

Jumpstart your career!

START NOW!

**Students, don't wait to build
your network.**

Gayle Hallgren-Rezac, Judy Thomson & Darcy Rezac
Co-authors of Work the Pond!

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What Students Have Told Us

"In the time since attending your workshop, I have gained more confidence and have noted a real shift in my approach to social situations. I've agreed to events which I would in the past have been passed up, connected friends from different areas of life. All these things, and more, I would never have thought about doing before the workshop!"

—Masters Student, Computer Science

How This Guide Can Help You

For over a decade we have been teaching networking skills to thousands of students at universities, and we've been involved in mentoring programs that connect students and young professionals with industry and business leaders. We know that networking works when it comes to finding a **great first job** after college or university.



Gayle Hallgren-Rezac, Judy Thomson,
Darcy Rezac

Shepa Learning Company

And, in a brutal job market—probably the toughest it has been in decades—a network is essential. Online applications (with thousands applying) get flagged **when someone knows you**. People **who know you** will take the time to walk down the hall to mention your name to the HR department. And, your network will open your eyes to new opportunities and **make connections you couldn't make any other way**. That's why building a network matters! And the sooner you do it, the better.

Not Feeling Like A Used Car Salesman

"I believe that networking is the most important soft skill you need to be successful in industry and academia. The networking courses (taught by Shepa) helped me to see networking as a tool to develop relationships by offering to understand people's problems and build dynamic solutions... It has also allowed me to feel like I can approach anyone without feeling like a used car salesman."

—Post Doc, Department of Physics, Engineering Physics, & Astronomy

I'LL BUILD ONE WHEN I NEED ONE!



Judy and Gayle were concluding a workshop on the skills of networking and asked the group, “What are you going to do differently as a result of what you learned today?”

A young environmental researcher put up her hand and said, “I know building a network is really, really important, but I am super busy right now. **I’ll build one when I need one.**”

Judy and Gayle looked at each other—they were both thinking— *It’s too late to build one when you need one. You need to start building your network now.*

So if you are a student, start now! And this e-guide will help you do just that.

Why You Should Start Building Your Network Now

If you are at university, college, or even still in high school, here’s why you should start building your network now:

- **A network takes time to build.** Most students don’t start thinking about a network **until they are looking for their first job** in the months before graduation. They start panicking, ‘who do I know who can help me find a job?’ The most valuable relationships are high-trust relationships and these take time to develop. You have to make that investment now. It takes time and effort, but it is worth it.
- **You are actually in a great place to start.** From our experience we find that most students don’t act on the fact that one of their best networks are other students. Imagine your peer group ten years from now, they’ll be people with roles in companies or organizations **where you’d love to have a connection.** They will be successful entrepreneurs, politicians, educators, you-name-it, and they’ll be working all over the world. Imagine **the power of that network**, and it all starts at school.
- **Making it a priority.** When you are swamped with your course load, projects, exams and all the other pressures of school, spending time to build a network doesn’t seem like a priority, but it should be. Hopefully, by reading this Shepa Learning Company e-guide, you’ll realize that **you really aren’t too busy** to build a network right now.



“When you meet someone it’s not just that person you are meeting, you are now one handshake away from their network.”

—Gayle, Judy and Darcy

YOU NEED A ROAD MAP



Image: office.microsoft.com

Make an action plan to follow these seven steps and you will distinguish yourself from all the other smart students out there who are looking for jobs.

YOUR SEVEN ACTION STEPS

1. **Start your career while at university.**
2. **Understand what networking is really about.**
3. **Buy a few less lattes and get business cards.**
4. **Leave your study cubicle at least once a week.**
5. **Start building your profile in the industry where you want to work.**
6. **Get your LinkedIn page in shape.**
7. **The world is flat; seize the day.**

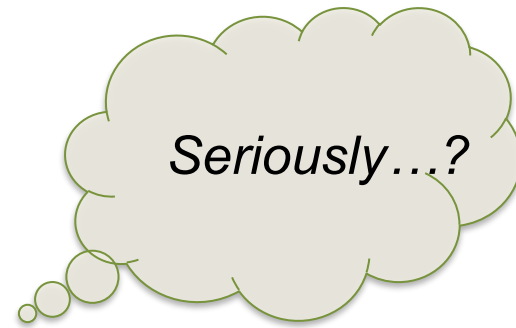
SAD, BUT TRUE

“I am at university to learn so that I can get a job. University is for learning. Career comes later.”

—MBA Student

A perfect (and sad) example of this attitude was our experience with a group of MBA students. Darcy and Gayle were starting a full-day networking workshop and Gayle suggested that the students ‘take some notes.’ Everyone started scrambling for paper and pens, which they hadn’t brought with them. They hadn’t pulled their laptops out of their backpacks either. They just kind of ‘showed up’.

Our thought was, “Seriously, didn’t you think that the information we would be sharing was valuable enough to take even a few notes?”



Later in the day we found out that faculty frequently arranged for C-suite executives from their region to come and speak to the students, but the school was thinking of stopping these events because so few students showed up. It was embarrassing for the organizers. What’s funny and sad is that these same students, once they have graduated and are out doing their job search, would now give anything to meet these same people!

“Create more opportunities by building your network before you need it.”

-Gayle Hallgren-Rezac, co-author, *Work The Pond!*

1. Start Your Career While At University

Change your mindset, here are some simple things you can do:

- **Go to your campus events.** Your university or college is a silver platter organization; it ‘serves up’ the opportunities for you to meet people in your field of interest **right on campus**. A quick look at a Campus Events web page reveals how easy it is to meet interesting and influential people. Here’s what we found in a quick search. A showing of a documentary film sponsored by the business school, includes a panel of business and community leaders. The cost is only \$8. Sit at the front of the room, then stand up and ask a question during the Q&A, or go up and meet the panel afterwards. Here’s another example: A world famous scientist from the Large Hadron Collider (look it up if you aren’t sure...) is speaking. Cost: free.



Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

- **Build skills as you build your network.** About that standing-up-and-asking-a-question in the tip above...too scary? Get over this fear now. (If you have public speaking skills on your resume it’s a huge plus.) Best way? **Join Toastmasters**, most campuses have at least one Toastmasters club. Better yet, join a Toastmasters club in the business district. Now, you are connecting with the business community, many of whom will become part of your network. You get the idea...
- **Develop high network shepa.** *Shepa* is the Tibetan word for consciousness or awareness and at Shepa Learning Company we want you to raise your network *shepa*. Look around your classes at the people you **don’t** talk to right now and remind yourself that if you connect with those people, you are now connected to their network. Where might that lead? Join clubs on campus. Recognize that the university is **bringing the world to you**. Be aware of the power of these connections because **your career starts now**.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU—REALLY!

Many people have the misplaced view that one meets people with a goal of **how can that person can help me**. Instead, become a “positive networker” which means that networking is not ‘all about you’, ‘it’s discovering what you can do for the other person.’

Here’s an example: when students network with business executives, they often go in with the focus of, “I need a job.” “Can this person help me get a job?” Instead, change your focus to “How could I add value to this company?” or “This is an opportunity to open a relationship, make an impression, rather than trying to close the deal.”

People want to build relationships with givers, not takers. Be memorable, be relevant and be likeable.

This philosophy of networking, *Positive Networking*[®], will serve you well throughout your life. Guy Kawasaki, an Apple fellow, best-selling author of books like *The Art of The Start* and one of the world’s most popular bloggers says that our definition of networking is “the world best definition. Once you understand that, the rest is just mechanics.”

“Now that I don’t have to sell myself, it takes all the pressure off.”

—College student,
Work The Pond!

“ *Positive Networking*[®] is the world’s best definition.

—Guy Kawasaki

”

2. Understand What Networking Is Really About

Now that you understand the philosophy, and know you need to do **more** connecting, here are some tips on how to do this:

- **Be the one to start the conversation.** We see it all the time, students arrive at our class and they sit in silence or start texting—not even acknowledging the people next to them. **Step out of your comfort zone** and say hi right away, because the longer you wait, the weirder it feels. You build a network by talking to people.
- **Be socially smart.** When networking with those people at a more senior level, make sure you come prepared. If you can learn something about them or their companies, do the research beforehand. Come dressed for the impression **you want to make**. Have a firm, confident handshake, engage the other person with a smile and know that you’ve got to make **an upfront investment** in small talk to get the conversation going. Being a *Positive Networker* means you have a natural curiosity and **the focus is on the other person**, not yourself.
- **Be specific and passionate.** Have good answers for the questions that you are **guaranteed to be asked** in networking situations: What are you studying? Why did you choose this field? What do you want to do when you are finished school? Avoid being wishy-washy, “I think I would like to do something in the field of ...” Instead be specific and be enthusiastic. Answer the question in a way that shows **how you can add value**, (not that **you** need a job) and be passionate. That’s what makes you memorable.

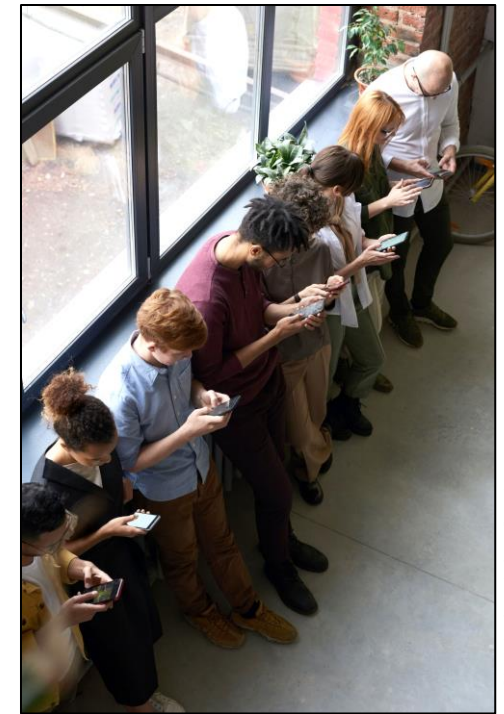


Photo by fauxels from Pexels

THE ESSENTIAL TOOL TO GET A JOB

Most students we meet don't have 'business' cards, and don't think they need them. Wrong. Get in the habit of using business cards because it gives you an advantage throughout your career. Our experience after going to thousands of networking events is that 50% of people don't carry business cards, and when they do, they forget (or are too shy) to give them out. This is one of the biggest missed opportunities. How can people help you if they can't remember how/where to connect with you? Not everyone is going to try and find you through social media.

There are lots of reasons why you should have business cards now, but here's the best reason, and it comes from a recruiter in a large multi-national firm. "I meet tons of students, and if you don't have a business card, I probably won't remember you." Enough said....

Yes, some people don't have cards and connect by putting each other's contact information in their phone or LinkedIn. That's fine but have business cards as well.

How to get cards: Ask your supervisor if you can get a business card. Many students we teach have a business card with their university logo. There is a standard format and printing places on campus can usually produce these cards for you. If not, make your own card. Vistaprint and Moo.com are good places to go to make a very cool looking card.

3. Buy a Few Less Lattes & Get Business Cards

We 'get it' that students are on budgets, but business cards should be a priority purchase—first year!

- **Get cards.** Figure out a way to purchase at least 250 business cards—and when you run low, purchase more. This seems logical, but people say, "I've given away all my cards, sorry." And, it's not just students who say this!
- **Stash them everywhere.** When you get your cards, always carry them with you. Put some in your workout bag, jacket pockets, including clothes you wear for sports. We've heard stories of people getting amazing jobs because they talked to someone on a ski lift, or were sitting next to someone on an airplane and gave them their business card.
- **Exchange cards gracefully.** When you go to a networking event, put your cards in your pocket (don't keep them in your wallet). Have a stack of cards with you. Give them out as part of your introduction. If the other person doesn't give you a card, ask for one. When you get someone's card keep it in your hand. Some people just take the card and stick it in their pocket (rude). Instead, look at the card and use it as a cue for a way to start a conversation. "I love your product." "I've been following your company." "Can you tell me a little about what your company does?" You get the drift...

STEP AWAY FROM THE COMPUTER

The most effective way to build relationships is face-to-face. It's how you build high-trust relationships and it's how relationships turn into friendships (which is the bonus of all this connecting!) But, it does require stepping away from your computer.

We poll all our audiences (anonymously, prior to a workshop) and we find that 80% of people don't like networking or meeting strangers. Research also shows that 30-50% of people are, to some degree, introverted. So you can see that face-to-face is hard for a lot of people!

We know, from our own experience, that even shy or introverted people can learn the skills of connecting, networking and conversation and it just takes practice. It doesn't happen if you are sitting in your room or in front of a computer screen. In the new hybrid-work world you will be spending enough time engaging with people on a screen. Try and go out and meet people face-to-face.



Image: office.microsoft.com

4. Leave Your Study Cubicle At Least Once A Week

Set a goal to go to **one thing on campus each week** where you can meet new people and start building your network. Here are some ways to maximize the connecting:

- **Invite people to join you.** There's a speaker coming to campus and you decide to go, but like most people you don't talk to other people when you are there — unless you know them. Instead, invite a friend and then each of you invite someone the other person doesn't know. It can be an acquaintance, someone who'd be interested in the topic. What happens? You both meet two new people and they meet each other. Then go for a coffee afterwards, how awkward is that? Not really...
- **Be the connector.** If you are going to the pub with good friends, invite some new acquaintances to join you. Be the connector who creates the network. **Share the friends you have with others.** Check out Action Step 7 on page 22 for new people to invite.
- **Participate in team sports.** Of course, do your workout in the gym, but that's usually a pretty solitary activity. Try to get some of your exercise with a team sport. If you aren't a team sport kind of person, join a hiking club or some other club where you can meet new people.



Images: istockphoto.com



Images: office.microsoft.com

WHY DOESN'T ANYONE TELL YOU THIS?

Graduates seem to get really agitated when there is an article in the newspaper on the challenge of finding a job. The number of 'Comments' are usually huge, with grads expressing the futility of the job market, and it can get pretty bitter. They write stuff like, "You know who gets jobs today? The CEO's kid. The CFO's niece. The VP of Marketing's next door neighbour's kid. Nepotism and cronyism are what it takes, and even that isn't always enough."¹

This particular comment was from a 29-year-old complaining about not being able to get a job after slaving away at university. When we read the letter, we thought, this isn't about nepotism, it's about recognizing **an opportunity**—if the VP of Marketing does live next door, go visit them! OK, maybe the VP doesn't live next to you, but there are amazing ways that you can make those C-suite connections all on your own. Check out the next page to find out how.... See what Darcy has to say in the quote below, it should encourage you to reach out.

"Here's a secret: Older people (and that doesn't have to mean really old) love to help and to mentor students. It's hard for them to say no to you, but you can't ask them if you don't meet them."

—Darcy Rezac, co-author *Work The Pond!*



¹ Rob Garrick, Reader Letter "A 29-year-old on the difficulties of landing a first job." *The Globe and Mail*, May 16, 2012

5. Start Building Your Profile In The Industry Where You Want To Work

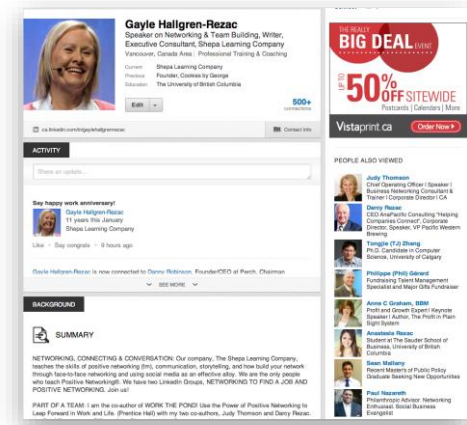
The best advice out of the 1,300 comments posted after 'the 29-year-old looking for a job letter' was from a human resources manager at a major financial institution who had hired hundreds of people during their career. "Instead of networking at job fairs, join a job search group, or better still, a business event or Chamber of Commerce function... use the experience to **develop transferable skills**, bolster your resume, and make meaningful contacts. Many prominent business professionals sit on boards of directors, so **make yourself known.**"

- Dig a little deeper and you will see that many boards of trades, chambers of commerce have 'leaders of tomorrow' or 'young leaders' programs that you can join. You get connected with mentors, attend networking events at student rates, **and become known in the business community** WHILE you are at university. You are now ahead of the game.
- Join groups at your university who are already making those connections to industry or the business community. Student government gets you connected with leaders on campus, but there are often dynamic student groups who are already out there connecting with business, industry or your area of academia. One look at the 'clubs' page or student organizations on any campus website will show you that there are amazing ways to connect not just with other students, but with those higher up the 'food chain'. Shop around; find the most dynamic organizations. Consider getting more involved by looking at leadership roles. That means putting in the time with that group.
- Get involved in your city or town's community activities **where you can punch above your weight** (political campaigns, high-profile community events, etc.). Yes, it may be 'go-fer' work but you will be making connections with the CEOs, CFOs and VPs of Marketing, people who understand and want engaged employees. The VP of Marketing doesn't have to live next door to you... You can meet these people on your own if you get out there!

LINKEDIN IS YOUR PERSONAL WEBSITE

LinkedIn is your must-have social media presence for your job search. LinkedIn is where business people go to check out other business people, potential employees and people who have moved jobs and have left 'no forwarding address' (most job endings happen that way). LinkedIn seems to be increasingly used by academia as well.

Think of LinkedIn as your career web page. If you haven't got a LinkedIn page set up yet, it's time. Spend the time to create as complete a profile as you can and update it regularly. There is lots of information on LinkedIn to help you create the best profile you can. Search on 'LinkedIn tips for students' and you'll find very helpful ideas.



Besides creating a good summary profile, it's important to build contacts. Let's face it, a LinkedIn page starts out a little pathetically, 5 contacts, 30 contacts, 50 contacts in your LinkedIn network, but it doesn't take long to start building those numbers. Connect with other students and invite those more senior people who you know to join your network.

What is the number of contacts you should have as a minimum goal? Make the goal: ten times your age. For example: if you are twenty, aim for a minimum of 200 contacts in your network. If you just start connecting with other students, it's not that hard to get 200 contacts. But, as you will remember from the last tip, you want to invite business people, those more senior in your field to connect with you as well.

6. Get Your LinkedIn Page In Shape

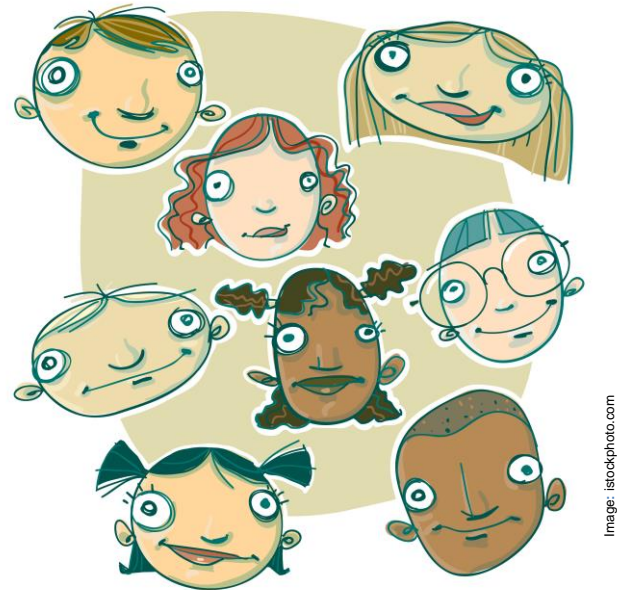
Now that you understand the philosophy, and know you need to do **more** connecting, here are some tips on how to do this:

- **Post a photo.** According to LinkedIn, **people with photos are seven times more likely to have their profiles viewed.** Photos help people remember who you are and make it easier to connect with you. What does your photo say about you? Put in a professional looking head shot with a plain background.
- **Create your best profile.** Use keywords in your headline so that people looking for your skills can find you. Make your Summary concise and specific and update it regularly. Highlight your publications and most prestigious awards.
- **Be upfront with what you want.** If you are looking for a job let people know the kind of job you want. If you are open to collaborating with others on a research project say that.
- **Easy way to follow up.** When you meet someone an easy way to follow up is to send them an invite to join you on LinkedIn. They will check out your page!
- **Easy way to say yes.** When you are making the request for someone to join you, **avoid using the standard greeting**, "I'd like to add you to my professional network." Instead, customize it, "I am the marketing student you met at the local chamber event on Wednesday. I appreciated the advice you gave me. I was wondering if you would join my LinkedIn network?" Then put your full name, school, graduating year and any other pertinent information in the signature.
- **Join groups and share.** Join groups on LinkedIn where you have a specific business or professional interest. There are over a million LinkedIn groups to choose from! Choose three or four groups and see which ones are the most active and valuable. Spend time engaging with others in group and you'll find out quickly if this is a group you want to keep on your list. LinkedIn research has found that people who share articles or content with their LinkedIn network at least once a week are nearly **ten times more likely to be contacted by a recruiter** for new opportunities than people who don't share with their network.

THERE'S A GREAT CONNECTION IN THAT ROOM

This is a typical example of what we see when teaching a networking class in a university lecture hall: The Asian kids were all sitting together on one side at the top of the auditorium. The German students (all three of them sat together), were also in the upper level seats, but on the other side. Other EU students sat close by, but not too close. The Latin American kids sat together. Ditto for the kids from India. The North American kids (either in a Canadian or US classroom) sat in the tiers below. A few lone wolves, usually the talkers, sat closer to the front of the room, and the rest, well, they stuck with their pack.

What's missing from this picture? No one is cross-connecting. Almost everyone in the class understands that globalization and interconnectedness are today's reality—what is meant by 'the world is flat'—so why aren't the North American kids talking to the kids who will be running the businesses in China or Europe, and vice versa?



Five years from now your boss is going to be looking for a reputable supplier in Mumbai, or a banking connection in Beijing. Everyone else will start Googling to find some suppliers and you can say, "I've got a connection in Beijing who might be able to help." If you'd built that connection at school imagine how easy it would be to reach out, "Hey, Quin, I know you work in Guangzhou, but you said your uncle is a banker in Beijing, perhaps you could connect me with him? Our company has an opportunity that he may be interested in."

It just makes so much sense to make these connections at school, don't you think?

7. The World Is Flat; Seize The Day

Someone has to make the first move—make that person **you!**

- **Take the first step.** We appreciate that it can be hard to make that instant connection with someone if there are cultural and communication challenges, but it's doable. It **requires someone to take the first step.** When you come into your class, sit next to someone that you know is from another country. Say hi, and introduce yourself. Find out: Why did they choose this school? Do they like it here? Pretty soon you are having a conversation. It's that simple.
- **Invite them to your home or out for coffee.** Act like a host in your country. Then stay connected. Four years from now you could be having dinner with their family in Hong Kong, Ulan Bator, Paris or Santiago. **Things are so much better** when you have personal connections when traveling or working in other countries.
- **The start of a global career.** Another reason to start building global connections and making friends with students from Beijing to San Paolo is that in a tough job market why not improve your chances. Why couldn't your first job be in Mexico, the UK, Australia? **Create more opportunities by building your network before you need it.**



"Every new career opportunity that came my way—from developing the customer service experience for a world famous tour train through the Canadian Rockies to leading a diverse administrative team in Hong Kong—was due to my network."

—Judy Thomson, co-author *Work The Pond!*

About Us

Darcy Rezac, Judy Thomson and Gayle Hallgren-Rezac are co-authors of *Work the Pond! Use the Power of Positive Networking to Leap Forward in Work and Life* (Prentice Hall). This best-selling book has been called the "connectors handbook" by *Town & Country* magazine. It has been translated and published in China, Russia and Korea.

For close to two decades they have been teaching the skills of networking and connecting to corporations, associations, governments and graduate schools of business around the world.

Darcy is managing director emeritus of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and has held executive positions with the Canadian federal government, Alcan and General Motors. He has been recognized by the World Economic Forum as a networking expert.

Gayle is a writer, speaker, entrepreneur (founder, Cookies by George) and a recipient of a *YWCA Women of Distinction* award. Gayle is a member of the Davos Circle, having attended the Annual World Economic Forum over eleven times, where networking happens at the highest level. She is also an expert on the "art of conversation", a subject she writes and speaks on frequently.

Judy is a CPA, CA who has held executive positions in human resources and administration with global companies in Canada and Asia. She was also part of the start-up management team and the first Director, Customer Services of the world-famous Rocky Mountaineer Railtours. Judy is an advocate for women in business and spent six years as the vice-chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's *Women's Leadership Circle*® advisory council, six years as a director of the BC Women's Enterprise Centre and has ten years of corporate director experience in the public sector.



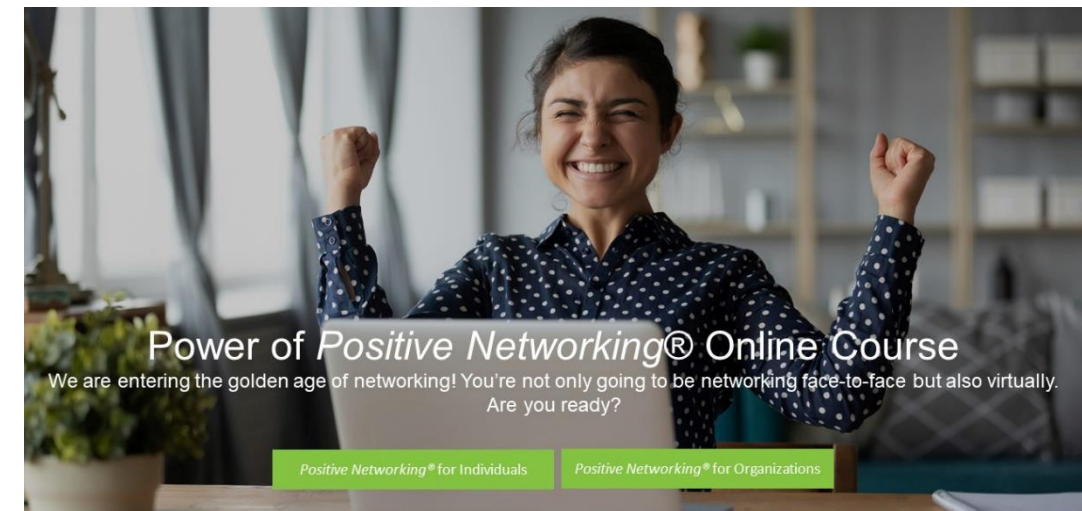
Now that you've read

Start Now! Students, don't wait to build your network

would you like to improve your face-to-face and virtual networking skills even more?

Then check out our online course:

Power of Positive Networking®



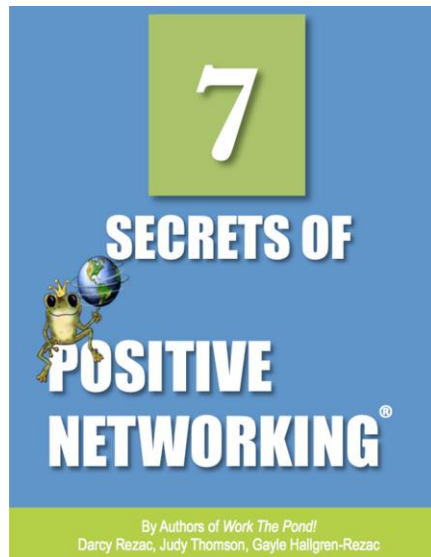
Power of Positive Networking® is like being immersed in a full-day workshop with two of Canada's top networking experts but done online and accessible 24/7 from any device.

Gayle and Judy have taken the extensive knowledge and experience they have gathered from teaching hundreds of in-person workshops and packed it into five hours of learning. This course is comprehensive, with engaging content, and excellent value. After this course you will be a better, **more confident networker** (yes, even introverts) whether you are connecting face-to-face or virtually.

And the best part, you only have to learn these skills once. Do it now because you've got a long career ahead of you.

For more information: <https://training.shepalearning.com/>

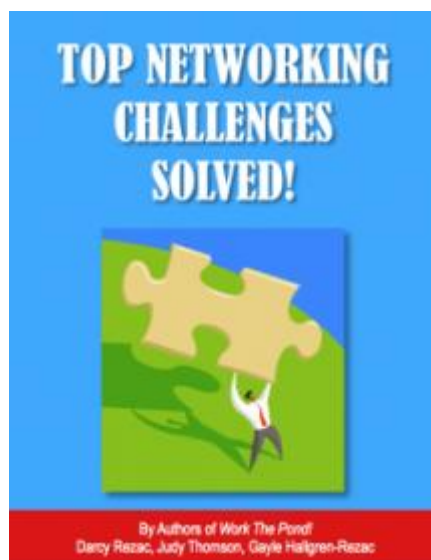
*You may also be interested in these
Free Downloads*



7 Secrets of Positive Networking®

Networking is not something we do “off the side of the desk”. It’s our focus—100%. This handy little guide gives you our seven secrets—yes “secrets”. We think they must be secrets because it’s surprising how often people don’t use these simple techniques, skills, and tools to become better networkers and build better relationships.

Get it here: <https://shepalearning.com/business-networking-best-practices-resources/>



Top Networking Challenges Solved!

We took the top 10 networking challenges people have—everything from small talk, to exiting conversations gracefully, to finding the time to network—and answered them in this handy e-guide.

Get it here: <https://shepalearning.com/business-networking-best-practices-resources/>

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Please sign up for Shepa Learning Company’s
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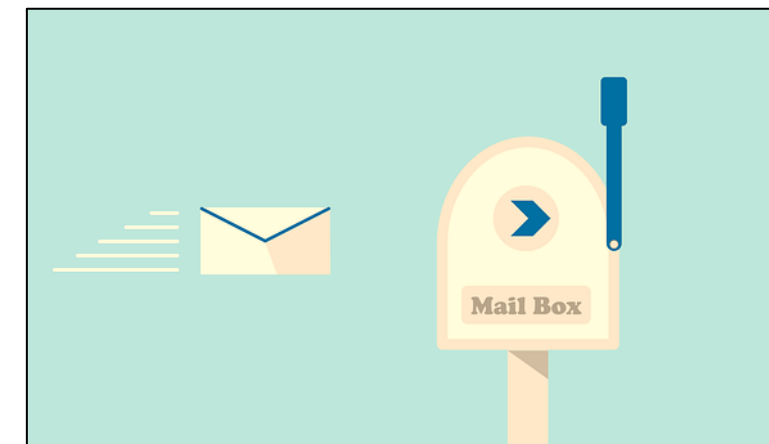


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