



The Power of Connecting

by Dr. Tracy Shroyer



Meet Dr. Tracy



In January, 2013, Dr. Tracy Shroyer completed her PhD in Organization & Management with a specialization in Leadership from Capella University. Her passions include teaching, training, personal development, and leadership.

Dr. Tracy has 19 years' experience in the financial services industry spanning the areas of customer service, risk management, analytics, operations, and people and process development. In addition, she holds 3+ years' experience as a college professor of business.

About BTSW



Through Beyond the Stone Wall, Dr. Shroyer provides motivation, encouragement, and development opportunities. Available programs and services support clients in one or more of the following areas:

Increase self-awareness

Realize possibilities that lie beyond your personal or professional stone walls

Develop an organized and focused plan for success

Take actions towards an improved self or organization

Expand knowledge of social media, personal or professional development, or networking

Visit

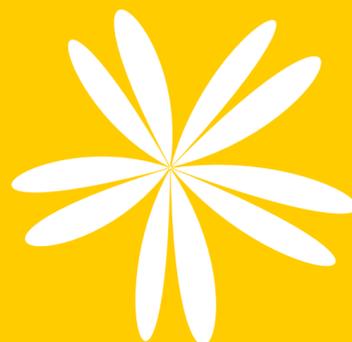
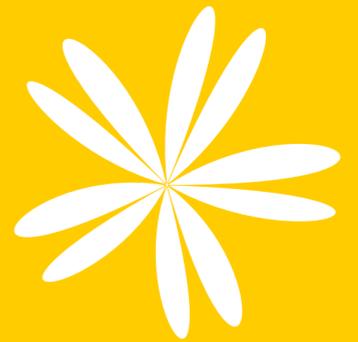
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to learn about services available and upcoming events!



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Definition

Does the word ***networking*** make your skin crawl?

There is something about that word that sounds so stiff, technical and that gives people that uncomfortable feeling whenever they hear it. Yet, it continues to be a word that everyone uses.

What if, instead, we replace the word networking with the word connecting?

Connecting

is...



...building relationships.

...sharing information.

...showing curiosity in others.

...enhancing your confidence.

...finding others with shared interests.

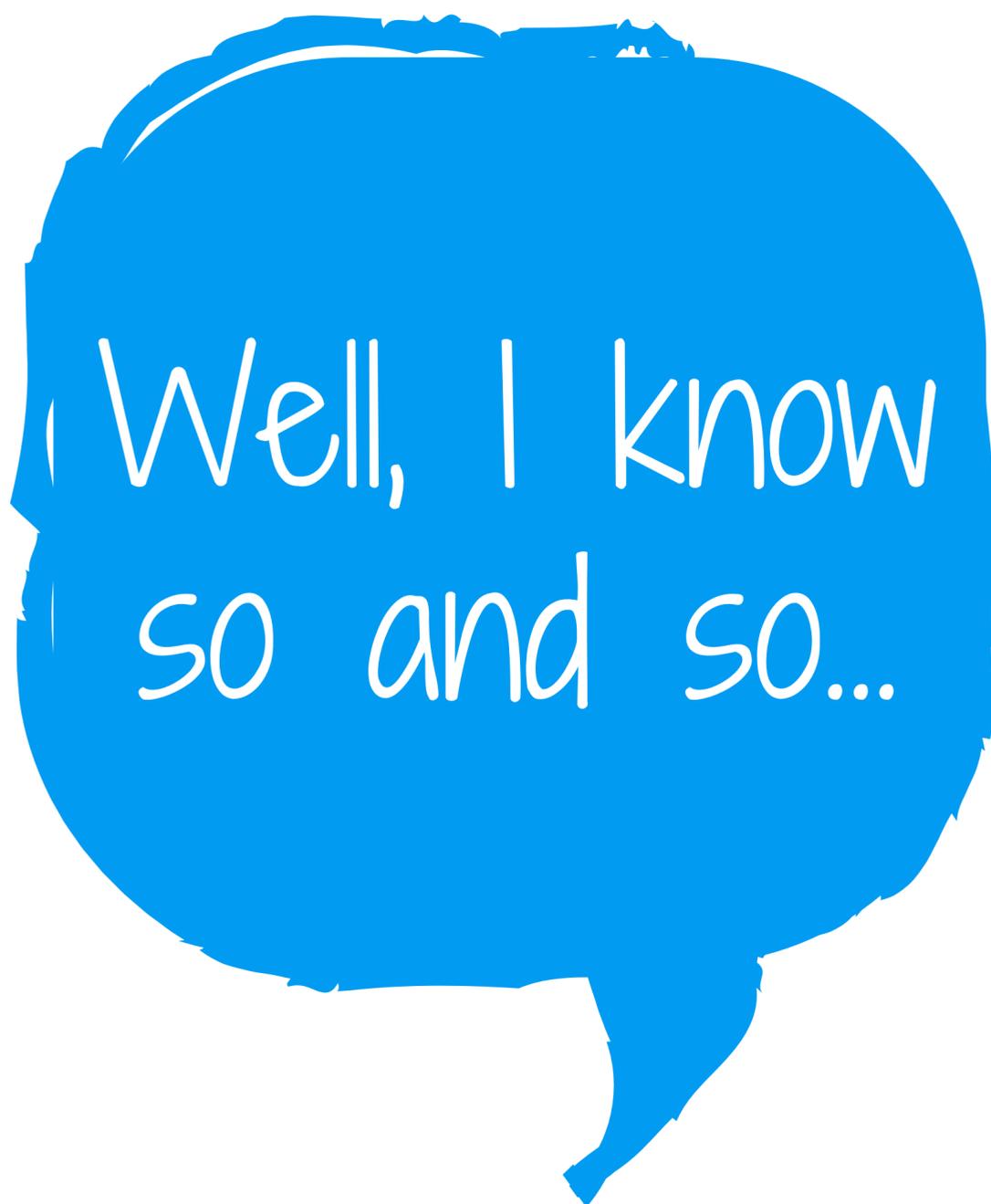
...learning from diverse others, or those that are not like you.

This thought (to use the word ***connecting***) came to me as I was putting together a particular slide in a presentation. As I was tracing my way backwards as to how I recently met a sweet gal named Joy, I realized that the path went back three layers deep:

Dan → Cynthia → Gail → Joy

If I had not met Dan (the first person in the string of connections), the likelihood that I would have connected with Cynthia, then Gail, then Joy, would not necessarily have been non-existent, but it could have taken more time and been less likely to occur.

The concept of ***networking*** has become more well-known for passing out business cards, name-dropping, or how many friends or connections you have on a social media site.



Whereas ***connecting*** is getting to know people and their interests, and being interested in and supportive of each other's success.

Challenges

There are 5 common challenges people mention over and over again when it comes to connecting with others:

LACK OF INTEREST

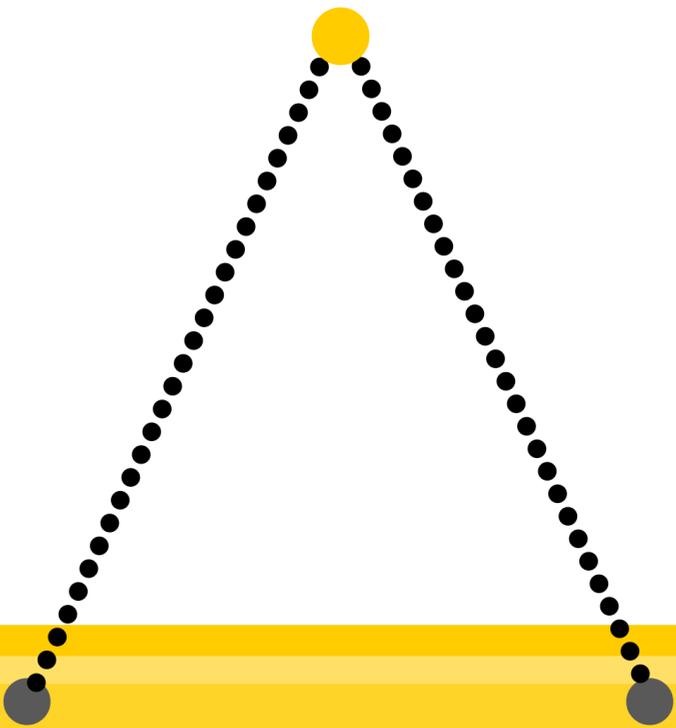
IT'S HARD WORK

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

SHY, QUIET



NO TIME



Lack of Interest

A co-worker of mine mentioned attending a conference and walking up to someone else and introducing herself, only to be met with a blank look of disinterest. Any responses were super short, and she quickly realized that the person had no interest in knowing her on any level. You can only try your best and learn when to move on from this type of obstacle.

HELLO
MY NAME IS

Hard Work

Yes, connecting can be hard work on your part to reach out and make an effort to initially connect. Guess what, once you do, you also need to put in energy and time into staying connected!

Remember that you may trip and fall, but you will persevere and be excited at the possibilities that evolve through the connections you make.



Location

Location

Location

There is this amazing technology called the World Wide Web, which can serve as a platform for you to interact with others, whether it is the space that you meet others or the space used to maintain your connection.

Don't complain about time zone differences either – I have interacted with connections out of California, Alaska, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Lebanon, and Africa (to name a few) – all from right here in Ohio!



Being a wallflower only keeps you out in the field versus digging in and growing through your connections with others. I was once that shy, quiet girl (believe it or not), but I slowly began to crawl out of my shell and test the waters.

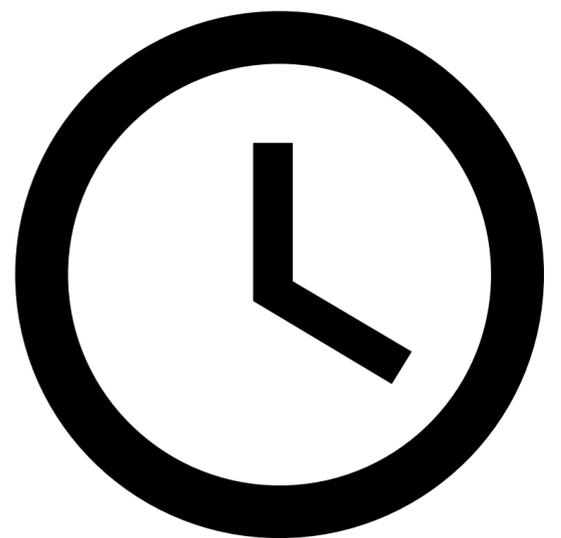
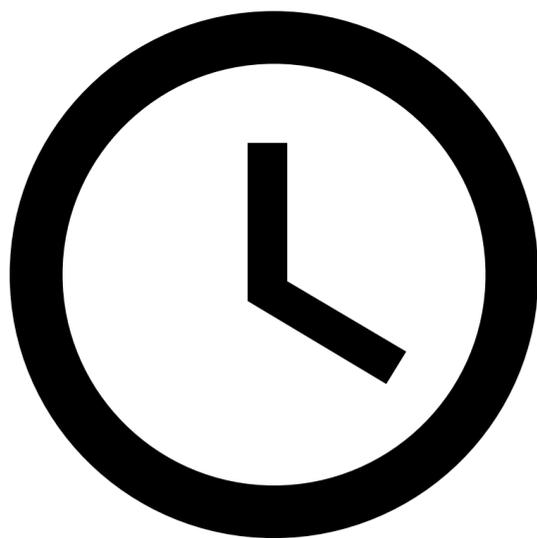
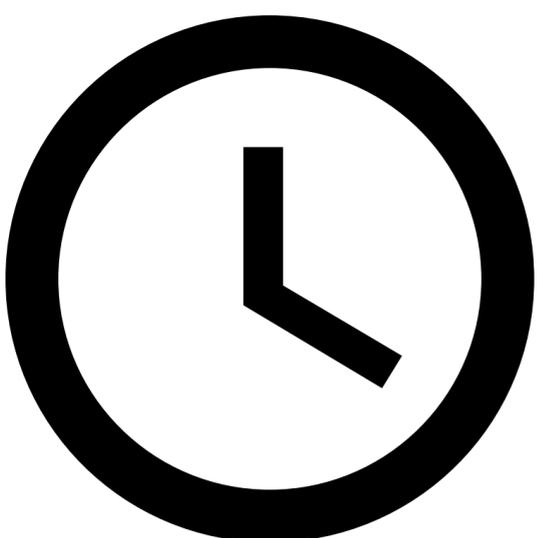
Go to one event or join one group. Dip your toe in the water and be open to what opportunity it may bring.

No Time



If you want something enough, you make time for it. Prime example, the key to losing weight is to eat healthy and exercise. We know this, but how many of us make time to do this?

Those who want it bad enough make the time. If you want to grow, learn, and develop, you will make time to connect with others.





Benefits

Alone we can do
so little; together
we can do
so much.

Helen Keller

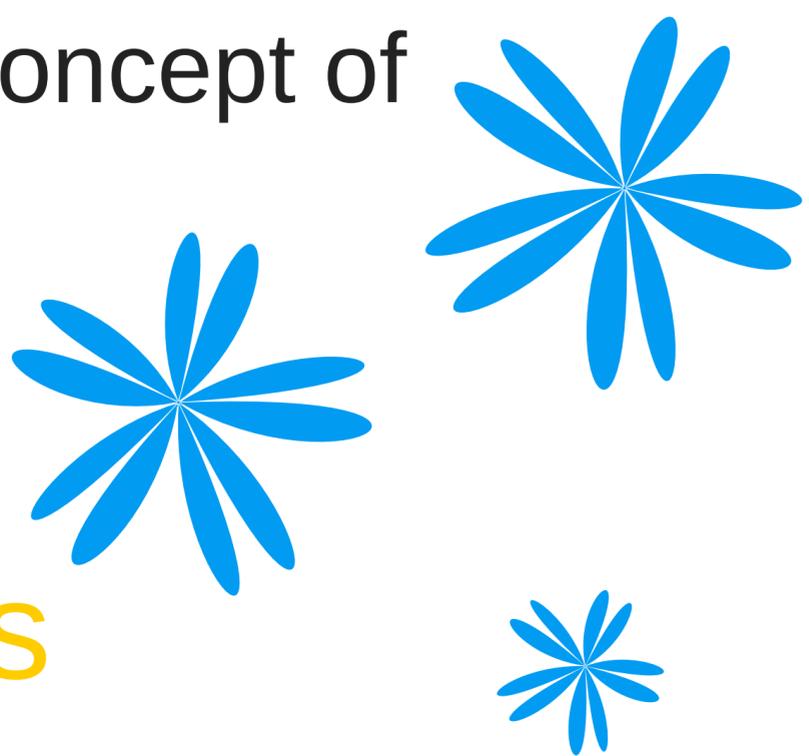


improved
health

positive
attitude

Benefits to making positive connections include improved wellness and a positive attitude. Heart rates improve, anxiety decreases, and people are typically happier beings when surrounded by others that encompass the concept of connecting.

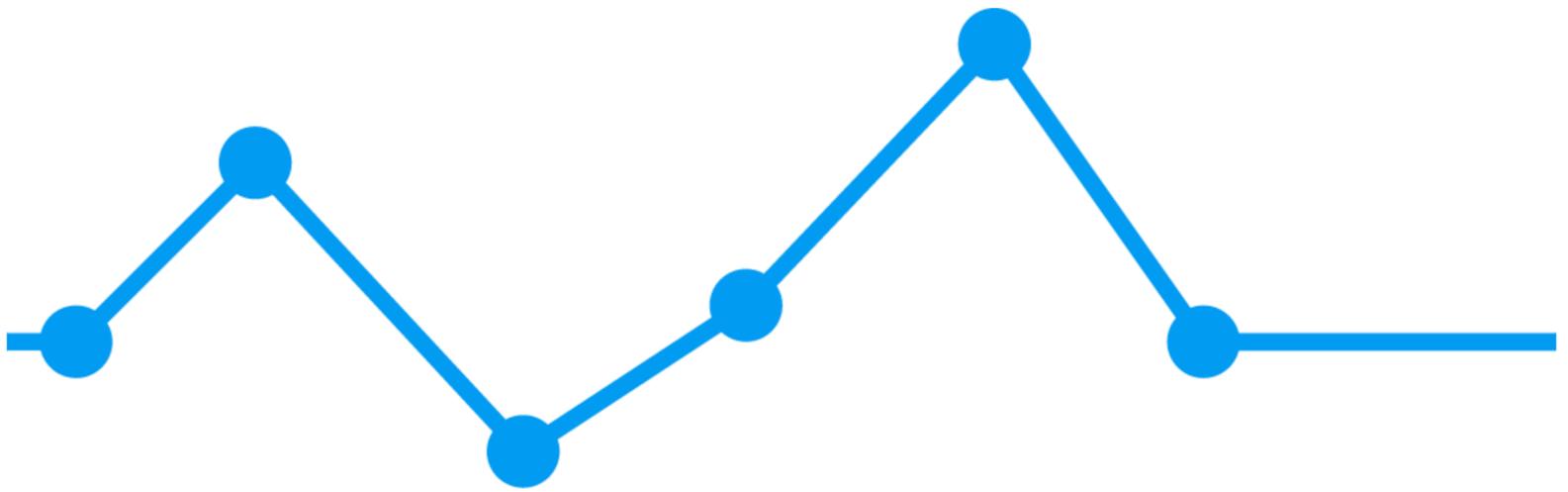
Diverse Perspectives



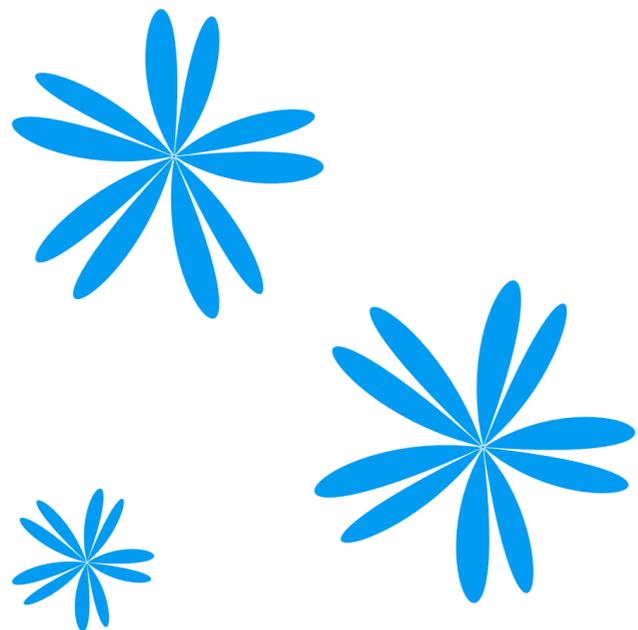
Connections with diverse backgrounds and experiences may provide amazing feedback that you would not have otherwise considered.

Cheerleaders

Another benefit to making positive connections is that those individuals become your cheering section. You may find the need to reach out for support or ask for feedback. In turn, when your connections need input or when they are thinking of something you have said or done, or want to partner with you on a project, they will not hesitate to reach out. Maintaining relationships with your connections provides great value.



Connections lead to more connections. I cannot tell you how many times I have met someone through a friend or a friend of a friend. As mentioned earlier, there were three levels deep to my connection with Joy. It is incredible what you may learn and who you might meet through connecting with one person!



Results



Another benefit to making connections is that it can lead to some A-M-A-Z-I-N-G results! It may take several connections over time, time with one connection, or happen instantaneously, but building those relationships can lead to improvement in yourself, your work, and your team.



opportunities

In Person

There are several ways to connect with others in your community, even some places that people may not have even considered. Below are some examples:

- **Schools** (e.g., PTA, Band Boosters, events, workshops, craft fairs)
- **Fitness Centers / Gyms**
- **Churches**
- **Local Businesses** (e.g., bowling alley, pizza parlor, winery)
- **Local Events** (e.g., farmers' markets, parades, holiday events)
- **Volunteer opportunities** (e.g., charity run/walks, Noon Lions, Rotary Club)

Social Media

Enhanced technology over the past decade has greatly intensified our ability to connect with others.

Whether using your mobile device, tablet, or laptop, the following are great ways to meet and grow your connections!

- **FaceBook:** search individuals, become fans of pages, and join groups

- **LinkedIn:** search individuals and join groups

- **Twitter:** search individuals, topics of interest, and participate in TweetChats*

*To learn more about TweetChats (what they are, common chats that I attend, etc.) check out the bottom of the Calendar of Events section on www.beyondthestonewall.com.



Action Plan

Possibilities List

Check out your local paper (whether physical copy or on-line version) to find out about networking opportunities coming up around town.

Reach out to a volunteer organization to learn more about opportunities to assist (where you can meet others while volunteering).

Ask someone you have not talked with in a while, or someone new, to meet you for coffee or lunch to learn more about them.

Create a Twitter account and use 2-3 keywords of interest in Twitter's search box. Begin following some of the individuals or groups you find of interest (including @tshroyer2 and @lifebtsw).

Search FaceBook for areas of interest and begin following pages of interest or request to join groups that align with your hobbies and/or areas of interest.

Talk with your manager or co-worker about ways to connect with others.

Find a club or association and become a member. Explore what opportunities / activities they offer and attend an upcoming event.

Action Plan

Review the Possibilities List (on the previous page) and select 1 item. Use the below Action Plan template to develop your plan of attack. Once you complete, pick another item or think of one not on the list.

Action Item: _____

Set a deadline (date/time) for when you need to complete this action:

Identify 2-3 steps you may need to take to complete this action item: An example is: (1) Identifying interests to search; (2) Searching Twitter for interests identified; and (3) Following people or organizations aligned with interests.

Once you complete this action item, post a note on the Beyond the Stone Wall FaceBook group or via Twitter using @lifebtsw in your tweet.



Individual Development Coaching &
Small Business Organizational Consulting

www.beyondthestonewall.com

FaceBook Group:
Beyond the Stone Wall

Twitter:
@tshroyer2 and @lifebtsw

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