
2. CLEAR THE ROADBLOCKS

Things that Get in Your Way



ROADBLOCK NO. 1:
SOCIAL RELUCTANCE

Networking for Introverts, Shy Guys and Gals

Networking does not come naturally for most people. In fact, it can be quite terrifying to walk into a room full of people you don't know. There can be moments of reluctance even for the most outgoing extrovert. Fears, hesitations, doubt and awkwardness well up inside of us to such heightened levels that it becomes a significant emotional event. We don't like it, so as a defensive measure, we avoid it. I call this social reluctance.

This is especially challenging for people who identify themselves as introverts by nature or those who are shy. You may already know that shyness and introversion are not the same thing. Introversion is a personality trait that usually lasts a lifetime. Shyness, on the other hand, is an emotional state that can be overcome.

Carol Bainbridge, who writes about shyness and introversion, suggests that while an introvert may also be shy, introversion itself is not shyness. Basically, an introvert is a person who is energized by being alone or with one or two people at most. Being in crowds of people (i.e., parties, conventions, networking meetings) literally exhausts that person. Have you ever felt that way?

Are You an Introvert?

Ms. Bainbridge explains that "Introverts are more concerned with the inner world of the mind. They enjoy thinking, exploring their thoughts and feelings. They often avoid social situations

because being around people drains their energy. This is true even if they have good social skills. After being with people for any length of time, such as at a party, they need time alone to recharge.”

If this description fits you, you may be an introvert, and that’s perfectly fine. Networking and relationship-building is not the exclusive dominion of extroverts. You too can be successful with people, relationships and yes, networking. You will do so in a way that works best for you. Just keep reading.

Are You Shy?

When I was in college, I had the privilege of sitting in the classroom with the brilliant and charismatic professor, Philip Zimbardo, Ph.D., of Stanford University. His psychology classes were “standing room only.” Shy or not, many of us attended his lectures because the topic, quite frankly, was vitally important to our futures (not to mention our weekends).

In his groundbreaking book “Shyness: What it is, What to do about it” Dr. Zimbardo reveals that shyness is pervasive, with as many as 40 percent of people in his research study considering themselves shy. If you’re shy, you are not alone. There are millions of shy people all around us.

Shy on the Outside - Torn Up on the Inside

Dr. Zimbardo’s study presented a surprising portrait of those with the shy condition. Their mild-mannered exterior conceals roiling turmoil inside. The shy disclosed that they are excessively self-conscious; constantly sizing themselves up negatively and overwhelmingly preoccupied with what others think of them. While everyone else is meeting and greeting, they are developing plans to manage their public impression (if I stand at the far end of the room and pretend to be examining the painting on the wall, I’ll look like I’m interested in art and won’t have to talk to anybody). They are consumed by the misery of the social

setting (I'm having a horrible time at this party because I don't know what to say and everyone seems to be staring at me). All the while their hearts are pounding, their pulses are speeding, and butterflies are swarming in their stomach – physiological symptoms of genuine distress.

Being shy can be extremely uncomfortable, if not emotionally painful. Check out Dr. Zimbardo's web site www.shyness.com for tons of up to date information, surveys to complete, scales and more to help shy folks overcome their social reluctance with confidence.

An Unusual Case of Narcissism

Mark Shepard, master practitioner and trainer of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), the study of how you run your brain, believes that shyness is a form of narcissism, a trait where a person is overly concerned with self-image and ego. Shepard, a recovered “shy guy” himself, works with shy people to help them clear their limiting beliefs and negative emotions. His program “Clear the Fear” helps shy people and others learn how to get out of themselves and get comfortable conversing and connecting with other people. He even wrote a song about it. It's hysterical. Here are a few lyrics from Mark Shepard's song “Narcissism”:

Narcissism, narcissism
 you know you're really living
 when you're looking through the prism of
 good ole narcissism

If you want to get ahead in life
 you better get this right
 people don't want to hear about you
 they want you to hear about them!

Narcissism, narcissism
 you know you're really living
 when you're looking through the prism of
 good ole narcissism

What I've thought about you is all wrong
 it's been all about me all along
 and what I think about you is all about me
 so we might as well sing this song...together!

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For more inspiring and entertaining songs, go to www.MarkShepardSongs.com

The good news is that shyness can be overcome. In fact, practicing networking and learning the skills of conversation can be an excellent way to get rid of the shyness problem. Like any learned skill, it will be uncomfortable at first, but after time, you will get good at it. With networking, you also experience an extra benefit: You make new friends and get more opportunity. Why stay trapped inside your narcissistic shy self, when you can come out and play with the rest of us? Once free of your shyness, you will never look back.

How Can You Do it More Comfortably?

My advice to introverted and shy people is to keep in mind that networking is nothing more than building relationships one person at a time. Your energy and focus should be on one person at a time. Find ways and venues that allow you to maintain your personal energy and interest. This book will give you new ideas on just how you can do that.

"The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid"

-Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, wife of
 Lyndon B. Johnson (1912 - 2007)

ROADBLOCK NO. 2: **COMFORT ZONED**

Hanging Out with People You Already Know

To be an effective networker, you must continually meet new people and add them to your professional network. Just hanging out with the people you already know is not going to grow your sphere of influence. Imagine if you had adopted this limiting attitude when you were in elementary school? You'd only know the people in your sixth grade class. Not good.

Life has a way of pushing us out of our comfort zones. We move to new places, attend new schools, work for different companies, drive on new roads. In fact, it's really hard not to meet new people throughout your life. So unless you are in the witness protection program, go ahead, put yourself out there, extend your hand and meet new people. It's good for you.

But for some reason, meeting new people in the context of networking takes on a whole new level of hesitation. It can create the same physiological response as public speaking (and we know how some of you feel about doing that). Ultimately, it's fear and uncertainty that stops you.

This reminds me of a personal story when I experienced extreme levels of hesitation that resulted in hermit-like behavior. When I was in sixth grade, my family moved to a new community, which meant a new school for me. It was toward the end of the school year, but still it was traumatizing for a young girl whose whole life was built around her friends, her school and her neighborhood. I was somebody there. Now, I would have to start all over again. It was exhausting just thinking of it.

So I stayed in my room for a full three months after moving to the new house. I didn't go outside and play with new kids. I went to my room immediately after school every day. During the summer, I stayed inside where it was safe. I practically missed the

entire summer. I was angry, sad, scared, lonely and becoming a bit depressed. The babysitter didn't notice.

Then the new school year started, and I was forced to come out of my shell. It was a new year, new school (junior high school now) for everyone. We were all in the same boat. Everyone had to make new friends. I was forced out of my comfort zone. My self-induced, extended pity party was officially over. Thank goodness, as I could now get on with the business of living and learning.

So what do you have in common with a 12-year-old girl who was traumatized by a changed environment? You're not 12; you may not even be a girl, but no doubt you too have experienced something like this in your life. It's an imaginary roadblock that becomes quite real and powerful and can be personally and professionally disabling.

So the next time you find yourself declining to attend a conference or networking meeting, ask yourself: "What am I afraid of?" "What's the worst thing that could happen to me?" Or better yet, ask yourself, "What's the best thing that could happen to me?"

It's time to come outside and play, make new friends and create new opportunities. President Franklin Roosevelt said, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." He had a point.

"Don't be afraid to expand yourself, to step out of your comfort zone. That's where the joy and the adventure lie."
-Herbie Hancock, American pianist, bandleader and composer.

ROADBLOCK NO. 3: **LAZY AND UNDISCIPLINED**

The Shortest Path to Mediocrity

I'm going to hit you hard here. Networking takes effort. It takes personal discipline. It takes commitment and follow-through. Most of us are just too lazy, undisciplined or disorganized to do it well. We start, and then we stop. We do it for a while, and then we quit. If something bad happens (e.g., get laid off from the job), we quickly start networking again. It's as if networking is behind a glass case that reads, "In case of emergency, break open."

Networking for the Health of It

Networking is like exercise and eating right. It is a no-brainer for short-term and long-term health. Exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, sleep well, limit the toxins and you may just keep yourself out of the hospital. You'll look better and feel better. You'll potentially live longer and live better.

With effort, it will become your new lifestyle, an automatic daily routine. You'll wonder how you ever lived without doing it. But most of us would rather take a pill, go through surgery or just live a fat, high-risk life than put exercise and healthy living into our daily routines. Crazy, isn't it?

Protecting Your Greatest Assets

"Anything worth having is worth working for," some wise person once said. Yes, your health is worth it. It is your greatest asset. Without your health, you will be severely limited. It's a game changer. Ask anyone who's run the cancer gauntlet.

After your health, your next greatest asset, I propose, is your relationships. Think about the special people in your life who make living rich and meaningful for you. What are you doing to protect this asset? Investing time and effort in those relationships?

Or ignoring them and taking them for granted? Be honest now.

Relationships are at the very heart of networking. They are the big prize in networking. Long-term, mutually beneficial relationships are what you are working toward. Therefore, it only makes sense that some effort will be required to create them and to maintain them. When it comes to relationships, lazy doesn't last long. Couch potatoes don't make good husbands (or wives for that matter), nor do they make good friends or good contacts.

What's so cool about this roadblock is that it is 100 percent in your control. You can do something about it. You don't need external solutions to put it into play. Just add effort and sustain it over a period of time until it becomes a personal habit. Discipline yourself, and make networking and relationship-building a daily priority in your life. If you do this, you'll feel better. More people will care about you. You will care about more people. This is good.

"You can't teach people to be lazy - either they have it, or they don't."
-Dagwood Bumstead, the main character in
the long-running comic strip *Blondie*

ROADBLOCK NO. 4: **SHORTAGE OF TIME**

How Are You Using Your 86,400 Seconds Per Day?

“There’s not enough time in the day.” Don’t you love this excuse? It is indisputable. Everyone has the same problem. The busier we get, the more important we feel. How cool is that?

This is not so cool if it keeps you from doing what’s important in your life. Never forget that your *To Do* list is not the same as your priorities. Not all tasks are equally important. We have choices. Not just excuses.

Let me share a story that changed how I view time. It was shared to me by the head of my martial arts academy, Grand Master Yu, who is a Judo Olympian, an eighth-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, Judo and Hapkido and is on the council the World Korean Judo Society. Clearly, he is an influential man in the global community of martial arts and has positively impacted many lives in his 30-plus years of running martial arts schools, including mine.

One day, when I was feeling particularly overwhelmed (and apparently showing it to others with my body language and energy), he took me aside and told me a story in his broken English and with his charming Korean accent that I have grown to love during my studies with him. He said:

Let say, I give you ‘tousand’ dollars every day. You spend as you wish. What you not spend, you give back to me. Next day, I give you another ‘tousand’ dollars. You spend. What you not spend, you return to me. Next day, same thing. [pause] Tell me, how you spend the money?

[pause]



Now, instead of ‘tousand’ dollars, I give you 24 hour. I give you 24 hour each day. You spend it as you like. What you don’t spend, I take back at end of day. Next day, I give you another 24 hour. Next day, you get another 24 hour. [pause] Question: how you spend your time?

I was dumbfounded, speechless and utterly transformed with this story. I realized that I get this precious, valuable and seemingly unending gift of time. A fresh supply of time – 24 hours every day! That’s 1,440 minutes each day or 86,400 seconds each day. Wow! If that were money, I’d be rich!

But unlike money, you can’t save time. You can’t accumulate it and get compounding interest on it. You can’t put it in a bank account, invest it in the market and hope that it grows. Time comes as quickly as it goes. When it’s gone, it’s gone. But you do get a lot of it, and you have choices as to how you use it.

I tell you this personal story so that you too may adopt a new attitude about time. This is your opportunity to stop making excuses about time and start embracing it as a gift.

While there will always be pressures and demands on your time, ultimately it is yours. You choose how you spend it. Why not spend a little of it each day in building and maintaining relationships? That, my friend, will pay you rewarding dividends.

“We realize our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically a problem of priorities. We confess, we have left undone those things that ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.”

-Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns, French composer (1835–1921)

ROADBLOCK NO. 5: **TECHNO-PHOBIC VERSUS TECHNO-ADDICT**

Misusing Technology to Your Determent

Is technology your friend or foe when it comes to networking and relationship-building? Imagine living without your cell phone, BlackBerry® or iPhone®. Was there life before Facebook®, LinkedIn® or Twitter™? Of course there was. More advances in technology will be introduced after this book is published and will continue to be introduced on a daily basis.

How Do You Keep Up with All of It?

The good news is that we human beings are learning machines. Even as we age, our brains continue to make new neurological connections, our bodies regenerate and we can learn new skills and tasks. But for some of us, the learning process involves a fair amount of complaining.

Technology-Life Balance

In order to strike a healthy balance in using technology to enhance your relationships, you need to keep a few things in mind:

- **Technology is not going away.** It continues to evolve, and you must evolve with it. If you bury your head in the sand and decide that you are not going to participate in social media, for example, you will become outdated quickly. Your skills, knowledge and experience will also become dated.
- **Technology is your servant, not your master.** Like any tool, technology is only as good as your ability to use it, understand it and control it. “The right tool for the right job,” my husband reminds me when we are tackling home/garden remodeling projects. When networking and

relationship-building, please remember that technology creates new communication channels, additional ways of staying in touch with the people that you care about. But don't become a slave to it. Don't let technology alter the fundamental ways in which you relate to other people.

- **Technology only temporarily hides your flaws.** The song “I’m So Much Cooler Online” from country singer Brad Paisley reminds us of how easy it is to appear to be something you are not when you present yourself on social media sites. Because networking is fundamentally about relationships, you must reveal the real you. Online and offline, you must bring the real you to the table. Anything else would be phony, exhausting and ultimately unsustainable.

*“Yes, I love technology, but not as much as you, you see.
But I still love technology. Always and forever.”*
-Kip’s wedding song from the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*