

# The Crystalizer

Crystal-Barkley Corporation  
The John C. Crystal Center  
Originators of  
*Life|Work Design*

## Networking – It is All About the “R” Word – RELATIONSHIPS!

Have we forgotten what we thought we learned about the substance – really the essence – of networking? Have we forgotten what makes networking really work? Many of us have done just this in our haste to.....(you fill in the blank, but here we are really talking about making that next step work decision).

Effective networking is the result of building genuine relationships, be they personal or business. It is the result of our individual exchanges with others – no one else can build our network for us.

We all know many people. Perhaps only one of them knows about our particular subject of interest, but that person also has a set of contacts; one person leads to another and to another and so the pattern, the network, expands. Why does it work? It works for three reasons:

- You demonstrate your focus and desire to learn through having “done your homework” in preparation for talking with them, and
- Your subject is one that is of genuine interest to you and the other person in your conversation.

So, let’s understand the difference between effective and ineffective networking.

### A personal contact network is not:

- **Automatic** – It does not arrive full-blown and at your disposal because you joined the “right” organizations.
- **Ready When You Are** – The people you may wish to engage in your network have different schedules and demands on their time.
- **Obvious By the Profession or Titles of Its Members** – Frequently people are quite effective resources on subjects unrelated to their professions because they are passionate about avocations.
- **Built In a Hurry** – People may see you once but remain accessible and both of you may profit from the exchange over a period of time.

### A personal contact network is:

- **Personal** – Let me say this again, *p-e-r-s-o-n-a-l*. It is *yours*, built as friendships are, one by one.
- **Based on Rapport** – There is something indefinable that encourages you to share conversation and information with another.
- **Diverse** – Although at a given point in time your interest may be quite specific, those who populate your network will be much more broadly based and you may well return to them at other times in your career (and life) with other interests.
- **Private** – Built on mutual interest and trust, your network cannot be shared wholesale with others, but with discriminate care you can and will want to nurture and share where the synergy has good potential.

To get your own network going:

- Get organized – update your contact list!
- Pursue networking opportunities in your community and/or in the locale where you wish to work (and live).
- Know what you want to know *before* you go to talk with someone – and know it in very specific terms.
- Do research, background reading, on your field of interest. Avoid the obvious easily researched questions.
- Role-play your meeting with family members or a friend or two. Feedback will help you gauge whether your approach makes good sense.
- Pursue volunteerism – pursue areas where your interests lie and your skills are needed and recognized.
- Remember, you are enlisting the people in your network to provide you with information that will enable you to make your key decisions for the future. Don't lay the onus of "job" on them.

Always, always keep in mind – As long as you make your purpose clear and ask for a reasonable amount of time, it's relatively easy to get an appointment with almost anyone. **Just don't confuse getting information with getting a job.**

*This E-zine is authored by Nella G. Barkley, co-founder and chief executive officer of Crystal-Barkley Corporation and edited by Bob Scudder, a certified executive coach and member of the Crystal-Barkley team. Crystal-Barkley is internationally respected for assisting--- literally thousands--- in the identification of the full range of their unique abilities and resources, thereby realizing and expressing their full potential.*

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