self-interest.

But there is a second group from whom I heard this same point about not seeing much of their NetWeaving coming back around, and yet I believe their motives were pure, or mostly pure, and they were focusing on the right kind of people who were 'givers' rather 'takers'. As I studied this in more detail, something became very clear and I identified the two additional reasons why their NetWeaving was not coming back around to benefit them.

THE FIRST REASON PEOPLE DON'T BENEFIT FROM THEIR NETWEAVING – LACK OF FOLLOW UP

Let's assume that you and I meet at some 'networking' event – a Chamber Meeting. . .an organization to which we both belong, etc. And let's also assume that like several groups and

organizations around the country, and even globally, “NetWeaving” has now become a recognized way to network.

As I am probing for ways which I might be able to help you and you describe someone ‘generically’ who I realize is also at the same meeting, I survey the room and spot the person and bring her over to make an introduction. After a short but meaningful discussion, I suggest that we look at calendars and set up a meeting that I can host for the two persons.

The meeting takes place and the two people really hit it off and end up discussing a number of ways which they can help each other.

Everything sounds great, and as we also find is true in the overwhelming number of cases, one or both of the persons you have brought together turn the table and insist, “*What can we do to help you?*” And even after you simply ask each of them to ‘pay it forward’ and do the same for two others, they still insist to find a way to help you.

Seems like a perfect ending doesn’t it? Sounds like a grand slam home run for everyone involved. It looks as if everyone involved is going to be helped. There’s only one problem.

All of us are so busy these days and ‘time-stressed’ that within a week, if no follow up action is taken, chances are that all of the positive things discussed, and all of the potential connections which could be made or resources provided, will be lost in the cosmic dust of lost and faded promises and through poor memories.

A serious NetWeaver host should take one additional step as the host and send a follow up email or letter to each of the two persons summarizing what each said he or she was going to do. Then in a couple weeks, he or she should follow up to see if either or both of the parties have followed up, re-connected, and followed through with what they said they were going to do.

This is what separates the great NetWeavers from the ‘dabblers’, and what separates amateur NetWeavers from the pro’s who will make a difference in the world with their NetWeaving activities and actions.

ONE MORE PROBLEM – A WEAKNESS WHICH IS PART OF HUMAN NATURE

But let’s assume that the two people DO follow up and get back together, and even that they DO ‘pay it forward’ and host a meeting or simply make a new introduction for their new friend. There can still be a major breakdown which can prevent the original NetWeaver from benefiting from his or her NetWeaving.

Let me illustrate this with a true story. Several years ago, through our CEONetweaver organization, I met the CEO of a company offering a unique voluntary employee benefit. I felt that a good friend of mine, who had retired from a large company, was perfectly positioned to go back to this company and offer this benefit to his old company. I called the friend up and as I was beginning to tell him about the company and the unique offering, he interrupted me saying, *“Bob, I’m on their Advisory Council”*. I felt pretty stupid until, as I was driving home, it hit me that I was the one who introduced him to the CEO of that company, which ended up with him being asked to join their advisory board.

When I called and reminded him that I had been the one who had originally connected him with that CEO, he was embarrassed, but I quickly reminded him that it’s one of our human failings, that when someone makes an introduction for our benefit – especially if it’s to a fairly high level person – we tend to **‘ownership’** of the new relationship. As the saying goes, *“We forget the girl who brought us to the dance.”*

So that illustrates that it’s important for the “NetWeaver” who makes an introduction of two persons to each other, that several weeks or a month later, he or she needs to follow up and see if the two have connected and to see how it went.

Sometimes the reaction will be, *“Wow, I had totally forgotten that you were the one who introduced me to Tom. After Tom and I got together and got to know and trust each other, Tom actually turned around and introduced me to Mary who is now one of my best clients. Gee, I need to find some way to help you.”*

It’s not that we’re ungrateful, we just plain forget. As we build the relationship as a result of the connection someone else made for us, we tend to under-value the fact that had the other person not made that original connection, none of the good things which have since transpired, would have taken place.

When a person commits to becoming a skilled NetWeaver, he/she will find him/herself consistently challenged to keep track of all the connections made but without good follow up, ‘the law of reciprocity’ may not work, and what goes around, may just not come back around.

A good tracking system can help or even a ‘manual’ system. There’s a form at the end of the book which you use to keep track of your NetWeaving and so now that this is an e-book, you can simply print out and complete that form out whenever you make a new connection; offer your or others’ resources, or add someone new to your Trusted Resource Network.

BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT – AND YOUR NETWEAVING IS JUST NOT WORKING – NOTHING IS COMING BACK AROUND

After the first edition of this book came out and I had more opportunity to hear from people who had been practicing NetWeaving, I was thrilled to hear many of the great success stories of business deals and jobs landed; long-term relationships established, and a never-ending stream of referrals generated.

But there were still enough wanna-be NetWeavers who would come up to me after one of my talks, or email me after buying and reading my books, and sheepishly admit that they had been NetWeaving since they had either read the book or heard me speak, and it just wasn't working for them. Nothing seemed to be coming back around to benefit them.

The first thing I did was to eliminate those who were doing one of the things I just covered and that would explain why their NetWeaving wasn't working:

- 1) NetWeaving for 'takers' rather than 'givers'.
- 2) Not following up to make sure that the people they connected actually followed up; met, and then followed through with the connections or resources they had offered or promised the other person.
- 3) Not following up after they had made a connection to make sure the other person had not forgotten the role the original NetWeaver had played or none of the good things that came of the connection would have happened.

Interestingly enough, I still saw that there were still enough people who were doing everything right with NetWeaving efforts, and nothing was coming back their way in the way of **'returned hosting meetings offered to be set up'** or just **'referrals'** or **'introductions'**.

Finally the obvious became more obvious. What is a 'referral' or an 'introduction' which someone is making for you? In their eyes it's a RISK!

If someone values his or her own reputation, unless they see the qualities in YOU which would make them be willing to take the risk, you can NetWeave until the cows come home, and you just won't see much if anything coming back around in the way of returned 'referrals' and 'introductions'.

These qualities would include:

- Your professional reputation and skills – technical and soft skills
- People consider you to be a person of high integrity

- Good communication skills so you come across well in an introduction

But in today's world, it just may not be enough to be OK in these areas. People will be most willing to introduce you to others if you are UNIQUE in some ways, or one of my favorite terms, ***“Are you REMARKABLE?”***

And that doesn't mean you have to have invented the light bulb, or discovered the law of gravity. In fact, what we've been able to do is to show some of those whose “NetWeaving” was not working, some ADDITIONAL ways that can help them become REMARKABLE. These might include:

- Helping others get PR or media coverage
- Taking public speaking lessons or getting involved with Toastmasters
- Hiring a coach or finding a mentor
- Getting published, writing a blog,
- Studying social media and getting active on LinkedIn
- Forming a NetWeaving Cluster or Enrichment Group

A RECAP OF THE TOP TEN REASONS PEOPLE DON'T NETWEAVE AT ALL OR NETWEAVE MORE OFTEN

1. They aren't aware of the skill sets and therefore don't recognize when they're NetWeaving. If they were, they would be doing much more.
2. They have never thought of NetWeaving as something with learnable skills and actions steps which most can master.
3. People forget. As with any new skill which people begin learning, unless they build it into their daily routine, they will soon forget to do it on a regular basis.
4. They are too short-term in their thinking and view NetWeaving as something with too long-term a payoff to dedicate any real time toward doing it.
5. Some persons are highly analytical by nature and have a problem being perceived as nosey which good 'connectors' are by their 'curiosity'. More analytical types would prefer to be viewed and recognized as helpful, creative, problem-solvers. What they don't realize is that that is one of the key skill sets of NetWeaving and with some direction, and some appreciation for their help, it builds their self-confidence, and some back into becoming good 'connectors' as well.

6. They spend too much of their time and efforts NetWeaving for 'takers'. And because they are 'givers', they keep trying even when nothing comes back around, rather than simply turning their efforts toward helping other 'givers'.
7. Some people, especially CPA's and attorneys have an overriding fear of connecting some of their clients, for fear that it might not work out and that it could reflect negatively (or worse) back on them for making the introduction.
8. Some are just too all about "*what's in it for me*". It's generally a losing battle to try and convert someone who falls into this category.
9. They give up NetWeaving at some point because they don't think they see anything coming back.
10. They carry NetWeaving up to a certain point but then fail to follow up or follow through and the results fall short of their potential. That especially applies to connections which they make for others on which they don't follow up to see what happened. Something great may have occurred but unless they check back, the two persons connected may have 'taken ownership' of the new relationship and forgotten to give credit and return the favor to the original NetWeaver.

Chapter 8

NetWeaving in Action – The Four Levels of Making NetWeaving Connections – Why is In-Person Hosting Most Powerful?

*There's a magic chemistry created when good people
bring other good people together. . . and no two combinations are alike*

- R.S. Littell

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Imagine you are attending just about any business networking meeting, function, or event. You are in conversation with Darlene, someone whom you just met and who has been asking you a number of fairly in-depth questions about your business as well as any specific needs you might have; problems you might be experiencing within your company, or opportunities you might be attempting to take advantage of. It surprises you how open you are being with your answers.

That's partially because she prefaces her questions with a little explanation of a new word she's learned describing something she thinks she's been doing most of her life – just without a good word for it. And she just loves doing it. She calls it “**NetWeaving**” – a Golden Rule form of networking which is all about putting the other person's needs, problems, or opportunities ahead of your own. Also the way she's asking the questions supports your belief that she's not doing it just for her own benefit. She's genuinely interested in finding ways to help.

You are subsequently very impressed by how helpful she is in suggesting various people to whom she might be able to introduce you, and what gratuitous resources she or someone in her network, might be willing and able to provide – *no strings attached*.

Suddenly out of the corner of her eye, Darlene spots someone she recognizes and before you know it, you are almost being dragged halfway across the room and introduced to Tom, obviously an acquaintance of Darlene's. After Darlene and Tom conclude a warm welcome and a short catch-up conversation Darlene begins rattling off things about you and your business and Tom's, and why she believes there might be some opportunities for mutual collaboration or ways you might be able to help each other.

You have just met a “**Natural NetWeaver**”. Here are a few giveaway signs of a “Natural NetWeaver”:

- Someone with a seemingly insatiable desire to connect people for their benefit - to solve problems and fulfill needs and opportunities they have – some which they don't even recognize.
- An individual who, as you get to know him or her, just seems to be a walking, talking rolodex of contacts, resources, and helpful information.
- And the next day (sometimes even the same day) or within a couple days, you get a follow up email, telephone call or personal note from the person summarizing what you talked about with the several follow up items list which they are going to do – information to provide you, or persons with whom they are going to connect you.

BUT DO YOU NEED TO BE A NATURAL NETWEAVER FOR NETWEAVING TO BE EFFECTIVE?

Some people just seem to be naturally gregarious and float effortlessly about during social and business situations meeting and greeting new people as if they'd known them all their life. With some, it's because they just genuinely enjoy making these connections because it just makes them feel good.

Others do it partly because they enjoy it and partly because they have found it to be an interesting way to help them overcome some of their feelings of insecurity in social situations.

Take the case of the Plain Jane, the 'wallflower', who goes out on the town with her good-looking very shy friend, Suzie. Plain Jane finds that by being outgoing and initiating conversations, she is helping her friend make contacts and friends, as well as making contacts herself which she wouldn't have made on her own. Is this 'using' the other person?

Some of us are 'extroverts'. Others of us are 'introverts'. And then there are all shades in between. Dan Pink in his book, "*To Sell is Human*" includes a term for those who are fairly well-balanced in-between to be '**ambiverts**'. In her book "*The Power of Introverts*", Susan Cain describes how many introverts, similar to Plain Jane above, force themselves to be more extraverted than they actually are, and perhaps surprising to some, I would put myself in that category as well.

Most of us are still trying to figure out how to get along with each other. In my opinion, almost any means that isn't destructive and overly manipulative, and which helps us break out of our typical routine in order to establish more new healthy human relationships should be welcomed.

But for some of us, especially persons who tend to be more on the shy or analytical side, this meeting and greeting new people and establishing relationships is often challenging and even threatening.

Psychologists report that the number one fear is NOT fear of heights, or snakes, or spiders. It's a fear of public speaking. Part of this is related to the fear of being rejected, or embarrassing oneself in front of a group of people. But to some highly analytical and shy persons, this fear of meeting new people and establishing relationships, can easily extend to meeting persons in smaller groups or even one-on-one. As stated before, many highly analytical people much prefer to be viewed as helpful – behind-the-scenes problem-solvers.

But we have discovered something very interesting about NetWeaving. Because it's all about helping connect other people with their benefit in mind and not our own, many more analytical types who were uncomfortable or downright nervous about connecting other people, find they really enjoy doing it. That makes them realize that to be effective in that 'connector' role, they have to meet more people, and so they approach 'networking' events and meetings with a different mindset. And some of them get downright good at it.

I suggest that these types approach meetings with a two-fold mindset. First they are on a mission to meet creative, successful people who come across as 'givers', not 'takers'. The ones who just want to talk about themselves and what they do, usually – but not always - give themselves away as of a 'taker'.

But secondly, I encourage those with more analytical personalities to pretend they are on a 'research' mission. Their goal is to learn more about industries and professions which they may know little about.

You've undoubtedly heard of or are very familiar with the term "**your elevator pitch or statement**". It's the idea that you get on an elevator with someone you would really like to meet, but you only have a few floors in which to get your message across and hopefully to make them interested enough to want to learn more.

But you don't need to be in 'sales' for this GLP concept to be effective, especially if you are one of those on a 'research' mission.

This can become a very effective way not only to become more knowledgeable about other industries and companies in that industry, but any time you sit back and listen, you are actually building a reputation as a 'great conversationalist'.

But realistically, those who are already pretty good NetWeaving – both as a 'connector' as well as 'helpful creative problem-solver' and 'gratuitous resource provider' are the ones who will benefit the most from studying and incorporating NetWeaving into their lives. Much of the secret to NetWeaving Simply involves raising one's awareness, learning how to build

NetWeaving skill sets into your daily hats, as well as how to spread the word to others about this 'win-win-win-win' form of networking.

DOING IT SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU ENJOY IT

Even if you've never done much matchmaking before, most people find they enjoy it for several reasons:

- They genuinely enjoy helping other people. Most people have never really thought of all the benefits that come from connecting other people. But the more they do it, the more they want to do.
- There's a "rush" that comes from connecting two people and watching the energy that they create as they find ways to help each other; people they discover they in common, and so on and so on.
- The NetWeaver experiences a 'halo effect'. They see their own image enhanced and elevated as the two persons connected now see them in a much different and more generous light.

DOING IT – WITH AND WITHOUT KEEPING SCORE

We said this earlier, but it bears repeating; one of the negative comments I hear time and time again about persons who join most "leads" groups is that they hate the feeling that everyone is "keeping score", whether they come out and say it or not (*"Ok, I gave you a lead, you now owe me one"*).

With NetWeaving, no one keeps score. You give and you give and at some point, as you give and you see nothing coming back in return, you simply assume (until proven to the contrary) this person is a taker and not a giver. You just go on. As you get more skilled in your NetWeaving, you will be able to recognize this type of person sooner and avoid some of the frustrations.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD BECOMING A BETTER NETWEAVING MATCHMAKER

As we mentioned in Chapter Five, the key to becoming a skilled NetWeaving matchmaker is to learn to listen differently – to create the habit of listening with a second pair of ears, and to be tuned into conversations and other forms of communication with a second set of antennae.

And over time you will learn "**The NetWeaver's Law of Referral Reciprocity**" – *'the more you refer OTHERS, the more you will be referred'*.

But on pages 43-46, I described the three main reasons that persons whose NetWeaving is not coming back around:

- 1) They're still 'networking' and not NetWeaving, meaning that any time you add 'strings' to your NetWeaving, it eliminates a feeling of obligation on the other person's part to want to return the favor.
- 2) They're "NetWeaving" for 'takers' rather than 'givers'. Takers just don't get it.
- 3) They're not following back up after they have made an introduction for someone and therefore they don't get credit for the connection they made. We as 'humans' take 'ownership' of the new relationship and often don't show the kind of appreciation the 'NetWeaving connector' deserves.

"PAY IT FORWARD' VERSION OF NETWEAVING

The Warner Bros. movie, "Pay It Forward" is based upon a book by the same name written by Catherine Ryan Hyde (Simon & Schuster – publisher). In both the book and the movie, a seventh grade school teacher, each year gives his entire class an optional assignment – "to create something which will change the world", but also "to put it into action."

Trevor, one of the seventh graders in the class, goes up to the blackboard and draws out a diagram of his concept. He draws one small circle with three lines connecting outward to three other small circles. When someone does a 'favor' for you, instead of paying him or her back, you pay it forward by doing some gratuitous act of kindness for three other people. . .then each of them do favors for three others, and so on and so on. It becomes an 'exponential favor factory' with people constantly looking for ways to do favors for others in order to pay it forward in way of recognizing the favors done for them.

Sure, maybe it's a little on the idealistic side but there's nothing wrong with imaging that the world could be like that some day.

But as you will learn later when we get into 'hosting' meetings to introduce two persons to each other, NetWeaving has its own version of "Pay It Forward" which I originally called **PIONTTO** – "**P**ass **I**t **O**n **T**o **T**wo **O**thers". With permission of Catherine Ryan Hyde, NetWeaving is now known globally as the 'business' version of "Pay It Forward".

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS

When you ordinarily hear the word '**recommendation**' or '**referral**', especially in a sales or marketing context, you tend to think of it in terms of someone **recommending** or **referring** a person to you.

And any salesperson will admit, "*I'd much rather work referrals than cold calls.*"

But in "NetWeaving" terminology, a 'recommendation' or 'referral' is where YOU, as the NetWeaver, are the '**recommender**' or '**referrer**'.

First though, I would like to draw a distinction between a '**recommendation**' and a '**referral**'. I like to consider a 'recommendation' more like a 'restaurant' or 'movie'

recommendation. You had a pleasant experience and you would recommend that others try them.

It can be a verbal or written recommendation but that's about it. I consider a 'referral' to involve more involvement on the person's part making the 'referral'. A skilled NetWeaver would include some reasons why they are referring this person – qualifications, skills, expertise, etc. – and include a bio, or send the person to whom you're referring them to their "LinkedIn" profile.

Or, even better, the NetWeaver would actually help the two persons set up a meeting to get to know each other, or with the ultimate form of NetWeaving, the NetWeaver would **'host'** a meeting to introduce the two persons to each other and be there to facilitate and energize the meeting.

My good friend, Judy Suiter, and one of the most experienced and knowledgeable **'DISC'** Behavioral Assessment Experts in the country – in her book, "***The Ripple Effect***" (Chris Carey – co-author) uses the term **'endorsement'** as "*the approval and support of one who is in a position of influence that advances the purposes and goals of others.*"

There's action involved in 'endorsing' someone. And it's the 'action' that creates the 'ripple effects'.

In my opinion, it's unfortunate that LinkedIn uses the term to **'endorse'** someone in what I would consider to be a less meaningful and purposeful way. There, you endorse someone for certain skills but frankly it's almost too easy to do. Plus, it creates a little feeling of obligation on your part to do the same back in return. I think that it's lost much of the strength of a more detailed 'recommendation' that you would write for someone. And as you also see, LinkedIn's use of 'recommendation' is what I would prefer to call a 'referral' or Judy's term 'endorsement' since writing a recommendation for someone takes some extra effort on your part to write it and is more sincere.

And in contrast to some 'leads' groups where there is an expectation of leads being exchanged, I believe that you don't ask or even expect recommendations and referrals, **you earn them**. The 'referrals' come to you as an indirect effect of helping others. They just come.

NetWeaving changes your radar. Applying the idea of learning to listen and tuning in differently, imagine on most phone calls you make and in most conversations in which you are engaged, that you start redirecting your ears and your radar antennae.

You still will be listening for signals that this person may be able to help you with some of your own needs. There's nothing wrong with that. But, with your newly installed radar, you're going to be listening and tuned in with these additional questions in mind:

- *Is there someone I know who would benefit knowing this person, either personally or professionally?*
- *Could this person provide information or resources which would benefit someone I know?*

- *Has this person impressed me so much that I should get to know him or her better; find a way first to help her or him, and possibly later, add them to my Trusted Resource Network?*

You should also know that as you are asking yourself these three questions, whether it's on the telephone or in person, you need not be overly concerned with making a 'perfect' strategic match with someone else. If you find this person interesting, creative, successful, funny, or just someone you've enjoyed meeting or talking with, chances are that others will feel the same way. That's half the fun of it. You just never know.

If you're a NetWeaver, you love connecting people just because you believe:

- They would benefit from meeting each other
- They have things in common which you're aware of
- They are both high quality people and good things happen when good people meet and figure ways to make other good things happen.

We have created three Levels of Referral Connections. You should think of these in conjunction the analogy we covered earlier of learning to listen with a second pair of ears and a second set of antennae.

LEVEL 1 REFERRAL CONNECTION

Loaning your good name: You simply give someone you know the name and phone number of someone else whom you believe that person would benefit meeting. All you're doing is allowing the other person to use your good name as a means of entry. You are leaving everything else up to them and actually chances are pretty slim he or she will follow up and actually contact the person.

Example: *"John, as we were talking, I just thought of someone you need to meet. Paul Jones is a consultant who works (description of what they do) and there might be some ways you could help each other. Here's his phone number; give him a call and tell him I told you to call him."*

LEVEL 2 REFERRAL CONNECTION

Loaning your good name PLUS adding a note: In addition to loaning your good name and reputation, you also send an email or a personal letter to the other person saying nice things about the person with whom you're wanting to connect them (possibly including a bio which they email you), and describing why you think the two would benefit from meeting.

Example: *"John, as we were talking, I just thought of someone who you need to meet. Paul Jones is a consultant who works. . . and there might be some ways you could help each other. I tell you what, send me your bio and some information on your company and let me send that on*

to Paul so he'll be expecting a call from you. Here's his phone number; give him a call after you receive my email and tell him I told you to call him."

LEVEL 3 REFERRAL CONNECTION

Loaning your good name, plus note, plus call: In addition to loaning your good name and writing a note or email, you follow up that note with a personal phone call to further validate the person's character and abilities and the value you would see in arranging a meeting with the other person. The strength of a phone call from you might also eliminate the need for even sending a note or email. Sometimes this can be accomplished all in one step via a three-way phone call introduction.

Example: "You would say the same as in example 2, but at the end you would add, "I'll tell you what John, I'll follow up the information I send on to Paul and then personally call and tell him a little bit more about you." (If you have the ability to make a three-way phone call, just go ahead and do it right on the spot.)

A Level 1 Referral might take you an extra five seconds on the phone; a Level 2 Referral may take 10 seconds to 30 seconds, and a Level 3 may take several minutes and more if include a 3-way phone introduction, but if you will fit in several of these during the week, you won't believe what will start happening. The impact will be cumulative.

LEVEL 4 HOSTING

NetWeaving at its best: You arrange a meeting to introduce two or three persons to each other and you are there to moderate.

As good and effective as these referrals on the phone are, in practice, I have discovered that all of these first three pale in comparison to the fourth method of "NetWeaving referrals" which involves physically, "Hosting" a meeting for two others.

WHY IS HOSTING A NETWEAVING MEETING SO SUPERIOR TO JUST MAKING A REFERRAL?

Here's why:

- With any of the other referral levels, you're leaving the work of setting up the meeting to the two others (although sometimes in Level 3, you can actually help set up the meeting at the time of the introduction). With 'hosting', you are the one doing the work of setting up the meeting and it is work, with everyone's busy schedules and sometimes needing to address the questions of, "*Why are you doing this?*" and "*How am I going to benefit from meeting this other person?*"
- With 'hosting', at the initial meeting, you give a little overview of why you felt the two persons would benefit from meeting each other, and explain a little about the whole NetWeaving concept.

- With ‘hosting’, you are there to experience the magic and energy that flows forth, once the parties start talking. But what is most interesting is that in the majority of cases, the most significant thing or things the two people find in common, or the key benefits derived from being introduced, are not what you had assumed up front when you set up the meeting. They discover someone they know in common; or they find they go to the same church, or they belong to the same club, or uncover hobbies they have in common.
- After making introductions, giving a little overview of NetWeaving and why you brought the two persons together, you have each of them describe more about themselves business and personal wise. Then we suggest you use any of the same key questions which we use when we set up NetWeaving Enrichment Groups (see page 69) to stimulate discussions to help them get to know each other at a deeper level. Then you as the NetWeaver/moderator get to sit back and just watch the magic as they do find ways to help each other and discover people whom they know in common.

PIONTTO – THE BUSINESS VERSION OF “PAY IT FORWARD”

Towards the end of the meeting, after you’ve seen the magic of the two people having found ways to help each other and learn they have friends and connections in common, you often find that one or both of the persons you have brought together, turn the table on you say something along these lines: *“Joe, this has really been great and just as you thought, we’ve found ways to help each other and discovered people we know in common who we never would have known had you not made this connection. But you have said much, how can WE help you?”*

In true NetWeaving fashion, and instead of asking for some help for yourself, you ask each of them to ‘pay it forward’ and agree to host a meeting for two others.

Back at the beginning of my NetWeaving journey, I was asking each of them to “**PIONTTO**”. They would look at me funny and I’d add, *“Each of you agree to Pass It On To Two Others and host a meeting to connect two other people, just as I’ve done.”*

But then on a fairly regular basis, someone would come up to me after one of my talks, or email me after reading the first book on NetWeaving, and ask if I had seen the movie, “Pay it Forward”? In that movie, a 7th grade school teacher played by Kevin Spacey, challenges his class each year to “create something which will change the world”. . .and then “put it into action”. Trevor – played by Haley Joel Osment – goes up to the blackboard and draws a small circle with three lines coming from it, and connecting three other small circles, saying, *“When someone does a favor for you, instead of paying them back, you pay it forward by finding a way to help three others; then they do the same for three others, and so on and so on.”*

In “NetWeaving”, it’s not quite three for one, but it is two for one: *“I hosted a meeting for the two of you, and now I’d like to ask each of you to ‘pay it forward’ and host a meeting for two others and you ask them to do the same, and so on and so on.”*

So after having heard enough people suggest that my “PIONTTO” request was just another form of ‘paying it forward’, I saw the movie and then bought and read the book. Then I

called Catherine Ryan Hyde, author of the book on which the movie was based. . .told her about NetWeaving. . .and after some time and after proving my authenticity and genuineness, she gave me permission to call NetWeaving the “**business version of pay it forward**”. Several years later, that led to me being asked to become the first elected president of the Pay It Forward Foundation (www.payitforwardfoundation.org) and where as of this date, I still serve on the Advisory Board.

NETWEAVING ‘HOSTING’ IS PERFECT FOR PERSONS IN TRANSITION

When someone is in between jobs, engaged in a job search, or is simply thinking of changing fields, the tendency is to look at it from a uni-dimensional viewpoint that to many potential employers doesn’t sell in today’s competitive marketplace:

- Here’s my track record
- Here are my skill sets and strengths/weaknesses
- Here’s what I’m looking for.

Will you hire me or do you know someone who might?

When we were differentiating networking from NetWeaving, we pointed out that there’s nothing wrong with networking. It’s just that when you are networking, you’re typically doing so with your own needs in mind. When you’re NetWeaving, you’re doing it with others’ needs in mind rather than just your own.

We have shown a number of people in transition (in between jobs) how and why it makes great sense for them to spend some of their time ‘hosting’ meetings for persons whom they’ve known throughout their career. Think of what a difference it makes when you are not viewed as someone *looking for a job*, but rather someone simply connecting others for their benefit rather than their own.

Not only will those persons being connected offer to pay back their host – who often doesn’t even mention he or she is in a job search mode – but after being asked to just ‘pay it forward’, they will still insist to find a way to help.

But in addition, the ‘energy’ they will derive from setting up and hosting an occasional NetWeaving meeting, will help them maintain a positive mental attitude which is critically important in any job search situation.

MARK AND ANN SCHOOLER

In our other book, “*Power NetWeaving*”, I talked about Mark Schooler, one of the greatest NetWeavers I’ve ever known. Well, he may be challenged by his wife, Ann. Together they make quite a team. Either together or separately, they are consistently ‘hosting’ meetings at their home.

Ann is an ‘in-demand’ volunteer who helps non-profits. She doesn’t charge for her services, which include such things as strategic direction and planning; board composition and selection; structure and conflict resolution; event planning and fund-raising. She almost always has a full load and takes on new clients under two circumstances. First she must philosophically believe in the mission, and secondly she must buy enough into the cause to put her own money into it.

How could a couple who spends virtually all their time connecting other people and hosting meetings as well as finding resources for others, especially non-profits, and be so financially successful? You just have to buy into the law of reciprocity and know that, “*the more you give, the more you will receive.*”

This doesn’t mean you don’t have to also be on the lookout for ways to increase the chances that things will come back around.

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH – The Five Step Process

Where most people fail in their networking, as well as their NetWeaving efforts is in the **follow up** and **follow through**. I will touch upon the importance of both these terms both here and again in the chapter on creating NetWeaving Enrichment Groups.

What good does it do to create meaningful dialogue with someone; begin to build mutual appreciation and acceptance with the other person; begin to bond, and then make the incorrect assumption that the details of the experience will stay with them for more than a day or so. Without exceptional follow up, follow through, and reinforcement, it may well just turn out to be just a pleasurable one-time experience.

So here’s the 5-Step process which is effective in a group networking event, or in a first-time one-on-one conversation. If it is a large networking event or just large meeting, it’s fine to collect 10 or 15 business cards but narrow it down to the two or three persons who impressed you the most and who came across as a ‘giver’ and not a ‘taker’.

The most obvious tip-off of a ‘taker’ is that person who only wants to talk about him or herself with little or no interest in learning about you.

So now you've been to the event and you come home or back to your office. What action are you going to take?

I used to be that all of us had some pretty good excuses for not writing thank you notes and note cards following up on a meeting at which we met someone who impressed us and with whom we'd like to at least get to know better:

- *I'm out of note cards. I'll send one when I buy more.*
- *It will be several days in the mail before the person receives it and by then, they will probably have forgotten our conversation.*
- *It's just so hard to remember to do it.*

But now, with the internet – email and texting, these excuses go out the window. Personal handwritten note cards are great, and in many ways even more powerful than ever since now they are much rarer, but they still take more time and effort to do.

So Step 1 is to write an email or personal note. Here's a sample beginning to the email:

“John, really enjoyed meeting you last night. Let's get together for lunch sometime soon.”

Sadly, for many people, that's where the relationship ends. No one follows up and a week or two weeks later, you come across that person's business card and you can't remember what they looked like, let alone what you talked with him or her about.

So, the first step begins by following up within 24 to 48 hours of an initial meeting with someone you decide you would like to get to know better. That can be an email or a follow up phone call acknowledging the meeting, but make sure to detail some of the things you talked about. I recommend that after you have that 'meaningful' conversation with the person, you sneak away and make some notes on the back of the person's business card. Just writing a few words on the card will trigger your memory for what to include in the email.

Also memory experts recommend that in the initial conversation, we repeat the person's name several times to help our retention.

But then Step 2 is where **'following up'** blends into **'following through'**. Rather than just sending an email that says something like:

“Mary, really enjoyed meeting you last night. Let's get together for lunch sometime soon.”

But then you add:

“Also based on one comment you made last night (or something specific you talked about), I've attached an article which I thought you would find of interest and hopefully of value.”

That shows two things. **First**, it shows you listened; but secondly it shows that you asked yourself, “*What could I do in the way of ‘following up’ . . .but even better, ‘following through’ . . . that would really impress the other person?*” And also find what you sent to be of real value.

There’s only one problem with this if you’re like me and have a stack of great articles you’ve set aside to read.

Over 20 years ago, I assembled over a hundred articles in file folders in a file cabinet, sorted by topic: sales, marketing, technology, medical, team-building, leadership, etc. Back before you could scan and email, I would send an article out with a note like that above, but I would always either ‘yellow highlight’ a portion of the article that applied to our previous conversation, or even better, in my note, I would write something like:

“Also based on one comment you made, I’ve included an article which I thought you might find of interest and of value. And in case you don’t want to read the entire article, the four points I found to be of most interest and value to me were: bullet point. . .bullet point. . .bullet point. . .bullet point.”

I cannot begin to describe to you the incredible difference this made, and how many times I would get a thank you note or email, or in some cases a phone call, thanking me for having taken the time to bring out the key points.

And guess what, you don’t need a ‘file cabinet’ full of articles sorted by topic today thanks to “Google”. You can easily find an article which relates to your conversation, and just as importantly, as you do that little bit of extra research, you grow more knowledgeable on that topic yourself.

But then Step 3 is to call the person, and set up a One-on-One meeting to get to know the person better. We also suggest you begin the meeting with a brief overview of NetWeaving and why you like it so much. This also sets the stage for you to be a little bit nosy since you’re looking for Needs, Problems, and Opportunities which they have with which you might be able to help them with. You can also print out a copy of the “**NetWeaver’s Creed**” from the website: www.netweaving.com and hand it to the person. It gives you all the talking points you will need.

But if you really want to make NetWeaving part of your business and personal life, here is the most powerful step to take – Step 4. You can either do this AFTER having had a one on one meeting or if you’re a “Natural NetWeaver”, you may be able to even skip Step 3 and go directly to Step 4:

“John, on the way home last night, I thought of someone. . .Mary Jones. . .whom I believe you would really benefit meeting and knowing. Why don’t you send me your bio or CV, and I’ll ask Mary to do the same (or use their LinkedIn profile if current)

and then after you each learn a little more about each other, let me know if you would let me 'host' a meeting to introduce the two of you to each other and see if you could each find some ways to be of help."

You might ask, why should you have each person review bio information about the other person and ask permission if you can 'host' a meeting? Partly it's just normal courtesy to do so, but also I've discovered that sometimes one or both of the persons you are trying to connect are in the middle of some important project. They don't want to let you down by spurning your offer but you've opened the door for them to say, *"I'd love to meet this other person, but I'm right in the middle of a major initiative right now. Could we put it off for about a month? Thanks are asking and I really looking forward to meeting him (her)."*

It's this 'hosting' concept of NetWeaving which I believe is helping spread NetWeaving around the globe.

But there are specific ways which we teach in our NetWeaving Ambassador course that can have a significant impact, not only in enhancing the probability that the two persons will benefit from the meeting and find ways to help each other, but in increasing the chances that 'what goes around. . .will come back around' in some form or another. . .to benefit the NetWeaver.

After all, I have always maintained that NetWeaving is not meant to be done out of PURE ALTRUISM. I like to say that it is done out of **"ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST"**.

Your motives are certainly first and foremost to connect the two people and help them find ways to help each other, but at the same time, you so strongly buy into the 'law of reciprocity' that you are confident that in some way – now or down the line - you will benefit as well.

Sometimes when I run into a "NetWeaving skeptic" who is often a 'taker' and who wonders why someone would spend any of his or her valuable time focused only on helping two other persons find ways to help each other, without immediate thought for how they would benefit, I respond something like this:

"(Name), I have found that if you bring two people together with their needs in mind rather than your own. . . and if you are there to introduce the two to each other, but then after helping them get to know each other a little better, you just sit back and listen as they do find ways to help each other. . .and they almost always discover people they know in common which they never would have realized had you not made this introduction. Frankly (name), if YOU don't walk out of that meeting HIGHER than the two people you have brought together, this just isn't a concept for you."

Actually we have found that in the vast majority of cases, the exact opposite is true. We have found that in roughly 7-8 out of every NetWeaving 'hosting' meetings, at some point, one or both of the individuals who have been brought together, reverse the question to their host, and say "How can we help YOU?"

So Step 5 is that you simply ask each of them to '**pay it forward**' and agree to host a meeting for two other persons. In some cases, I've hosted meetings where each of the two

persons immediately volunteered the name of someone to whom they would like to introduce their fellow 'hostee' and new friend.

But guess what also happens in many cases, the two individuals agree to 'pay it forward' and host a subsequent meeting themselves, but they refuse to let their host get by with that, and insist, "**Ok, we'll do that, but seriously, how can WE help you?**" Wouldn't it be downright rude not to at least offer them some way they might be able to return the favor.

That brings up an interesting point. Many 'pure' NetWeavers have a very difficult time asking for help. They love giving it, but for whatever reason or reasons, they aren't comfortable receiving it.

What has helped me and to give the same advice to others, that when you don't allow the other person or persons to 'pay it forward' to help you, you are denying them the same satisfaction and joy you received by helping them.

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

Most of us just don't create enough healthy and deeper relationships as we go through the normal routine of our daily lives – both personal and business-wise.

NetWeaving offers a way to do this within a business context that extends into our everyday personal lives.

My wife is a perfect example. She is "Natural NetWeaver" and as one friend of ours said one time, "*Bob, don't kid yourself. Carolyn is a much better NetWeaver than you will ever be.*"

Within only a few short years, after mostly an executive administrative support background, she has blossomed into becoming a very successful real estate agent. And one of the things which I like to say why she's so successful is that just about everyone she sells, we end up becoming friends with.

We won't get along with everyone we meet but by increasing the number of new contacts you make, the number of healthy new relationships you build will grow exponentially, as will the number of close and meaningful personal relationships over time. NetWeaving truly is contagious! Just watch. You will get better – both at the skills of being a better connector of others, as well as becoming a better resource for others. You will also become a better NetWeaving Ambassador – spread the word about this great concept, then watch how others being emulating what you are doing – and respecting you for having encouraged them to do the same. Most people truly want to help others. Sometimes they just need a little nudge.

I want end this chapter with my favorite quote from a book written back in the 60's by AHZ Carr, "*How to Attract Good Luck*" and I'm somewhat paraphrasing parts.

“The first step in attracting good luck is to understand that MOST of our good luck comes to us through other people.”

Here’s my favorite line:

“Between ourselves and those who cross our path, ‘chance’ spins an invisible web of awareness – a Luck Line.

So to create more luck simply means in essence to come into healthy human relationships with more people.

The more Luck Lines you throw out, the more luck you’re going to find.”

Chapter 9

Creating NetWeaving Enrichment Groups

*Successful persons make a 'habit' of doing those things
which failures refuse to do.*

Albert E. Grey

Why do people join groups? There are a variety of reason but the most common ones would include:

- To meet new people, socialize and make new friends.
- To gain acceptance from others – ***"I'm OK. . .you're OK."***
- To expand their horizons and learn from other people.
- To make new personal, business, and social connections.
- To join together with others sharing common interests – garden, book, or bridge clubs.
- To join together to work on charitable, church, and other 'good works' projects.
- To assume some kind of a 'leadership' role or to join in leading toward a goal or cause.

From the first time I saw a **NetWeaving Enrichment Group** (NENRG) in action (previously referred to as NetWeaving Cluster Groups, I knew they held great potential. And although we originally formed these groups exclusively with the idea of NetWeaving in mind, we have now see that NetWeaving can also be incorporate into any group formed for any of the above purposes and it will enhance the group's mission and purpose, whatever that might be.

The original idea behind a NENRG was to put six to eight people together with the sole purpose of exploring ways to get to know each other better, break through the usual superficiality and find ways to help each other. The idea was to create something that worked almost the opposite from what many 'leads' groups are all about – *"I'll scratch your back; so long as you agree to scratch mine."*

Now there's nothing wrong with this and some people who will help form or be a part of a NENRG will also belong to some kind of 'leads' or 'referral' group in which you are participating in expectation of being given leads in exchange for doing the same. They just need to make sure they come to the NetWeaving meeting with a different mindset.

In NetWeaving Enrichment Groups, the idea is to enter with the single goal of helping other participants by connecting them with people you know directly, or people who can lead them to others who can make favorable connections. It is to offer information and resources – our own, plus those of others in Trusted Resource Network purely on a gratuitous basis – simply

with the belief that some of your goodwill will pay off somewhere down the road. And does, time and time again. The key distinguishing element of NetWeaving Enrichment Groups is that no one is keeping score.

If you truly enjoy helping others, there's an immediate payoff as mentioned previously – heightened image among the others in the group, and a boost of energy – again call it the “**Helper's High**” – psychological and spiritual rewards. In some cases, these rewards are as great as the financial rewards later on. So it is the **motives**, as well as the mindset which differentiate NetWeaving Enrichment Groups from leads and referral clubs and groups.

In NENRG's, the idea is to give, give, and give; share, share, and share, without expecting that any of your giving and sharing is going to come back. As someone said in one of our early Enrichment Groups: *“I got out of a leads group I was in after attending several times because I felt there was too much pressure to make referrals to people who in some cases I didn't know well, and to some whose quality of work I wasn't real sure of. What I really like about this NetWeaving group is that no one is keeping score.”*

Now what will almost invariably happen in the real world, is that there will be some people who join the group who still don't get it! They will typically be quiet except when something comes up which would seem to be an opportunity for them to talk about providing their particular product or services. Over a period time, these people will typically drop out because others will feel reluctant to share with them. When they don't see much or anything 'coming back' to them, they leave.

But what uniquely sets true NetWeaving Enrichment Groups apart from any other groups is that they are specifically designed to overcome the superficiality. Over time, they help to create and develop new healthy human relationships.

People within the group can sense a 'genuineness' with others and there they want to get together outside of the group to get to know each other better and that's where the real relationships are formed.

HOW ARE NETWEAVING ENRICHMENT GROUPS FORMED AND WHY?

Whenever you put together a group of six to eight people who barely know each other and meet either one time only or several times over some extended period of time, chances are you will bond with a couple of them; create a good short-term or even longer-term relationship with one or two others, and then find that you may have little in common with several others in the group – different personality and communication styles, belief systems, very few things in common, etc. But that's fine.

And yet most networking groups are formed without any fixed term agenda. That's especially true with some networking groups and organizations, who charge a fee for being a part of one. This gives people an economic incentive to stay in the group. Once again, there's nothing wrong with this and the money creates a form of commitment to the purpose which is to obtain leads, as well as give them out.

NetWeaving Enrichment Groups are often designed to exist only over a limited period of time – only long enough to allow those in the group simply to get to know others in the group and to identify the ones with whom they think they eventually will want to bond and create longer-term relationships.

Back in high school and college, fraternities, sororities, service clubs, band, or any group served a similar purpose. They allowed us over time to see and experience persons in different social and communication situations, and we chose to connect with those persons with whom we really got along and felt some kindred spirit. Many lifetime connections were created during that period but it wasn't with the entire group, it was primarily with subsets within the group.

But, after families come along and with business pressures, especially in today's 'time-stressed' world, we don't seem to find the time or the opportunities to make those kinds of deeper connections and many of the ones we make, stay at a relatively superficial level. Just one more reason why "NetWeaving" hosting can allow people to continue to build trusted relationships and expand their network when they no longer feel they have the time to get involved in a more organized group.

INCORPORATING NETWEAVING INTO ANY GROUP OR ORGANIZATION

I first experienced the magic and the energy of an organized NetWeaving Enrichment Group when we formed one at the Buckhead Business Association (BBA). We actually launched that first program in the shadow of 9/11 in 2001.

Although that program didn't last for long, we learned things from it that allowed us to successfully incorporate NetWeaving into other places including the Metro Atlanta Chamber, where the word now is part of their culture, and even more so at the Buckhead Club, one of ClubCorp's most successful clubs in their network, where it began as a program called, "**Eight-at-Eight**".

Frankly, my wife and I had been members of the Buckhead Club for about 6 months and were actually ready to drop out. We hadn't met many new people and in our opinion, the club had a little bit of a stodgy feel to it.

Luckily, the club had just started a 'speaker's' series and someone learned about the the book I had written "*Power NetWeaving*", co-authored with Nancy Fisher from Houston, Texas, and they asked me to be the next speaker in their new series.

After my talk, a young man came up to me – Bill Nordmark – and suggested that we form a program there at the Buckhead Club. We formed a committee, and called the program "**Eight-at-Eight**" – putting 8 people together every other Tuesday morning. Later it became so popular, with a waiting list to get in, we added an evening version.

Today, over a decade later, that program continues known as "**Member Connect**", but the "NetWeaving" spirit is still there. It is one of the easiest places you'll ever see for new members to get connected with other members. And for me, some mornings it will take me 20 minutes to walk across the room with introductions from people I know.

As with any project of this kind, when installed within an existing organization, there must be total support and commitment from the leadership at the top. They must buy into the concept and philosophy and be willing to actively promote and support the project.

The project can be done at separate stand-alone events as we are doing at the Buckhead Club or they can be set up by just a few individuals who like the NetWeaving Enrichment Group concept and agree to get together for just three or four meeting – typically one per month, with one person 'hosting' and 'facilitating' the meeting on a rotating basis.

The first step is usually to have someone within the organization make a 15-20 minute presentation on NetWeaving which can easily be done by using materials in this book or from materials available on the website at www.netweaving.com.

Although we've tried a number of combinations in experimenting with the formation of NetWeaving Enrichment Groups, we've found one design which seems to work the best – two or up to four people, determine they like the NetWeaving concept and want to get to know each other at a deeper level. They form the nucleus of the group.

When they have chosen up to four persons – none in exactly the same field or profession – they meet for an organizational session where the principles and mission of the NetWeaving Enrichment Group are discussed. Then names of four other potential members are brought up and of all the criteria most important, having a 'giver's' heart and persons who have had some degree of success in whatever it is they do. You should also look for persons who are creative thinkers and who will challenge the group. In short, they should be a person of character and someone who derives genuine satisfaction from helping others.

It is recommended that the group be no larger than eight since it often works that one or two of the eight can't make every meeting and that typically leaves at least 6 people which is just enough to allow everyone time to talk and participate in the discussions.

You can either approach persons whom you know well, or use this project as an excuse to approach someone whom you may only know slightly, or even not at all, but someone whom you've heard great things about and with whom you would like to form a relationship.

Some groups may wish to invite members within the same industry (non-competing). Other groups may decide to go with a totally random selection from industries outside their own, with the only criteria being to look for the most creative and free-wheeling thinkers who share the same 'give first in order to receive' mentality.

HOW TO APPROACH SOMEONE TO JOIN YOUR NETWEAVING ENRICHMENT GROUP

If you were to approach someone whom you don't know well, here's an approach which you might use (or some condensed version of this).

Let's say this is someone a friend of yours knows casually, but just raves about what a great person and creative thinker he or she is:

"Mary you don't know me other than I believe you know Jack Jones who speaks very highly of you and calls you one of the most creative persons he's ever met. (important to get a reaction or response at this point and cover a little more territory all about getting to know each other).

I'm involved in a very interesting program involving a concept you may or may not heard of called "NetWeaving". It's a Golden Rule and 'pay it forward' form of networking which is all about putting other person's needs ahead of your own and helping make connections and offering resources – no strings attached – just as a way of building trusted relationships. . . and doing it simply with the belief that, what goes around, does come back around.

*(Name of other persons) and I are forming what's called a "**NetWeaving Enrichment Group**" with just 8-persons who all share the NetWeaving mentality. After an organizational meeting where we would get to know each other better, we would each only commit to having about 3 or 4 meetings where we would cover what NetWeaving is all about – the skill sets and action steps - and discover ways we might be able to help each other, and what resources we have, or those of others within our networks, which we or they would be willing to share gratuitously, just as a way of building trusted relationships.*

Does this sound like something you would be interested in, assuming you learned a little more about the other persons who would be in the group?"

AGENDA FOR NETWEAVING ENRICHMENT GROUP MEETING NUMBER ONE

- MEETING ONE -

Developing or Enhancing Your Skills as a Strategic Connector or Matchmaker

- One of the persons will give a 15-20 minute overview of NetWeaving – this can be done by using a wide variety of materials available both from this book as well as on the NetWeaving website: www.netweaving.com .
- Then, going around the table, each person will take 5 to 7 minutes to describe his or her business or position in a company and personal life, with the idea of explaining:
 - o What is their line of work – how do they make their money. . .or create revenue.
 - o If in sales, what does a best prospect for them look like and be very specific with a good bit of questioning here? Have him or her tell how they landed their best client or customer. We remember stories better than facts.
 - o What are their most burning issues or problems – their ‘missing pieces’ – in the form of needs, problems, and opportunities which they would like the other members to be out there looking for during their ordinary course of business?
 - o Do they have a ‘mission in life’ or a ‘passion’ and if so, what is it and how could the others be of help? If they don’t have one yet, would they like to begin thinking about one and if so in what area of interest?
 - o What is their ‘**strategic advantage**’. . .their ‘**unique differentiator**’ – important to be able to ‘sell’ them and their services to others – What are their strengths? What differentiates them from their competitors?
 - o What are the names of some people in town or in the organization whom they would most like to meet? Someone in the group may know that person or at least know someone who is close enough to make a valuable introduction.
 - o What is their family situation, any hobbies, or any other interesting information they would like to share.

The real purpose of this session is to help break through the superficiality and awkwardness we all go through as we’re getting to know new people. It’s only when people begin to feel safe and secure that they will begin to open up and share and it’s then that the real NetWeaving can truly begin.

- Learning to be a better ‘connector’ of other people involves first learning to ‘listen’ with two pair of ears and two sets of antennae – one to be attentive for possible solutions to some of your own needs, problems, and opportunities – that’s natural and nothing wrong with that. But do so utilizing a second pair/set of each, to be attuned to those needs of others. Much of what you will be discussing and brainstorming within your NRENG is helping you understand
- how you can do this. You are simply carrying that same attitude and new listening ability out into your everyday conversations. When in doubt, throw out the question, **“How can I help you?”**
- In preparation for the meeting, make sure to review the chapter on ‘referrals’ (Levels 1, 2, and 3) and use the hosting and you can use the hosting referrals notepad (in appendix) for a week and see how often on a telephone conversation you can remember to make a Level 1, 2, or 3 referral, or jump ahead and offer to do a Level 4 “NetWeaving Hosting” meeting.
- Assign or ask for volunteer in the group to be the ‘scribe’. This is critically important. First, even good listeners don’t retain much from information which is not written down shortly after hearing it. Secondly, good listeners will still get some of the information incomplete or incorrect. So, writing the notes down, sending them out to each participant for corrections and additions, and then circulating the corrected notes will make a big difference in the group’s total outcome and success. This not only helps people clarify things they may have misunderstood, but just as importantly, people will add points to the notes when they review them which are often more relevant and more valuable, and are stated in clearer terms than those comments mentioned during the meeting.

- **ASSIGNMENT #1 –**
HOSTING a NetWeaving Meeting for 2 others
(refer to Chapter on Hosting and Referrals)

For your first ‘hosting’ meeting, we’ve found it best to ‘cut your teeth’ by hosting a meeting for two people who you already know well, and who trust you. You can be ‘strategic’ in in your matchmaking (meaning you’re trying to match business opportunities for one or both of them) or ‘non-strategic’. By that I mean that you bring two people together just because you like both of them – they are persons of good character, are interesting; not self-absorbed, and you believe they would enjoy being of help to someone else.

As we talked about in the chapter on “Hosting”, you would first call and tell them a little about NetWeaving, and that you would like to play the role a ‘matchmaker’ and introduce him/her to this other person over breakfast, lunch, or a drink after work.

They will almost always agree to meet.

As part of your second “**NetWeaving Enrichment Group**” meeting to encourage each person to bring any articles or reference materials, or websites, which they have found especially valuable in their personal or business life. This can be things to help become a better listener, motivational material, etc. Have each person bring enough copies to hand out.

AGENDA FOR NETWEAVING ENRICHMENT GROUP MEETING NUMBER TWO

- MEETING TWO – Developing or Enhancing Your Skills as a Resource Provider for Others

- Review over any experiences which hopefully most or everyone has had in explaining and exposing other people to the NetWeaving concept. If you aren't using the word, and explaining NetWeaving to others, you're missing the boat. Get used to using the word on a daily basis and watch, as you explain it to others, how people light up to you.
- Review any successful 'matches' which anyone in the group made as a result of 'hosting' a NetWeaving meeting for two other persons, or Level 1, 2, or 3 referrals which people made over the telephone, or even possibly online. It's not unusual to have a number of great stories just about the positive energy created during the meetings but there will also usually be a couple of cases where it really came to benefit one or both of the persons you hosted, and occasionally, there will even be some 'immediate' payback for the NetWeaver host to share since remember, your two 'hostees' will often INSIST to find a way to return the favor and help you in some way.
- Within the group, discuss and update any needs, problems, or opportunities anyone would like to bring up for others to be on the lookout for.
- This meeting's agenda involves developing or expanding your skills as a 'no-strings-attached' Resource Provider for others. It involves sharing valuable sources of information you may have or to which you regularly refer for information or help. This is a good time for each participant to share the various materials items he or she has brought with them.

- **ASSIGNMENT #2** -
HOSTING another NetWeaving Meeting for 2 others

Last time we introduced you to the extremely powerful concept of 'Hosting' a meeting for two other people and you hopefully experienced the magic and the energy created in such meetings.

Here's a recap of how you can progress in 'hosting' meetings from one just introducing two friends, to advanced ones where you may be connecting someone whom you've never met or talked with before.

Beginner Version – simply calling two friends, clients, or centers of influence who you already know and whom you believe would benefit meeting each other – in a business, family, or personal context and asking them to join you for a breakfast, lunch, or after-hours beer or glass of wine. This was what you hopefully did for your first 'hosting' meeting.

Intermediate Version – You know one of the individuals well, but the other person only slightly or he or she may have been referred to you by a good friend or by someone whose opinion you really trust. You usually already have in mind how the two people would benefit meeting each other. In this situation, you will probably need to explain NetWeaving as to why you are doing this, but have confidence because remember you're doing it for their benefit, not your own, and people generally want to meet other people – especially if you do a good job selling them as to how and why they would benefit meeting the other person. Also as we said earlier, remember to have them exchange bio's ahead of time to make sure they would like to have the meeting and to also make sure the timing is alright.

Advanced Version – You call one of your strongest and highly connected clients, or centers of influence and ask them if there is someone they haven't met but whom they would really like to know. Or, you may read an article in a newspaper or magazine about someone and decide for yourself that this person and your top client or center of influence would both really benefit from getting to know each other. In this case, you need to do a good bit of fact-gathering about your client or center of influence, as well as the other person with you want to connect him or her. The good news is that powerful and influential people want to meet other powerful and well-connected people. In a way, that's how they got to be so powerful.

Here's a rough script for the intermediate or advanced NetWeaving hosting meeting approaches. The higher up they are, the greater your chances your first connection will be to a 'gatekeeper' but frankly when you 'sell' the gatekeeper on why this could be such an important introduction for her or his boss, they will almost always become your best ally.

When you get to the person whom you don't know well (or at all), you would say something along these lines and often the explanation will already have been communicated by her or his 'gatekeeper':

"Joe, this is Bob Littell. We've never met before but I think you may know, or know of, John Jones who is (describe him briefly and your relationship with your top client or center of influence). I've mentioned to John about a concept I really like called NetWeaving which is all about connecting people you believe would benefit meeting and getting to know each other, and doing so simply because you enjoy doing it, you know that many times, 'what goes around. . .does come back around'."

Then if Joe doesn't know John:

"Joe, what I'd like to do is to send you a copy of John's bio/cv and if you like what you see, and think you would like to meet and get to know him, then we'd set up a meeting which, if it's ok with you, I'd like to 'host'. What that be alright with you?"

This will almost always result in some great new contacts for both of them and eventually, sometimes immediately, will come to benefit the host as well.

You host the meeting. You kick it off with a little explanation of the whole NetWeaving concept and I also recommend that you print out two copies of the "NetWeaver's Creed" from the NetWeaving website and give it to each of them.

After setting the stage, have each of them tell about their backgrounds and I recommend having them go as far back in life as they are willing to go. You often learn interesting and helpful information from things as simple as:

- Where they grew up?
- What were they like as a child. . .as a teenager in high school. . .in college. . . early career, etc.?
- What was their first 'leadership' experience?

In the appendix there are a series of questions which we have used in groups and sometimes individually to 'inspire meaningful dialogue' and helping the two people to get to know each other at a deeper level.

So you have hosted the meeting and help facilitate a lively discussion and then you just sat back and watched as the two people found ways to help each other and probably discovered people who they knew in common who they never would have realized had you not made this connection.

What we have discovered over the years we've been teaching and training NetWeaving as well as from my own NetWeaving 'hosting' meetings, somewhere between 7-8 out of every 10 meetings, something happens toward the end of the meeting. One or both of the persons

you have introduced to each other turn the tables on you and insist on 'pay it forward' by asking, "What can we do for you?"

Before I had seen the movie or read the book, "Pay It Forward", I was asking each of them to just PIONTTO (**P**ass **I**t **O**n **T**o **T**wo **O**thers). But people kept coming up to me after one of my presentations asking if I had seen the movie "Pay It Forward" which I had not. So finally, I bought and read the book; then went and saw the movie, and then called Catherine Ryan Hyde, author of the book on which the movie was based. After a year or so of her getting to know me and realizing my heart was in the right place, she gave me permission to call NetWeaving the '**business**' version of "Pay It Forward".

AGENDA FOR NETWEAVING ENRICHMENT GROUP MEETING NUMBER THREE

- MEETING THREE -

Developing and Expanding Your Trusted Resource Network

At this third group meeting, you might want to do the following:

1. Review over again any experiences which hopefully by now, most if not everyone, had had in explaining and exposing other people to the NetWeaving concept as well as hopefully 'hosting' a meeting or two to introduce someone within the group, to someone he or she knows outside the group.
2. Review any other successful referral 'matches' which anyone within the group as made simply connecting two people via the phone.
3. Within the group, discuss and update any needs, problems, or opportunities anyone would like to bring up for others to be on the lookout for helping with. Creative brainstorming should now be fairly common and easy to do within the group.
4. This meeting's agenda involves developing or expanding your impact as a NetWeaver by establishing and expanding your own "Trusted Resource Network". Learning how to pick the right people; learning how to ask them to become part of your resource network; what should they expect in return and how will they benefit? How formal or informal should the relationship be? Refer to the chapter about creating a Trusted Resource Network and moving potential candidates from the "Yellow Pages" level to the "Qualifying" level, to the "Trusted Resource" level. (See page ____).

- ASSIGNMENT #3 -

Followup on one of your Hosting Meetings

By now hopefully everyone in the group should have hopefully held at least one “hosting” meeting and they will have seen the magic of serving this hosting role. Although we can see how easy it is to actually put people together this way, we underestimate the value of it. We forget that putting together a meeting such as this takes work, and most people don’t think of it from the standpoint of the value which they could gain and provide to others by doing this on a regular or at least semi-regular basis.

The assignment this time is to follow up on the two persons whom you hosted and see if they have followed through with any of the needs, problems, opportunities, ideas, etc. which they discussed with the other person and with you present. One of the two may very well have been a member of your group. And don’t be surprised if the answer is “no” since everyone gets pulled back into their everyday crises but if you drop them both an email once again summarizing some of the things they discussed, and said they were going to do for each other, this will often help. Every time you help facilitate the relationship, your image is elevated in both party’s eyes since you’re doing it with their benefit in mind.

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

The most important benefits to come out of the cluster groups are not what happens at the meeting, but rather what happens in subsequent one-on-one follow up meetings and hosting meetings which occur after or between the regular NetWeaving Enrichment Group meetings.

That’s another reason why the role of the scribe who takes notes during the group meeting and then circulates them for correction and circulation is so important to help people retain information and to be able to remember connections they thought of at the time, but might have forgotten had it not been for the notes.

And as noted earlier, encouraging follow up ‘hosting’ meetings is also a great way to grow ‘membership’ within ANY organization, not just within a NetWeaving Enrichment Group. You meet someone within a cluster group with whom you find you have much in common. One or both of you discuss ‘hosting’ a meeting for someone ‘outside’ the organization, and at that hosting meeting, you not only explain a little about NetWeaving and the hosting concept but you can also point out that this is what your organization is promoting internally as way to expand their member’s networking in a truly effective ‘win-win’ way. The other person is usually truly impressed by this approach and the way NetWeaving has been adopted by the organization as part of their culture, and will often decide to join.

Join a NetWeaving Enrichment Group or help form one and you will be amazed at what eventually comes of it. Just remember that the purpose of the group is to help expose you and the others within the group to more people so that you can identify the few with whom you will eventually bond, or add to your resource network.

Sample Announcement from an Organization to persons who signed up
to be part of a NetWeaving Project

TO: NetWeaving Participants
FROM: (Project Leader or President)
SUBJECT: NetWeaving Enrichment Group

Congratulations!

You have chosen to become part of a project which should have beneficial effects not only on your business, business career, as well as your personal, and upon our organization.

NetWeaving is a Golden Rule and “Pay It Forward” form of networking which is all about putting other’s needs on a more level plane with our own interests. It reminds us how to be better ‘connectors’ of other people for their benefit, not our own, with the belief that, “*what goes around. . .will come back around.*” It also helps us learn ways that we can become a better ‘resource’ for others – either acting in that role ourselves – or utilizing someone from our “Trusted Resource Network”, who share our same NetWeaving philosophy and mindset.

We hope you will enter into this project with a genuine desire to help others with only an belief and confidence to know that good things will come back around to benefit you. But in addition to any direct benefits, if you enjoy helping others, the positive energy you will derive, as well as the enhanced reputation and image you will gain from NetWeaving and spreading the NetWeaving message to others, will come immediately and often.

In a way, all of us are “*walking, talking jigsaw puzzles*” with certain pieces missing. Some of these may be in the form of **needs** that need filling; **problems** that need solving, and **opportunities** we have which, if we don’t get help from someone else, they will remain unfulfilled and never reach their full potential. Any of these could be within a business context such business or referrals needed, or within a personal or family context such as the best daycare for a child, counseling for a trouble children or young adult, or more fun areas such as hobbies, best travel locations, motivation or self-improvement.

You may have a secret ‘passion’ which when you share it with the group, not only will suggestions for help and advice flow, but one or more of the members of the group may want to get more involved with your project or mission and help you achieve your goal.

You will become more conscious of and you will be looking out for opportunities to be a NetWeaver for others: putting other people together in win-win relationships; acting as a strategic resource for others, either acting in that capacity yourself, or by creating a wide and

deep resource network who excel at what they do, and share your gratuitous NetWeaving philosophy. And in exchange for them agreeing to be part of your resource network, they will usually invite you to be part of theirs, opening up new doors you never knew existed.

Chapter 10

Putting On A NetWeaving Event

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

- William James

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True Happiness. . .and Success. . .Lies More in the Giving than in the Taking

It's Saturday morning. You'd like to sleep in but you've committed to helping out working in a 'soup kitchen' serving the less fortunate. You drag yourself out of bed, get dressed and begrudgingly drive there.

As you work the serving line, your reluctance to have come is replaced by a gratitude you're there. And as you get to talk with some of the people and discover many of the unusual circumstances which drove them there, you change your perspective. These strangers become real people with faces and names who just need a helping hand and a lot of moral support.

You leave that day, saddened by some of the stories you've heard and shuddering a little with a feeling of, "*there but for the grace of God go I.*" But unlike how you started the day, you are now totally energized by the small part you were able to play in making someone's day, just a little bit better. It's a form of energy which can only be derived from the good feeling associated with helping others.

Getting people to participate in almost any charitable activity is not always as easy as it would seem. And yet afterwards, those who do participate almost universally talk about it as one of their most enjoyable and rewarding experiences. In today's time-stressed world, most of first set aside time for things which we consider essential, and then fill in the remaining time slots with those activities which seem beneficial and/or enjoyable either from a business, family, or personal viewpoint.

Helping other people, in one way or another, is one of those activities which most people tend to look at as important, but not necessarily something which they are going to build into an every day habit. And yet, as mentioned above, after we participate – whether it helping build a "Habitat for Humanity" home; working in a soup kitchen, or almost any activity serving others – the feeling is almost euphoric.

And yet how many people do these kinds of activities more than once or twice a year, unless their company happens to be an active supporter and it's expected that they participate.

NetWeaving offers a way that people can build 'helping others' into their DAILY lives in a way that not only doesn't get in the way of their other business or personal activities, but actually enriches both of them. With its focus first on helping others solve problems; identify and fulfill needs, and recognize and take advantage of opportunities, rewards come back in ways you have to see to believe. Unfortunately though, with some people, because many of the good things that occur as result of your NetWeaving are deferred, many either won't do it regularly or they try it, and because they don't see anything immediately come back around, they abandon it.

But as we've said before, because of the fact that some of your NetWeaving DOES result in immediate paybacks (enhanced image and a positive source of energy created), those who stick with it, find it because very natural and the more they do, they more they want to do. And as they truly become an Ambassador of the concept and spread the word to others, it becomes contagious.

WHAT DOES A NETWEAVING EVENT LOOK LIKE

In the Foreward of the book, you learned from Jeffrey Gitomer, one of the world's greatest Sales Guru's, syndicated columnist, nationally and internationally recognized speaker, and author of many books on sales, marketing, prospecting, networking, and leadership, how he became a fan of NetWeaving after attending a couple of NetWeaving events in Atlanta back in 2002.

NetWeaving events can come in all shapes and sizes, from a small gathering of 15 to 20 people, to several hundred or more.

At the larger of the two NetWeaving events which Jeffrey Gitomer attended, we had seven "secret NetWeaving" judges sprinkled throughout the audience and at the end of the night, we awarded prizes to those persons whom the judges thought did the best job of NetWeaving for the judge during their conversations, either suggesting connections or resources which could help. Each judge selected one winner.

IT'S THE DIFFERENCE IN MINDSET THAT SETS NETWEAVING EVENTS APART

When people attend a typical networking event, they usually go with one idea in mind: to meet some potential prospects for what they have to offer or just expand their OWN network for the future. As we've said before, there's nothing wrong with this. We all need to look out for our own interests and networking events provide a way to cast our net very wide.

But those who are invited to a NetWeaving event are asked to come with a different mindset as well as a different set of goals. Sure we're still telling them to be tuned in for possible opportunity for themselves, but we stress NetWeaving is all about 'helping others,' with the belief and conviction that a payback will come somewhere down the road, and sometimes it's right around the corner. This sets a different mood for the event. Therefore the questioning and the listening is focused externally on all the questions we've stressed in previous chapters. Understanding how the person creates revenue in his or her business? What does a best prospect for them look like? What is their most burning need, problem, or opportunity we might be able to help them with? What is their strategic advantage that differentiates them from others who do the same thing or something similar?

As they are talking, rather than 'qualifying' them as a potential prospect, as would be the case at a typical networking event, a skilled NetWeaver is sorting through his or her mental rolodex as the other person speaks, in order to identify potential connections which could be made, or resources (their own as well as those with their Trusted Resource Network) which could be suggested to fulfill needs, solve problems, and take advantage of opportunities.

AT A NETWEAVING OR NETWORKING EVENT. . .THE KEY IS FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

The key to success in life usually lies in the small stuff. It always amazes me that we'll carve out large chunks of our time and our money to join organizations and attend networking OR NetWeaving events, and then will disregard the most important element required in order to make it a success – the **follow up**, and even more importantly, as we stressed in Chapter 7, the **follow through**.

In Chapter 8, where we covered 'hosting' a meeting for others, as well as in Chapter 9, talking about forming NetWeaving 'cluster groups, we stressed the importance of having someone act as a scribe, both to get the key points down and circulate them for corrections and additions; get them back to those in the group to remind them what was said as well as action steps different persons committed to taking.

Within a 24-hour period after meeting someone, especially if it's within a group setting where some of the conversations tend to run together, you will lose more than 90% of what you heard, unless, within a fairly short period of time (one to twelve hours), you take good notes from your meeting or introduction and/or send a follow up letter or email summarizing what you heard and what each of you said you were going to do.

A FOLLOW UP LETTER OR EMAIL IS SOMETHING VERY FEW DO

We mentioned it previously, but it bears repeating. Some of the most successful people almost always follow up a meeting with a ‘thank you’ or enjoyed-meeting-you note or email.

How would you feel if you got a following email that read something like this:
John,

I really enjoyed meeting you last night at the XYZ networking event.

From our conversation, here are some of the key points I heard you say which will hopefully help me in introducing or connecting you with people whom I know who might be able to help you:

- You create your revenue by identifying companies that are having problems with growth and yet are at that stage where they can’t yet afford a full-time CFO type.
- A BEST prospect for you is one of those companies who typically have an outside accountant who does their books and their taxes, but who doesn’t help them much from a strategic and tax planning standpoint.
- You indicated that your broad experience and track record, including time with one of the major accounting firms, as well as having been CFO of two other large companies, is what differentiates you from others in your same field. And the other persons you have brought into your company have a similar broad experience background.
- I also remember that you really enjoy scuba diving, and since my wife is a travel agent who specializes in ‘adventure travel’, I’ve asked her to send you any information that comes across her desk on really interesting trips or vacations you may ever want to consider.

Please let me know if I heard you correctly and that this information is accurate. Also, if there are some other points which I missed, or some other points which you didn’t mention which would help me ‘sell’ you better to someone I already know or to someone I’ve just met, please feel free to add them to these notes and return them to me.

I already have a couple people in mind, but first I’d like to get together with you one-on-one and get to know you better. After I hear back from you, let’s get together for breakfast or lunch, or just a cup of coffee over the next week or so.

Sure, this is some additional work, but you will find that going this extra 1%, will a 100% difference.

As quoted earlier – by Alfred E. Grey, **“Successful people make a habit of doing those things that failures refuse to do.”**

AN EVENT EXAMPLE

Now let's look at a couple of actual events which people have done.

Jim Cichanski is someone whom I met early in my NetWeaving journey when he attended a NetWeaving presentation which I made at a church in Roswell, Georgia, to a group of 'in-transition' managers and executives. Reverend Jack Pilger ran the program and it really was all about NetWeaving without calling it that.

Jim, whose background has been in human resources as well as a part-time Colonel in the National Guard, is CEO of a company called "FlexHR Inc." (www.flexhr.com). They provide part-time HR services for companies who have reached a size and growth stage where they need to ramp up their HR internal systems and procedures, but aren't ready to create an entire HR department.

Jim was attending this meeting at which I spoke on NetWeaving as a volunteer facilitator – looking for persons he could help connect for employment opportunities. Jim was NetWeaving before we ever met. Now that he has a word for what he had been doing, he will tell you that he is paying more attention to the skill sets, and consequently is doing 10 times more than he was doing before.

Jim has held several NetWeaving events with neighbors, friends, and over 80 affiliate partners with whom he has made connections during the first year of his business. Over the course of the evening, while he serves food and refreshments, he challenges the group to NetWeave among themselves. And about every 20 minutes or so, he gets everyone's attention and asks them to spend the next period of time getting to know someone else with they haven't yet talked. By the end of the night, most leave with a list of 5-10 'to-do's' which are all related to helping one or more of their new acquaintances.

Jim regularly gets calls from some of those who have attended, as well as from others who hear about it, wanting to know when he is holding the next one.

SPECIAL NOTE: This section was written over 10 years ago when Jim was just launching his company. Today FlexHR _____

NETWEAVING FOR CHARITIES

Stop and think about the way most charitable fundraisers and donor appreciation banquets and receptions are organized. Typically the donors are invited to the event. They are informed about the great work the organization continuing to do; probably told an inspirational story or two about someone who has been helped by their work, and then a plea is made for continued or increased donation support.

The networking part of the event is simply an informal gathering of donors who are left on their own to strike up any sort of dialogue they can think of with each other, which mostly ends up in small talk.

Why not precede the event with a letter thanking their donors and inviting them to the event, but do so within a spirit of and with a mindset for NetWeaving, both to exchange they can help each other and/or find areas of commonality, as well as to brainstorm creative ways to raise more funds for the charity or the organization. These key donors who are usually pillars of the community and successful in their own right, typically react to this NetWeaving Challenge as if they've been given a work assignment. It allows them to skip the 'small talk stage' and move right into 'meaningful dialogue'.

It's also beneficial to break up the evening in different phases so that people have an excuse to get involved in several group discussions rather than just one. The idea is to help them make new connections, and to allow them to brainstorm with a fairly wide cross-section of the people in attendance.

So by introducing NetWeaving within the business community and then extending it into the charitable non-profit world, not only helps create more business and new and interesting personal connections, it energizes people and makes them more likely to want to carry the NetWeaving message into their work for charitable organizations and non-profits with which they're involved.

A NEW KIND OF NETWEAVING EVENT – The “Don't Need To Read the Book” Book Club

If you remember, one of the key concepts and principles that NetWeaving stresses is that to get to know someone, you need to get to know them below the superficial level where they will really open up to share their real needs, problems, and opportunities. In the chapter that featured the NetWeavers Pyramid of Trust Building, we learned that one of the best ways to get to know people below the superficial level is for a NetWeaver to 'inspire meaningful dialogue' – to elevate the conversation from the typical 'small talk' stage to a discussion level where there 'learning' and 'growth' are taking place.

I had always observed that “book clubs” represent a wonderful example of 'inspiring meaningful dialogue' – where you get to see the side of someone which you wouldn't in an ordinary conversation. In some cases it makes you want to get to know someone better, and in others it might even make you decide this is someone who doesn't exactly think along the same lines you do.

The problem I discovered with book clubs that are meant to attract busy business execs, business owners, coaches and consultants of all kinds, is that in our time-stressed world, many

just aren't willing to take the time to read the book. And if they haven't read the book, they don't feel like they could really come and participate.

So I decided to try calling authors of great business books, like Malcolm Gladwell, Dan Pink, Harvey Mackay, Jeffrey Gitomer, Adam Grant, (over two dozen) and with their permission, I write a 15-20 page summary of their book. I started with a small group of friends whom I invited to come to a central location. But over the 3+ years the book club has been going on at the time of this writing, the list of persons who have asked to be added to the invitation list is over 400. We typically get 30 to 40 people who come. I send my summary to everyone who RSVP's and promises to attend. At the meeting, we discuss some key points from my summary. Sometimes we stay as a single group to discuss the book. In other cases, we break up into smaller discussion groups and then come back together at the end to share key observations brought up within their group.

The meetings last from 6:00-8:30 pm and we serve beer, wine, and hors d'oeuvres and only charge enough, after also paying for parking, to just about break even.

But the ongoing relationships which have been established, and in some cases, new businesses which have been created or collaborative projects launched has been nothing short of amazing.

In addition to the great new relationships formed, the other discovery I have made is that these summaries make a great 'follow up' and 'follow through' tool and they have become one of the most valuable 'value-adds' for those persons who go through the "**NetWeaving**."

Chapter 11

Building A “Trusted Resource Network”

Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though it is hard to realize this. For the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grieves which we endure help us in our marching onward.

Henry Ford

As you are mastering the NetWeaving skill of becoming a strategic connector of other people, you should also be working on the second skill set which is learning how to be a better gratuitous resource provider to others. We spent a good deal of time on becoming a better resource provider yourself and how to better position yourself as one in the first book. Here we will focus on the second important element of resource-providing – learning how to build a network of other gratuitous NetWeaver resource providers across a broad variety industries, professions, and specialties.

Think of the names of several of the people whom you trust the most. What are the characteristics which have inspired that level of trust? Here are a few that come to mind:

- Over time, they have demonstrated a high degree of integrity and sense of urgency – they do things when they say they’re going to do them and if there’s a delay, they let you know so that it’s not a surprise.
- They are very competent at what they do and with rare exception, the quality of the work they do or product they provide exceeds your expectations.
- There’s an intangible bond that you feel with them that you can’t completely explain, but whether it’s chemistry or something else, you don’t have it with that many other people.
- They have a positive mental attitude and a can-do spirit.
- You genuinely like working with them and enjoy their company.

How many people do you know who would possess all or almost all of these qualities? Not many?

CREATING A TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK

Now imagine for a second that your only goal in life is to recruit a network of successful people – across all industries, products and services – that fall within the criteria listed at the beginning - and they would become your Trusted Resource Network.

Think of a ‘trusted resource’ as being someone who, when you refer that person to someone else, and after the product is used or the work is done, the person to whom you referred your trusted resource is SO grateful that he or she not only thanks you, but gets down on their knees and thanks you. That could be because the product worked so well, or the resource provided was far above their expectations, or both.

Why then aren’t all of us constantly in a recruiting mode for persons who can fill in the gaps in our Trusted Resource Network? Partly it’s because we never thought about the idea of **recruiting** such a network. Secondly, even if over time, we have created an informal network, we tend to think too narrowly instead of looking for exceptional people across all fields and professions. Thirdly, out of our own field of knowledge and expertise, finding ‘best of breed’ persons requires work.

You need to separate those who **talk** a good game about their expertise and the quality of their work, but upon checking with key sources, don’t stack up. Third-party referrals and outside recognition by acknowledged experts in that field are the best ways to determine this.

Top real estate agents are often easily identifiable. And not surprisingly, most have become tops in their field by NetWeaving – just without a good word for it. They are natural connectors of other people: buyers with sellers, tenants with landlords, leasees with lessors. They are typically great information resources themselves. But on top of this, the best ones have truly assembled a wide and broad network of ‘trusted resources’ across a wide variety of industries and specialties.

Say you’re in the market to buy a home and you have a thousand questions:

- Are those good medical facilities close by and do you have the name of an outstanding pediatrician?
- How about the name of a great veterinarian?
- We see several things we want to change about the house. Do you know a very reliable remodeler?
- Where can my daughter get the best ballet lessons and where is the facility?

Now, an average or below-average real estate salesperson would probably still have names of the contacts or could readily find answers to any of these questions and many others. But if some of the referrals didn't turn out to be that great, no big deal, the house has been sold and who knows, they may never see that person again.

But a great real estate agent or broker has a Trusted Resource Network made up of experts who, over time, have proven their salt. The homebuyer not only becomes a vocal advertisement for the way the sale of the house was handled but the real estate NetWeaver has earned a reputation as being a walking, talking yellow pages directory when it comes to resources, and not just 'average' references, but each one – performs tops at what they do.

And guess whose reputation also gets elevated as a result of making the referral? You, the NetWeaver.

THE PROCESS OF CREATING A TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK – FROM YELLOW PAGES. . . TO QUALIFIED CANDIDATE. . . TO TRUSTED RESOURCE

You might refer to someone whom you meet for the very first time at an event, or just any first time introduction, as a 'yellow pages' level contact. All you know about them at that point is a name, a company, phone number, and some very basic information what they do. There's no trust or relationship established yet, but there's something about this person that makes you want to learn more.

One of the goals you should set for any networking event you attend is to make several 'yellow pages' connections – potential future additions to your Trust Resource Network. These are persons who impress you enough that you want to learn more about them and continue to 'qualify' them.

In some cases, you meet this person through someone whose opinion you already trust and respect. When they begin raving about how good and reliable this person is at what they do, and if you feel a connection after you visit for a while, you may want to actually move them to the next level – the Qualified Resource level.

At this level, you have now either done some business with them – referred them to someone who gave you great feedback about how good they were, or they were referred to you by someone whose opinion you genuinely trust and they are sincere in their praise of the person referred to you.

You then continue to 'test the waters' with him or her and eventually you either decide to keep them where they are (or lower them back to the yellow pages level if they disappoint you), or you've seen enough that you decide you want to 'recruit' him or her to become part of your Trusted Resource Network.

WHEN YOU'RE RECRUITING NEW ADDITIONS TO YOUR TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK. . . YOU ACT LIKE A SEARCH FIRM

When you are searching for persons to be added to your 'best-of-breed' Trusted Resource Network, you change roles. Your reputation is on the line when you make a referral and so you become a 'headhunter' searching for the most qualified candidate to fill each slot of your network. And you typically want to have more than one 'trusted resource' in each area of expertise so that if you are referring someone, you can give them two or even three names, describing each, and hopefully make the introduction and connect with the person who also fits the other person's personality, as well as being qualified to help with their need.

You have to be very careful in your selection process if you really want to make your network as powerful as it can be. If you put it together in the right way and get the right people involved, it can become a tremendous positive reflection back on you.

And of ALL the criteria you use to build your Trusted Resource Network, the one that tops the list is that they have to share your '**giver's heart**'. They have to believe in the 'law of reciprocity' and that, *what goes around, does come back around*, and that you '**give first**'. . .in order to receive.

And when you ask someone to join your Trusted Resource Network, it can be a real honor to that person when you explain the concept and give them the criteria you used to select them, as well as some of the names of the select people in the network, some whom they probably already know. And guess what? That person will perform better for you knowing that he or she is part of a select group chosen for their excellence at what they do.

You should also encourage them to form their own network and you should volunteer to be one of their gratuitous resource providers if they feel you can qualify.

WHEN YOU'RE RECRUITING YOUR TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK. . . YOU MUST FIRST FIND A WAY TO BE OF HELP TO THEM

To set the NetWeaving tone for your possible Trusted Resource 'recruit', you want to find a way first to be of help to them in some way. You might 'host' a meet to introduce him or her to someone he/she would value meeting and knowing. Or you might identify some need, problem, or opportunity they have and find some way you could be of help along those lines.

If you haven't already explained to them what "NetWeaving" is all about, this is the time to give a more detailed explanation. You can do this in several ways:

- Send them to the NetWeaving website and have them take “**The NetWeaver’s Aptitude Assessment**” quiz to see where they would currently stand as a “NetWeaver”.
- Hand them a copy of “**The NetWeaver’s Creed**” which you can also download from the website.
- Give them a copy of “**NetWeaving in a Nutshell**” which is in the appendix of this book.

INTRODUCE YOUR TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK MEMBERS TO EACH OTHER AND ACROSS OTHER PERSON’S TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK

As you build your Trusted Resource Network and as you teach others how to do the same, you create new opportunities. First, when you introduce members of your network (best-of-breed individuals) to other’s Trusted Resource Network, they will make connections that will often come back to benefit you.

Secondly, by helping others create and expand their own Trusted Resource Network, you occasionally ‘borrow’ one from their network and vice versa.

One of the best ways to create and/or expand your Trusted Resource Network is by being involved in small study groups, or NetWeaving Enrichment Groups or forming your own “**Don’t Need to Read the Book**” book club, as we covered in Chapter 9.

EXAMPLE OF HOW TO INVITE SOMEONE TO JOIN YOUR TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK

Here is a hypothetical approach you might use in asking someone whom you have qualified and determined they are truly exceptional at whatever it is they do:

Mary, we’ve known each other for some time now and I’ve been very impressed by (mention those things which have made you want to recruit them – quality of their work, attention to detail, sense of urgency, reliability, and organization, management, communication skills, etc.).

You may or may not have heard me speak about a concept I’ve become a big fan of called “NetWeaving”. It’s a Golden Rule and ‘pay it forward’ form of networking which is all about helping other people simply with the belief that, ‘what goes around, comes back around.’ In addition to becoming a better ‘connector’ of others with their benefit in mind, rather than your own, NetWeaving teaches people to be a ‘gratuitous resource’ for others – either acting in that capacity yourself, or assembling what is called a ‘Trusted

Resource Network' made up of persons who are exceptional at whatever it is they do. They also must be 'givers' and share your same 'give first' in order to receive NetWeaving mentality.

As you assemble a wide and deep Trusted Resource Network, your value to your clients, friends, and centers of influence is enhanced by the value of this network you have assembled. Based on everything I've seen and heard from some of my (friends, clients, centers of influence) about you, I would like to ask if you would consider becoming part of my Trusted Resource Network?

All that is involved is agreeing that for some basic questions, issues, or challenges I run into which involve your area of expertise, I would like to refer clients or prospects to you, knowing that you will give them the best possible advice and direction – and offer your services gratuitously at first – even if they offer to pay you. (They probably have done some of this for you already). In exchange, if you run into a situation where my expertise might be of value to some of your clients, etc., I will agree to do the same for you and some of your clients so that we end up becoming part of each other's Trusted Resource Network, assuming that is a role you'd feel that I am qualified to play.

In line with NetWeaving, I'd also like to find some way I could be of help to you immediately. Is there any 'need'. . . 'problem'. . . or 'opportunity' which currently I could be of help to you with?

If put together carefully, and if you are very picky about who you invite to join – whether formal or informal - your Trusted Resource Network can end up being your greatest sales tool or simply a wonderful mechanism for better serving others.

TRUSTED RESOURCE NETWORK EXERCISE

- List the names and occupations/professions of all the persons whom you would consider inviting to become members of your Trusted Resource Network.
- Think of any occupations/professions missing and stop and think of the names of some persons whom you like but don't know well enough yet to add to your Trusted Resource Network.
- Add these to your 'mental rolodex' of person for whom you should be on the lookout.
- Let other know that you are looking the BEST person they know in a particular field and if so, ask if they might be willing to make a connection and let them know why.
- Have a reception once a year where you invite all the members of your Trusted Resource Network to come and "NetWeave" with each other.

Chapter 12

NetWeaving Inside Companies and Organizations to Create a More Collaborative Culture and Creative Environment

Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen

When you open the door for someone else, you never know who YOU will meet as a result.

- The two NetWeaving Motto's – Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

At the very beginning of my NetWeaving journey, I happened to attend a Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce meeting which featured a panel discussion and workshop on providing superior customer service. From what I saw and heard, it became perfectly clear to me that although I had been focusing on NetWeaving as an 'external' tool for developing business and for expanding your referral network, there was an 'internal' application for NetWeaving which could help companies of all sizes, shapes, and in every industry, create a more collaborative, and thus more creative environment and culture.

After the three panelists made their opening remarks, each who either ran or was with a company specializing in CRM training (Customer Relationship Management – now also called CEM – Customer Experience Management), the room of a little more than 50 people was divided into three separate groups and sent to separate rooms with the same assignment: come up with the Number 1 barrier within companies that thwarts good customer service from taking place, as well as the Number 1 contributor to providing good customer service.

In the breakout room of about 15 people to which I was assigned, it turned out that I was the last person polled on his opinion and answers for each of the two questions posed. After about the first seven or eight persons around the room had provide their answers, most of the others were agreeing or modifying an answer previously stated.

When it came my turn, I threw out a slight curve. Taking part of a page from Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" theory, I recounted that when I had been on the corporate side earlier in my career, and in most other organizations with whom I'd work or consulted – including the Federal Government in D.C. where I interned for several summers during college – the Number One 'barrier' to providing good customer service I saw was defensive or uncooperative behaviors between and among various areas of the company or organization caused mainly by 'territoriality' concerns and issues.

Maslow would probably interject something to the tune of, once food is on the table; safety and survival issues are mostly handled, the next most basic human drive is 'territoriality',

and that isn't just limited to 'turf' in a real estate sense. Territoriality can mean anything that I might consider to be my own including:

- My position, responsibilities, or duties
- My span of control or chain of command.
- My authority over an area or a position on the organization chart.

In other words, it boils down to 'control' and 'power'. And these 'territoriality' concerns can extend from the chairman, president and CEO level, all the way down the food chain to the mailroom clerk, the janitorial staff. And any new employee who has been with the company long enough to recognize where he or she stands in the 'pecking order'.

Therefore, assuming good operations and efficient systems are already in place, these 'territorial' walls or silos' are the next greatest barriers which thwart cooperation and coordination between departments or divisions in the company, and this almost inevitably translates into poor customer service – *"That's not my job – try calling this person."* – pass the problem on to the next person, or *"If I help you solve the problem, you (or your area) will get the credit for it. . . not me (or my area)."*

How much more productive do you think any company would be if their employees, from top to bottom, were constantly looking for ways to help each other, rather than consciously or unconsciously, sabotaging cooperation.

This could include sharing leads from one division to another as well as understanding more about other departments and divisions and being on the lookout for ways to help bring them more business or make suggestions for streamlining their operations.

All of these to some lesser or greater extent, impact customer service. Where there is harmony and cooperation between and among departments and the silos and territorial walls are either torn down or at least minimized, the customer is provided better, and in many cases, superior service.

But too many times, the attitude which permeates the organization is, "If they win, we lose", or *"if we help them look too good, will that somehow come back to make us look less good?"*

In our breakout group at the panel discussion, I proposed this 'territoriality' problem as what I thought was the Number 1 barrier to good customer service, and then after giving a brief overview of NetWeaving, suggested that creating an internal culture of NetWeaving within the company, would be the Number 1 way to promote good customer service.

Not only were my two suggestions adopted and voted upon by our smaller breakout group, but when assembled back in the main meeting room, and after each of the groups

presented their recommendations, my two suggestions – both for the Number 1 barrier (i.e. the primary cause of poor customer service), as well as the top ‘solution’ (creating more of an atmosphere and culture of NetWeaving) were both selected.

SO HOW DO YOU DO THIS?

Having now spoken to and/or help train dozens of companies introduce the concept to their company, I’ve decided it’s relatively easy to do.

Like any concept which you are trying to introduce inside a company or organization, it only works if you have ‘top-down’ buy-in and support. If the leadership isn’t completely plugged into the natural human tendencies we all have as it relates to ‘territoriality’, and if they aren’t committed to creating an environment where NetWeaving can survive and eventually flourish, it just won’t work.

But for those ‘servant leaders’ who see their role as ‘serving’ their employees, their customers, and their community, and to do so requires a ‘culture’ where NetWeaving can help provide the skill sets and action steps to make that happen.

Giving this approach to tearing down or reducing walls and silos a ‘name’ – **“NetWeaving”** – and identifying skill sets and actions steps to help accomplish it – creates an awareness that will translate into concrete strategies to facilitate this within the entire company or organization.

I like to use the analogy of NetWeaving and a company ‘softball team’. Ralph in Marketing and Suzie in the Purchasing & Supply Department have never gotten along very well. There have even been a couple instances where that has actually negatively impacted Ralph’s service to their customer.

They both join the company softball team. . .root for each other. . .and after a couple of beers after the game, what happens, they become friends. Next time Ralph asks for a special favor of Suzie, it happens immediately.

I like to call what “NetWeaving” can do inside a company or organization – a 365-day Softball Team. Where people are looking for ways to support and root for each other - to ‘lift each other up’ rather than ‘stand in the way of someone else’s success or progress’.

And when the words “NetWeaving” and “NetWeaver” become part of the company’s culture and vocabulary, it helps make NetWeaving a daily activity:

- *“Thanks Helen that was a nice bit of NetWeaving you did yesterday when you went*

out of your way to introduce that client of yours to me and my division. There's a good possibility that we may be of additional help on top of what you're already doing."

- *"Joe, you're one of the best NetWeavers in our organization. You're always looking for ways to connect people in our organization with others on the outside who might be good prospects or just good centers of influence. In addition, you are one of our key 'go-to' people in that you know this organization from top to bottom and if anyone has a need or problem, they always know you're there to help. And because of your extensive network, sometimes having nothing to do with our mission, you know someone who is exceptional at solving that problem or fulfilling that need."*

There are any number of things which companies and organizations can do to promote NetWeaving in their company or organization:

- **Lunch & Learns** – putting together individuals from different areas of the company both to learn more about their function and role, as well as just getting to know them better and see them as a human being rather just 'that person in accounting'.
- **Book Clubs** – can also be a lunch and learn but with books that focus on 'creativity', maximizing 'customer service and customer experience', and other topics focusing on improving inter-personal skills.
- **Team Building exercises and outings** – but in addition, use these to support and increase the emphasis on "NetWeaving" so that the outcomes will be long-term.
- **Volunteer work** – Since NetWeaving is all about helping others, involving employees in some charitable project also helps reinforce "NetWeaving" as a word and concept internally.

I would love to see the day when "**Chief NetWeaver**" becomes a new corporate title since it denotes someone with a broad and unique set of skill sets which can be of tremendous value to any company or organization, but someone who puts those skills into action on a 'daily basis', and champions the concept as a NetWeaving Ambassador.

Chapter 13

NetWeaving It's The Relationships, Stupid! Or How NetWeaving Can Increase Your Chances Of Being Luck – How to Attract Good Luck

*Between ourselves and those who cross our path. . .
Chance spins an invisible thread of awareness – a Luck Line.*

- A.H.Z. Carr

WHO MAKE THE BEST NETWEAVERS?

In Chapter 6, we discussed how relationships are nurtured, culminating in trust, and then maintained and strengthened over time by good follow up and even better - exceptional follow through.

We also observed that some people seem to have a natural advantage in initially gaining acceptance due to qualities or attributes we don't fully understand and whose underlying nature may be partly biological, genetic, or neurological. Psychological and sociological factors developed during our upbringing, especially in early childhood, also play a part.

You don't need to prove that to those who have raised a large family, who in spite of attempts to raise them the same, have seen an amazing range in personality differences. So, there's no question that there are underlying factors at work which are largely out of our control and which account for many of the differences.

Although there are many different personality dimension profiles, grids, and models, being pretty simple-minded, I prefer to divide them into two main extremes: Extravert vs. Introvert and People (Relationship)-Oriented vs. Task-Oriented.

There is a great article at Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-factor_models_of_personality which gives a great historical perspective of the various models although some psychologists evidently have some problems with its scientific basis.

To me, the most important way to look at personality differences is to examine simple personality descriptions and then to examine what impact this might have in their attraction or resistance to "NetWeaving".

Amiable – friendship and relationship oriented – **“Why can’t we all be friends?”**

They love ‘connecting’ people and offering help, including ‘information and resources’ of just about any kind. Sometimes though, they lack the discipline to ‘follow up’ and ‘follow through’ and need some system to make their ‘relationship-building’ desires to materialize. They have a very easy time creating a “Trusted Resource Network” but tend to do it without much strategic thought behind it. Most are ‘extraverts’ although some are introverts, who are forcing themselves to be more sociable than they naturally are.

Analytical – problem-solving – **“Why am I thinking what I’m thinking?”**

They love using their analytical minds to solve problems and really get their greatest satisfaction coming up with a solution no one has ever thought of before. Because most tend to be more **‘task-oriented’** than **‘people-oriented’**, floating around a networking event looking for new people to meet and potential ‘connector’ introductions they could make, is not something they are comfortable doing. By helping them approach networking events as **‘research’** missions (remember **GLP** – Global, Local, Personal in Chapter __), to learn more about topics, fields, and industries they don’t know much about, they can become much more ‘extraverted’ than they naturally tend to be. Some, who learn how to expand their offers of help – providing their skills and resources gratuitously – begin getting so much positive feedback and thanks of appreciation, that they gradually build a fan base and become the ‘go-to’ person. In some cases they blossom into full-blown NetWeavers and actually become very good at expanding their Trusted Resource Network, and realize they can enjoy ‘connecting’ people.

Artistic – Expressive – Sensory –

Henry David Thoreau – “Walden – Life in the Woods” – *“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”*

Probably of all the personality types, I’ve found that highly artistic and sensitive people tend to be all over the board when it comes to NetWeaving. Some, are very extraverted and are convinced their work or works can change the world (and some do) and so they are incredible NetWeavers since their more sensitive side makes them conscious of helping others and not just themselves. Others tend to be ego-centric and probably are not good NetWeavers unless they recognize this in themselves and make a conscious decision to change. A third type are total introverts and their particular form of art is the only expression and internal satisfaction they need. Most are not great NetWeavers although some form very strong networks among artists of the same genre and practice all forms of “NetWeaving” within their group without calling it that.

Assertive – Take Charge – Classic Type A's - *"If you're not ready to lead, then get out of the way."*

As with the Artistic personality, I have found that there is tremendous variety among this personality type. Some, at one extreme, make the absolute BEST NetWeavers because they love meeting new people and introducing them to others they know. . .expanding their own networks in the process. And because they are 'action' and 'results' oriented, they DO follow up and follow through in creative ways. But the other extreme tend to be 'power-mongers' and are almost completely 'task-oriented', not people-oriented. That usually means that their networking is totally self-centered. I've learned the hard way that some of them are very good at being 'disguised' NetWeavers. They talk a great "NetWeaving" game, but what they end up doing often ends up more about *"How can you help me?"* rather than *"How can I help you?"*.

One of my pet peeves is that too often we tend to try and pigeon-hole people into one of these categories when in reality, most of us are mixtures and I also believe that we are often 'situational' in our behaviors, depending upon the circumstances. Most of us have one or more dominant characteristics that we revert to under stress.

The personality elements of extraversion/introversion represent an interesting contrast in trying to decide who might be more 'natural' NetWeavers.

On the surface, your 'knee-jerk' answer would assume that extraverts would be better NetWeavers since we think of those who are 'bubbly and gregarious' as the ones most likely to excel at the relationship-building skills.

I would argue that NetWeaving is the ultimate 'equalizer' – enabling those persons, who see themselves as semi-introverts and highly analytical, to equal or even surpass their more outgoing counterparts.

Analyticals tend to dislike being seen as too pushy and sales-y. Because they get their satisfaction out of problem-solving and acting as a helpful, creative resource for others, many of them end up in the longer run as great sales people. And because they are curious by nature and open to ideas from others as the best way to grow, many 'introverted' analyticals make the best leaders.

Many movies in the 90's, before the technology bubble burst, showcased a world which would be totally ruled by 'techies' – remember *"Revenge of the Nerds?"* And remember the joke, *"What do you call the guy in high school, who 10 years ago carried the slide rule and had 10 pens and mechanical pencils holstered in his pocket protector?"* . . . **"BOSS."**

During that over-zealous dot.com period, some interesting things happened. Anyone who could talk technology, could run circles around their non-techy 'bosses' who grew up in the old school where only relationships counted. These young turks were seen as the new geniuses who would soon control the world. When the tech bubble burst, those same 'old school' bosses were now firing and laying off some of the 'boy and girl geniuses' who understood technology, but didn't really understand the importance of, or how to build and maintain trusted relationships.

But then, when the economy even turned worse, some of those bosses who had led the young turks go, joined them in the ranks of the unemployed because no one really had the point clearly enough to leaders of industries and the investors pouring money into technology that the real challenge and ultimate solution was to strike a balance.

Today, technology savvy is needed more than ever to achieve cost-savings, productivity efficiencies, and expanded sales and marketing results, but building and maintaining relationships is just as important today as it has ever been and must be 'woven' into both sides of the equation.

Not that long ago, some technocrats within the insurance banking industries sincerely believed that in that new world of technology, people would gladly sidestep insurance agents and bankers to 'do-it-themselves'. To some extent this certainly has happened. But those companies who have proven most successful – and there's no sign this will be changing, at least not overnight – are those who make it possible for the customer to make his or her own decision about how to engage – internet or phone, or some combination thereof.

Certainly more people are buying books, music, clothing, many retail items and even things like insurance and even cars over the internet, but the 'experience' is still important. As the internet world gets more 'visual' which is beginning to happen very quickly, there will definitely be a 'middle ground' created between buying something in person, and buying it over the internet.

I gave a talk almost 30 years ago where I predicted that the single greatest change to impact our lives would happen '**when the world goes visual**'. It has taken a little longer than I thought but with cell phone, Skype, and the ability to communicate, teach, make sales presentations and close deals, etc. 'face to face' over the internet, that world is just around the corner here at the very end of 2013.

This will also mean that "NetWeaving" will become even easier for people to do. The ease with which I can set up a three-way visual internet introduction, sitting in my office in Atlanta or in the N. Georgia mountains where we live – introducing a friend of mine in Dallas to someone I met at a conference here in the U.S. from Copenhagen, will be almost as common as doing it in person.

So regardless of your personality type or combination thereof, I believe if you will incorporate NetWeaving into your daily habits – being listening and being tuned in with a second pair of ears and antennae, and to always be on the lookout for other person's missing pieces to their business or personal jigsaw puzzles – you will learn how to build more new healthy human relationship than you ever thought possible. And in addition to becoming successful beyond your wildest dreams, you will achieve a level of satisfaction with life unlike anything you've ever experienced. And that will make you want to become a "NetWeaving Ambassador" and to spread the word to others.

Who knows, as the whole world discovers the wonders of NetWeaving and as more people begin hosting a couple NetWeaving meetings a week for others on a regular basis; begin making referral connections on the phone, by email, and in person; being forming more NetWeaving Enrichment Groups, NetWeaving book clubs, and putting on their own NetWeaving events – we may just accomplish what Catherine Ryan Hyde had in mind in her book which became a movie – "**Pay It Forward**" – '**How to Change the World**'. . .and then '**Put It Into Action**' and that's what NetWeaving does as well as anything ever created.

IN CONCLUSION – INCREASING YOUR CHANCES OF BEING LUCKY

Over ten years ago, through a friend of a friend, I was introduced to Joe Wolfe who gave me a book written all the way back in 1952, by AHZ Carr (Wilshire Books) – ***How To Attract Good Luck***,

I mentioned this same quote at the end of Chapter 8, but I think it not only bears repeating but I'd like to close out with a couple stories that exemplify and magnify it. Once again, paraphrasing what AHZ Carr wrote back in the 1950's – "How To Attract Good Luck".

"The first step in attracting good luck is to understand that most of our good luck (he defines as "the beneficial effect of chance upon our lives") comes to us through other people."

"Between ourselves and those who cross our path, chance spins an invisible thread of awareness – a Luck Line"

"To expose ourselves to luck, then means in essence to come into healthy human relationships with more people. The more Luck Lines you throw out. . .the ore luck you'll find."

The Whitefoord Elementary Story – "the E.Y.E.S Have It" and Hallmark

Several years ago, as part of the Principal For A Day program (now called "Project For A Day") which is joint project with the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Atlanta Public Schools, and the Atlanta Partners For Education, I approached the principal of my 'assigned school' – Whitefoord Elementary in a fairly low-income part of South Atlanta. I called a few days prior to when I supposed to go and asked the Principal, Pat Lavant, if they would be willing to do something 'outside the nine dots'.

In addition to 'shadowing' Pat Lavant, the Principal - around to all the classrooms, I asked if I could try introducing "NetWeaving", as well as the "Pay It Forward" concept, to any one grade within the school. Pat picked the 3rd grade which is incidentally the one I would have picked. Pat had seen the movie, Pay it Forward and was excited about having me there.

When I arrived at the school that morning, there were banners welcoming me with NetWeaving and Pay it Forward on them. It's also the one which Donna Lowry, education anchor reporter for WXIA - 11Alive (NBC) chose to come back later and film and broadcast.

At the time of this update, I will have been back to repeat these exercises shown below for 6th time. I'm very pleased to report that when I went back into the 4th graders' classrooms (the previous year's 3rd graders), not only was I a 'cult hero', but the 3-step exercise I had done the previous year was just as effective as it had been the previous year.

Here are the exercises I put the group of sixty-five 3rd graders through that first year and which I now repeat each Fall:

- 1) I ask each of the 3rd grade kids seated in chairs, to stand up and to introduce him or herself and the 1st time around, I do no coaching. As you might guess, there are a number of mumbled names you can't understand, eyes to the ground and shuffled feet.
- 2) Then we redo this exercise but this time in pairs. Each child takes turns introducing him or herself to the child beside him and her by shaking hands. . .with good eye contact. . .and I make them repeat if I can't hear or understand them.
- 3) Then I ask for volunteers and had 3 volunteers come down front. Each one then has to pick a best friend and bring him or her down front and the two of them have to pick someone they don't know, or don't know well, and then the two friends take turns introducing their friend to the child neither of them knows.

I prefaced this exercise by explaining that:

"NetWeaving is just all about introducing your friends to other friends, and even to kids that neither of you know and then they have to 'pay it forward' and introduce you to some of their friends, and that way, you can have more friends. How many of you would like to have more friends?" Literally every hand is up and waving.

Later on that year, the kids and teachers created a project called "The E.Y.E.S. Have It".

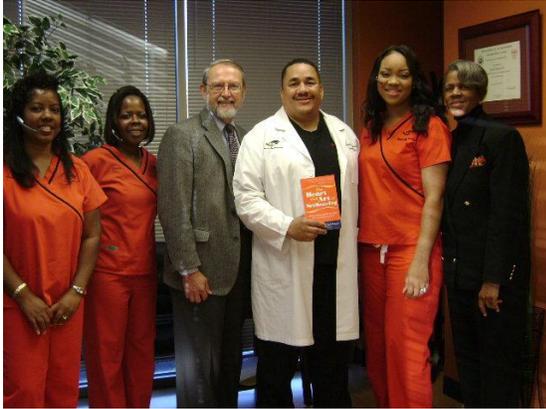
The E.Y.E.S. Have It Project

In these uncertain economic times, why would a very successful Harvard Medical School trained Ophthalmologist, who did his residency at the Mass Eye and Ear Center at Washington Hospital Center and his Fellowship at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston. . .and who was only beginning to branch off on his own private practice. . .a very successful career within a larger practice. . .and with one of the most expensive and sophisticated 'state-of-the-art' facilities in the country. . .agree to carve out two entire mornings to do FREE exams for two separate groups of African-American school-age kids from lower income families who had never had an eye exam?

Partly it was because he loved the nature of this project as well as concepts of NetWeaving and Pay it Forward.

And as a result of monies raised through the sale of the book, "***The Heart and Art of NetWeaving***" and donated to the "Pay It Forward Foundation", the money to pay for the glasses that 18 of the children examined needed was covered by a grant to the school from the Pay it Forward Foundation.

But the other reason he did it was just because **Eddie Harris, MD, Specialist in Ophthalmology**, knew that this was the right thing to do.



E.Y.E.S. – Every Youngster is Entitled to See was the brainchild of the NetWeaving – Pay it Forward Council created at Whitefoord by a coalition of students, counselors, and teachers.

It was formed following a previous year's presentation at the school by Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver, and creator of the NetWeaving concept who had been assigned Whitefoord as part of the Principal For A Day project.

Whitefoord teachers and counselors had identified a number of their students they believed might be lagging in reading and learning skills due to vision problems. With a commitment from the Pay It Forward Foundation to help fund the purchase of any glasses which would be needed - along with a pledge by these students to **'pay it forward'** and find other kids to help - Dr. Harris agreed to do the exams pro bono.

Dr. Harris agreed to do these free exams without the slightest thought that his gift of kindness, might somehow come back around to benefit him and his practice. That happened almost immediately.

What Dr. Eddie didn't know is that Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver, had called **Donna Lowry, WXIA's education reporter** and head of that desk (the NBC affiliate) and told her this story.

Donna had already embraced the NetWeaving and Pay It Forward concepts as a result of previously having emceed the Principal For A Day Program.



Subsequently, when she learned of the series of 'NetWeaving' and 'Pay It Forward' exercises Bob had done at Whitefoord Elementary, in addition to the traditional 'Principal shadowing', she came back and filmed these exercises which were later broadcast on her segment in the Morning Show.

After hearing about the E.Y.E.S. project, Donna sent out another camera crew to film the kids being examined. Without going into detail, Dr. Harris's gratuitous eye exams generated immediate favorable publicity for him and his clinic,

There probably could never be a better example and case study for how the first motto of NetWeaving comes true in the real world:

“Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen.”

Graduation at Whitefoord

After repeating the same 3 exercises in the Fall for the entire 3rd grade classes at Whitefoord for the first 3 years, Bob got a second idea of how to hopefully make the impact of NetWeaving and Pay it Forward even more long-lasting.

Bob was into his 4th year of the Fall exercises, and that Spring, his very first class of 3rd graders were now graduating 5th graders. These future NetWeavers would be going on into Middle School. Bob asked the Principal if he might be part of the 'graduation' ceremony and in order to give them more of a reminder of what they had learned, he created a "NetWeaving – Pay It Forward Diploma" and each student received a personalized copy with his or her name on it. Here's what the Diploma said and each year now every 5th grader receives a modified version of this one:

Whereas the 2007 3rd Grade Classes of Whitefoord Elementary School were the first in the United States of America to have adopted and embraced the philosophy, the principles, and the skill sets of "**NetWeaving**" and "**Pay It Forward**", this Diploma recognizes the below-named individual as a **NetWeaving and Pay It Forward Ambassador**. We challenge you to honorably represent these high ideals as you enter Middle School and that you will inspire others you know and those you meet to:

- introduce **your** friends and **their** friends. . . to other friends so you can make more friends
- to make introductions of **your** friends to children whom you do not presently know.

"**Pay it Forward**" is all about '**changing the world**' by the simple action of helping someone and asking them to do what **YOU** have just done - ask them to '**pay it forward**' for someone else. **You are our future leaders!** You will inspire your new classmates to also become **NetWeaving and "Pay It Forward" Ambassadors**. We know you will be up to the challenge.



The Hallmark Story

Several years ago as I was in Dallas, Texas, getting ready to make a presentation on my NetWeaving concept the next day, and because I had an open evening, I called an old friend who actually had reported to me when I was Marketing VP of an insurance company there back in the 70's to see if he would want to get together for dinner.

My friend, **Dick Evans**, was now President and CEO of a company offering consulting services within the financial services industry. Dick apologized that he had another commitment that evening involving a high level reception to which he had been invited. But since one of his people couldn't attend he invited me to come in his place. The reception was at Southern Methodist University and it was being jointly sponsored by the National Hispanic Corporate Council (NHCC) and SMU. The president of SMU was there to announce that SMU had been selected as a major executive training center for Hispanic Corporate Leaders. Almost all the major companies were present who were anxious to expand their reach in Hispanic communities.

As we walked into the meeting room, one of the first persons we met was **Pat Martinez**, the Executive Director of NHCC and after we explained a little bit more about NetWeaving which she really liked, she immediately took me over and introduced me to **Yolanda Casey**, with Hallmark out of Kansas City, one of the NHCC sponsor companies. She, like Pat, immediately understood and took to the NetWeaving concept, and we promised to keep in touch.

Several months later – close to Christmas – I happened to be watching TV and an ad came on showing two very young African American children sitting beside a Christmas tree holding a storybook. As they opened the book, the voice of their Grandmother greeted them and proceeded to read the story to them.

A light bulb went off in my head. A number of years ago, I had adopted an elementary school in south Atlanta in an economically challenged area which was almost completely composed of African-American children in grades K to 5 – Whitefoord Elementary School. Every year I go and teach "Netweaving" as a socialization skill to the entire classes of 3rd graders. Many of the children attending the school are either partially or entirely being raised by a Grandparent. But I also was aware that some of them do not actually have the reading skill level to read and record the children's books and definitely wouldn't have the funds to afford buying the books, retailing at \$29.95 each.

It struck me that if Yolanda, my previous connection with Hallmark, could introduce me to the right person there, perhaps they would be willing to donate some books which I could use and distribute at Whitefoord. Then, because I had done NetWeaving programs for a literacy group in Atlanta, I felt we could find adult literacy volunteers who would work with some of the Grandparents (some parents as well) to teach them to be able to read, and then record the



storybook stories. What an exciting thought and a way to not only leave an enduring legacy, but for some, a first-step introduction into the wonderful world of literacy.

Sure enough Yolanda liked my idea and said that she would pass my request on to the Hallmark Foundation who would be the one to consider making such a donation. After I described the project in an email, I received back an apologetic response that this project would not fit in with their criteria for donations and at the time I didn't exactly understand why.

Not being one to give up easily, I asked for a little more clarification as to why it wouldn't work, and quite simply, my new best friend, Carol Hallquist, head of the Hallmark Foundation, said the project I was talking about was just not large enough and would not have had the kind of impact for which they reserved their donations. It came out that they only shipped the books to non-profits with strategic plans to be able to use a 'truckload' of the books.

Realizing that there are thousands of children in the Atlanta area – who like those at Whitefoord – are being raised or strongly impacted by a Grandparent – some with reading skills but without the money to afford buying the recordable books, as well as some without the reading level ability to read and record the books, I felt that this was a match made in heaven. Also, for a number of years, I have served on the Board of Atlanta Partners for Education which is a 3-legged stool: Atlanta Public Schools; the Metro Atlanta Chamber, and the business community.

Several years previously, I was introduced to the group – Literacy Volunteers of Metro Atlanta. They loved the NetWeaving concept and thought it would be a wonderful concept for use in a planning session they were getting ready to hold and that I did.

With this project in mind, I envisioned approaching them and other literacy groups in Atlanta including Literacy Action who is now involved. The idea would be to recruit volunteers who would work with the Grandparents, as well as Parents, in schools across the Metro Atlanta area, teaching those with lower literacy skills, how to first read the storybooks, and then to record their voice – reading the story. Their initial reaction was extremely positive and so I got back in touch with Carol who then agreed the project would work.

Thanks to the generosity of the Atlanta Food Bank and Bill Bolling, their Executive Director, agreed to store the truckload of 7,000 books until their distribution. Also they have a program for needy children as well as where the recordable books, along with other school supplies which are donated by companies, could be distributed through the metro Atlanta and Several

other Public School Systems. They received 25% of the donated books in return for receiving and storing the books until we get them delivered to various non-profit groups.

Also another great friend and NetWeaving cheerleader, **Larry Greene**, CMO of Greene Classic Limousine in Atlanta, agreed to take and store a reduced quantity of the books since the Community Food Bank needed the space for their food storage

That first year, we not only distributed books to literacy groups to use in training adults to read making the 'recorded' storybook a wonderful Christmas gift to a child or grandchild, but to other non-profits like Safehouse Outreach, MUST Ministries, a couple of battered women shelters, and several others. Then I thought of another angle, and that was for sick and in some cases terminally ill children – having the child actually be the one to record the book. So a fairly large number of books went to CURE Childhood Cancer and a few of the children who recorded the story at Thanksgiving did not make it to Christmas and you can just imagine what that book now means to the parents.

But then what about continuing this into the future?

After sending Carol Hallquist some of the success stories from the first year, my 'selling job' for continuing the book donations was not even needed. In fact, without my requesting it, in addition to shipping 6,800 books the 2nd year – "Grandpa" and the other one "Grandma", they threw in 500 'Snoopy sitting at a grand piano with Woodstock sitting at one end'. When you pressed the 'play button', Snoopy rocks back and forth and the song is the peanuts theme.

We distributed most of the Snoopy's to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and to Camp Sunshine - children with life-threatening conditions - but also some to St. Vincent de Paul here in Pickens County where my wife and I live. Here is the picture of Carol Hallquist presenting a '**Snoopy at the Piano**' stuffed animal to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

The 3rd year, Hallmark actually contacted me and they shipped five (5) different books 6,600 in total - which, because the food bank ran out of room, are being stored this year at **Atlanta Peach Movers**, thanks to my friend and owner, **Orlando Lynch**.



Hallmark has done all this without any attempt to publicize it and I would love for this ongoing story to be told and spread the word of their generosity as well as the thanks to Orlando and Atlanta Peach Movers (there is no 'tree' in our name) for taking in and storing these donations from Hallmark which we hope will be coming for years in the future as well.



This year (2013) just before Christmas, we had a Hallmark Appreciation Day and invited a number of charities to come and pick up a large quantity of all the remaining items at Atlanta Peach Movers.

That day, Orlando was just being recognized at a luncheon by Women Realtors as their “**Affiliate of the Year**”. Can you imagine who valuable that is to a ‘moving’ company from a ‘referral’ standpoint?

Once again just living proof that “Good Things Happen to Those People Who MAKE Good Things Happen” and that indeed, “What goes around, does come back around.”

General Norman Schwarzkopf Story NAILBA Meeting – November 17, 2001

(This piece was written prior to the death of General Schwarzkopf December 27, 2012.)

This is my best recollection of what happened at the National Association of Life Brokerage Agencies (NAILBA) Annual meeting November 17, 2001 during General Schwarzkopf's closing presentation. A version of this was shared with the world. Bill O'Quin, a good friend who sends out the largest email distribution for *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, ended up putting this up on another site he runs for *Reader's Digest*: www.americainuniform.com.

It represents a great example of NetWeaving and the fact that , “*what goes around . . . does come back around*” and that “Good Things Happen to Those People Who MAKE good things happen.”

The Schwarzkopf story

As you read this, try and put your mental mindset back to the Saturday before Thanksgiving barely more than 2 months after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Kabul had just fallen; women were uncovering their faces and men were shaving theirs; the Taliban was in retreat into the South),

It was the closing session of a Annual National Meeting of an organization made up of life insurance brokerage agencies from around the country. There were roughly 1,200 people in the grand ballroom of the Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas.

As you walked into the hall, there were metal detectors at the door. The microphones set up for the Q&A session were set back 50 feet from the stage. An announcement was made that anyone who broke the corridor between the microphones and the stage would be "tackled and subdued" because Secret Service Agents were sprinkled within the audience.

The reason for these extraordinary measures was that our closing speaker was General Norman Schwarzkopf who would have been a logical terrorist target, and as you probably remember, in those days and months following 9/11, we didn't know if those kinds of major attacks were now going to begin happening on a more regular basis.

At that time, "Norm", as he likes to be called, now in his retirement, is into so many humanitarian and charitable activities, it would be difficult naming them all. He may be a retired military General, but like Colin Powell, he represents many of those qualities which are symbolic of the American Spirit. The fact that our military is run by men and women of character and compassion, as well as with a commitment to keep America strong and safe, makes this greatest experiment in humanitarian democracy the world has ever known even more remarkable.

Most of his talk was about leadership. He pointed out that what distinguishes leaders is that they LEAD because they are able to INSPIRE people to WILLINGLY do that which they would not ordinarily do on their own.

It was an incredibly inspirational talk and at the end of his address, he opened things up for Q&A. he was answering many questions about whether or not we should pursue Bin Laden - you already know his answer, and he also contrasted this situation with why we didn't, and why he felt we really couldn't, go after Saddam in the Gulf War.

Just as the Q&A session was nearing the end, a young lady came up to the microphone.

Although I didn't know it at the time, she was an executive with Xerox, one of the companies exhibiting at the convention. As she approached the microphone, she held some notes in her hand which she had obviously just scribbled onto a couple of sheets from the notepads provided on the tables in the meeting room.

As she started out, you could hear a slight tremor in her voice and General Schwarzkopf noticed her hands were shaking, which was not surprising in addressing an audience of over 1,000 people. "**Good Morning**", she finally said, as she looked down at her notes.

Seeing she was a little nervous, and reading from her notes, General Schwarzkopf jokingly asked her, "**Did you memorize that. . .or was that spontaneous?**" As the audience roared, she laughed, and that allowed her to regain her composure, and she started reading.

With an ever-increasing inflection in her voice, she described the PRIDE she, her sister and husband who were veterans of the United States Air Force all felt, having served under him, adding that she served in Panama (Air Force - Aircraft Engineer) and as her father before had served in the Army Air Corps. As a request from her father, she thanked General Schwarzkopf for his past and continued leadership.

She also expressed her wish that she could have been in uniform to salute him (military protocol required), while she also regretted that even a handshake wasn't possible because of the added security protection in place in the hall.

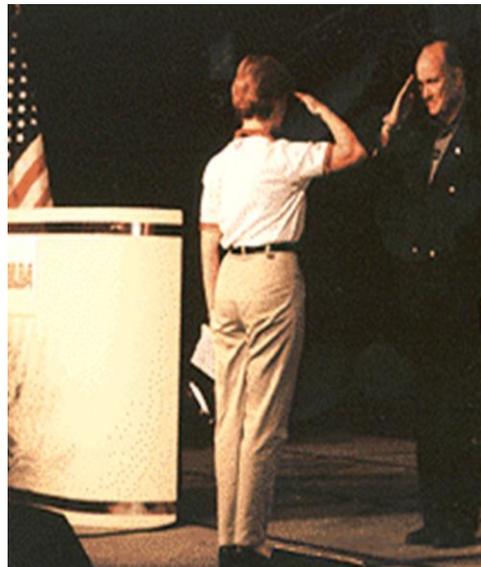
She then asked her question: what advice we as parents should give to our children as the next generation of leaders of this country. He said, tell them, "*It's ok to do your own thing, but do it PLUS 1.*" That ONE something extra is to "*help someone else up a hill; be a leader and stay one step ahead in helping them meet their goals successfully.*"

That's the advice he says he's given his own children.

With her short-read piece completed and answered (probably taking less than a minute), General Schwarzkopf said, "**Young lady, would you come up here to the Stage.**"

As she walked the distance to the stage and stood at attention, you could have heard a pin drop.

General Schwarzkopf first directed her to salute him and she addressed him with a full military salute, which he immediately returned. After she saluted him, he asked if he could shake her



hand. Then he said, ***“Can I hug you?”***

That's when she totally lost it along with 1,000+ other people in the audience. Through her sobs into General Schwarzkopf's lapel-microphone, this audience was treated to an event which will stay in our collective memories for the rest of our lives.

It was an event I shall never forget - one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences that EVERY person in that room will carry in their hearts, and pass on to their grandchildren. We truly were blessed being in that room and "God Bless America" now takes on special meaning.

But that isn't the REST OF THE STORY.

The meeting was on the Saturday, the week before Thanksgiving. On that following Monday, I happened to be on the phone with Bob Davis, a reporter for *USA Today*, working on another possible story for another consulting client of mine. As we wrapped up our conversation, I told the reporter this story and he asked if I would write it up as an email for him. He wanted to take it to the editors to see if they would print that in the Thanksgiving Day Edition of *USA Today*.

Well, it didn't get published there, but the email, which is very similar to what is described above, literally went around the world as people sent it to friends, and they sent it to friends and family, etc., etc. Then when my friend Bill O'Quin put it up on the www.americainuniform site, military persons around the world were also treated to this great story.

About 2 weeks later, I received a phone call from Nancy Richardson, the lady with Xerox who had shared her story and emotions. First she thanked me again for all the work I had done and frankly it WAS a lot of work – calls to confirm the facts from her and to get her permission and her willingness to appear in *USA Today* which she was thrilled to do. Then actually writing up the event, as well as a number of calls back and forth with the reporter with *USA Today*, and then later with Bill O'Quin.

But then Nancy apologized for the fact that even though I'd done all this work, she still had never asked me what I did for a living. I told her that I sell some insurance, act as “second opinion” fee-paid consultant to high net worth individuals, as well as serve as a consultant to insurance companies and vendors. As I described more about my background and some of my clients, she said, *“We need to hire you”*. And they did.

AFTERMATH – almost a year later

In September of the following year, in Rochester, NY, I helped Xerox put on a very successful meeting which not only added much to their meeting, but it also opened up my eyes to new possibilities for NetWeaving in helping technology companies create an atmosphere of openness and sharing at technology “user group” meetings. As a consequence of that discovery, I have gotten several other engagements which I would not have even considered had it not been for this opportunity – all brought about by NetWeaving.

As we say about NetWeaving, every single act of NetWeaving is like throwing a stone into a still pool of water. It sets off an ever-expanding set of circumstances and chain of events, whose consequences and ramifications may not be known for days, months, or even years into the future. Nevertheless, as sure as the sun also rises, *“what goes around. . .does come back around” . . . and good things DO happen. . . when good people MAKE things happen”*.

Appendix A

NETWEAVING NOTEPAD

Conversation with _____ Date _____

In-Person On the Phone By Email Other _____

TYPE OF NETWEAVING ACTIVITY

Level 1 Referral – While on Phone or in Direct Contact, mention the name of ANOTHER person who would benefit from knowing this person and suggest they call that person mentioning the referrer’s name.

Their Phone Number _____ Their Email _____

Level 2 Referral – While on Phone or in Direct Contact, offer the name of ANOTHER person who would benefit from knowing this person. Email or write to each of them plus send other info (bio of each person) as way of introduction.

Their Phone Number _____ Their Email _____

Level 3 Referral – While on Phone or in Direct Contact, offer the name of ANOTHER person who would benefit from knowing this person. Email or write to each of them plus send other info (bio of each person) as way of introduction. **Add a 3-way phone introduction.**

Their Phone Number _____ Their Email _____

Level 4 - Hosting a Meeting – While on Phone or in Direct Contact, offer the name of ANOTHER person who would benefit from knowing this person. Email or write to each of them plus send other info (bio of each person) as way of introduction and set up a Hosting Meeting with the referrer acting as the ‘host’ and being present at the meeting.

Their Phone Number _____ Their Email _____

Refer Someone as a Resource Name (Possible Addition to Trusted Resource Network)

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Resource Category or description