

Title:

Effective Networking For Writers

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556

Summary:

'Tis the season for conferences and seminars! Many of my friends have all been conference-hopping in recent weeks and we've been discussing how fruitful these gatherings can be when you can make great and lasting contacts. But how do you come away with something more substantial than a stack of business cards? Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

1.) Speak Up! The Magic of Telling

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Article Body:

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1.) Speak Up! The Magic of Telling

"Isolation is a dream killer," says life coach Barbara Sher. One of the women in my mastermind group reminded me of that today. She recently attended an event where, for the first time, she came out of her shell and started telling people what she did. She was met with great enthusiasm and people asking her for samples and wanting to refer her to others. All because she spoke up. Now that doesn't mean you go up to someone and talk non-stop! It does mean that you go into a conversation with a clear description of who you are and what you do or write.

2.) Be a Productive Networker

Your networking will not be productive if you are handing out business cards

indiscriminately or asking someone who isn't the right person to read your work. Or maybe you're listening only partially to someone and then writing them off if they don't seem to have what you want. Productive networking is about building long-term relationships. Why long-term? Because it's highly unlikely that you or your contact have what the other wants at that very moment. The idea is to keep in touch until you do. In the meantime, you want to offer value or be of service so that the other person feels it'll be worthwhile to stay in touch with you.

3.) Engage in Two-Way Conversations

When the other person is talking, listen up! Who is the person and what do they need? They've come to the event for their own reasons. What are they? Can you assist? Get a clear understanding of what the person does and respect it! For instance, don't push a science fiction novel on an agent who only handles non-fiction. Tell the other person what you're up to, but don't babble. Think attraction: be engaging, not desperate!

4.) Maintain the Connection

Ask for permission to stay in touch--don't just add the person to your email list. Decide how you'll stay in touch. Occasional emails? A monthly newsletter? In "Making a Literary Life", author Carolyn See suggests writing notes to a different contact daily. Try to attend events where your most important contacts are involved, even if it means taking a trip. It's just one more thing that helps them take you seriously.

5.) When the Time Comes, Be Specific!

Use your contact only when they can help you the most. "Ask early, ask often" doesn't apply here. Know exactly what you want from the person. Tell him or her, in detail, how they can help you. Make it easy for them! If you have developed the relationship well, the person will be more than happy to lend a hand. And when they've done so, be gracious--write thank you notes!

One Last Note: Be patient. Building a network takes consistent, persistent effort. If you truly believe in what you're doing, and it shows in your work, others will believe in you as well.