

***“It is in giving that we receive...”***

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We Catholics collect saints and one of my favorites was St. Francis of Assisi. His famous prayer says so eloquently that “...*it is in giving that we receive...*”

The late Anne Boe, a long time National Speakers Association member, once wrote a terrific book where she asked the question “*Is Your Net Working?*” Partnering with others has to be a win-win situation because people always ask question that speaker Joel Weldon, CPAE loves to ask “W-I-I-F-M”... *what’s in it for me?*

The great thing about networking with others is that it gives you an opportunity to get to know the strengths of others. Case in point: in 1978 I won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters International. I had often wanted to find an appropriate way to repay them for all the wonderful things that came from that victory but could never seem to come up with anything more than speaking every few years at the Toastmasters International Conventions.

Over a beer at a convention in the mid nineties, my friend Jeff Slutsky, CSP and I had some discussion about my having won the championship. Jeff knew very little about Toastmasters, but one of his marketing people, Ron Specht, was a member and was aware that I had won their World Championship. Coincidentally, Dearborn Publishing had approached Jeff about writing a book on public speaking.

“Let’s write a book for Toastmasters,” Jeff said. After all, there were 160,000 Toastmaster members in over 55 countries at that time. If we only sold the book to a few of them, it’d be a best seller!

Jeff and I immediately put our minds together (*with the help of a lot of alcohol*) and came up with the brilliant idea of actually taking on some partners in our project to make it work.

The first partner was a terrific literary agent by the name of Jeff Herman, who is also an NSA member. Knowing my thoughts about wanting to give something back to Toastmasters, Slutsky and I both decided that it would be wonderful if we could also make Toastmasters a partner.

Terry McCann, who at the time was the Executive Director of Toastmasters International, found our idea about partnering with them intriguing and agreed to license us the Toastmasters name, something they had never done before. In return, we donated a portion of our advance as well as future royalties to the Ralph Smeadly Foundation, named in honor of the founder of Toastmasters International.

Even the best-laid plans have a snafu along the way. After we sold the idea to Toastmasters (*with Jeff Herman's help*), Slutsky calls one day to say he's snowed under and can't write the book. Rather than bail, I offered to write the first version, and Slutsky agreed to edit and do a rewrite. The total project turnaround took us less than six months to do and alas, "*The Toastmasters International Guide To Successful Speaking*" hit the shelves.

Our book isn't the first nor will it be the last that was borne out of a relationship honed at NSA. Mark Victor Hansen, CSP and Jack Canfield, CSP built a publishing empire out of networking their "*Chicken Soup For The Soul*" books with NSA members.

Before you attend your next business event, ask yourself these networking questions:

- 1- Who can I network with that might gain something from what I have to offer?
- 2- Who can I think of in the marketplace (*buyers of our product or service*) that might benefit from my collaboration with that other speaker, trainer, consultant or author?
- 3- How can I get this idea into the marketplace as soon as possible?
- 4- What will it take in the way of time and effort on my part to make this happen?
- 5- Why am I doing this?

If your motives are not noble, the results matter less. Notice that none of the aforementioned questions ask what you are getting out of the relationship, but rather what you bring to the relationship to make it work.

**Those are the best ways to find out “*if your net is working!*” Remember the words of St. Francis: “...*it is in giving that we receive...*”**

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