

This is episode two of the Better Than Success Podcast, where I'm going to teach you how to teach yourself the art of success, and I'm your host, Nikki Purvy. This is episode two, indeed, of the Better Than Success Podcast and on this episode, we are going to talk about Networking. How to Network For Your Business. How to network for your business if you're an introvert. How to network for your business if you're an extrovert, and how to network for your business if you think you already know how to network. I'm going to tell you how to do it even better.

I'm very eager to talk about this today, because it's something that's been on my mind for quite a while, because I see so many things that go against my theory about networking, and it all started when I had a conversation with a friend. She was really kind of like a protege, or a mentee, and she wanted to move across the country because she wanted to start a new profession and she decided to visit and she was telling me about her visit and all of the things that she had planned, and in describing her week or days there, she talked about "I'm going to do this, and then I'm going to go networking," and everytime she said it, it made me cringe because I just felt like she was doing it for all the wrong reasons and that is to get something out of it, and as you know, you can't something for nothing. I don't believe that you can get something for nothing, that's one of my mantras. You can't get something for nothing, and it's really one of my pet peeves when people think they can get something for nothing. Now, she didn't get under my skin. This was my really good mentee and I loved her to death, but I want to talk a little bit about networking. Why am I equipped to talk about networking?

As you guys know, I run Lidyr Creative, and we quadrupled our business last year, and one year, that was only our second year of being in business, and this year, in 2016, we're already doing extremely well and that's without us spending a single dime, spending not one dime, on new business. It all came from referrals, and it all came from networking.

This notion of networking. I don't like to - You never hear me say I'm going networking or I really don't like to go to networking events. You'll never hear me say I'm going networking, because I don't like that word, but, obviously, we did something right. As the business' only salesperson, almost all of our new business - mostly all of our new business comes through me and I just don't - I don't believe in the word networking, and - y'know, I guess I network, but I don't even like to even say that I do.

So, I'm going to tell you why I don't like the word networking. I don't like it because it sounds manipulative and dishonest. It implies that the only reason that you're talking to someone, or that you're going out to talk to someone is because you want something out of it and the reality is people are amazing. I love people. I mean you have some really crappy people out here, but for the most part, people are amazing. Everybody's unique and you really don't need a reason to want to go and meet people. You should always want to meet people! You should always want to meet people if that's the thing you're going to do, but to set out and go and meet people just so you can further your business or to get something out of it? It sounds very dishonest and manipulative to me, and I just - it makes me feel like you're doing something very dishonest and I don't - I'm not with the whole dishonesty thing, as you can see, I'm stumbling over my words to

even describe how I feel about it.

But if you love people and you like people, then go out and meet people, just because you want to. Some of them will turn into business, some of them won't. Some of them will turn into really, really, really good friends. Some of them won't. Who cares? You know more people and engaged in a really great conversation.

The other reason that I don't like this term networking is because the modern day notion of networking implies you must be an extrovert to grow your business. Like, it's something that you have to do. When we think about networking, we think about "Oh goodness, it's something that we have to do." As a person, I think I'm a hybrid between an extrovert and introvert.

Before I started really forming my thoughts around networking, whenever someone said it, it made me feel so anxious about one more thing that I have to do that I really, really, really don't want to do that is not really a part of what I'm passionate about and I don't really possess the social skills to force a relationship.

I have some really, really, really, great relationships and I have no problem with forming one but I can't really force a relationship. I'm really bad with awkward conversation. If I don't feel a connection with you, I'm not going to stand here and talk to you.

When people used to say the word networking, it used to make me feel very anxious, because it's like, I don't want to have to go out to meet people. Sometimes I just want to be home and I want to work and my business shouldn't suffer because I want to be home and work, but the reality is you don't have to and this whole notion of you have to go networking is a farce. You don't have to. If you're an introvert and you like staying home and you like working on your business, that's okay, the business will still come.

So, those are my two reasons for why I don't like the word networking.

So, I'm going to tell you how I effectively networked, even though I don't like the word networking. The first concept that I have about networking is that I socialize with people because I love people. I know I talked a little bit about that already. I socialize with people because I love people. I love to be around them, I love talking to them, I love learning about them. That doesn't necessarily mean that I'm going to talk about my business or I'm going to talk about their's or they're going to talk about their's, but if I'm out and I'm in a social setting and I connect with someone and we're sitting and we're talking, I want to learn about you. If we talk about business, just because that is a part of your life or it's part of my life? Then great. If we don't? Then that's also great, but I'm not fishing for it. It's not forced and I'm talking to someone because I genuinely want to talk to them.

If I go to a networking event - If I just so happen to be at someone's networking event because I'm someone's wing woman or wingman who wants to go to a networking event. A lot of times,

or in the past, we haven't done anything recently, but in the past it's been my cousin because she loves going to networking events. I will literally sit in the corner. Someone, some kind of way, will find their way over to me and just spark up a really long conversation, but I will just sit in the corner and just, like, chill and just kind of like observe and see how people be so phony.

And then you - sometimes you have your genuine people there, but I just like to sit and observe. Sometimes someone will come and sit and talk to me - a lot of times they will and I'll just, like, talk to that person all night long but it doesn't feel so forced. It's just like, I'm at a social event, I don't feel the pressure, I'm just like, "Whatever." I don't feel the pressure with networking with people who are going out to meet people. Maybe I'll go to an event and I'll see someone I know, I just need to catch up with them. This actually just recently happened - well, actually, yeah, it was maybe a couple of months ago. I had a really, really, really good friend, Angel, love her to death, and in our office, in Lidyr Creative Office Space, we have an event space, and there was an event going on and I never go to the events, at the event space, but I just so happen to that day.

No, was I actually? No, I wasn't even going, no, I was on my way out and the event was starting and then I saw her at the registration table, and I'm like "Oh my goodness! I missed you!" You know, we're doing the whole girl scream hug thing.

She's like "Come into this event with me," so I come into the event with her and I talk to her all night long, and then so I invited her up to the office, and she said "Oh my goodness, this is so great because I remember when the idea for Lidyr Creative, this web design, digital agency, that you wanted to start was just an idea and it's so great to see it here and so on and so forth," so we get to talking and next thing you know, she's calling me, telling me "Hey, I know someone that needs a web designer."

Now, this is my really good friend, I know that she would have referred me, if I was at the forefront of her mind, y'know, prior, but the reality is, I wasn't. She has a whole family and we hadn't seen each other in months, maybe even a whole year - We got - it was a new prospect that she had brought into the door.

You just never know. If you're going out talking to people, because you love people and you love networking - or love talking to people and you love making new friends, then great, approach it from that sense. Don't approach it from "I have to go networking," because you come off false, disengaged, insincere, and it'll be work. You won't like doing it.

Here is my second tip to how I effectively network, without networking. I never, this is a rule that I have, I don't even want to say rule because it's so easy for me to live my life this way, but I never choose networking over running my business. Never. If I have something that I absolutely, positively need to do, for the business, have to do it. That's cleaning up, doing a client's website, getting out a proposal, doing whatever. Or for you, if you have an ecommerce business, if you're doing order fulfillment, if you're - whatever it is, if it's something that

absolutely, positively has to be done and you have a networking event that made it to your calendar two weeks ago; you knew you were going to this event two weeks ago - Never ever, ever, ever choose that networking event over whatever your priority is, in your business.

Now, let's just pretend like this is just a typical, standard networking event, this is not like, y'know, Obama's gonna be at your mom's house with, y'know, I don't know, some really, really prestigious event, for sure. Definitely figure out a way to pull an all nighter so you can get your work done after you come home from the event, for sure, but if it's just a regular, standard, event that is going to be there next month, whatever, because you know there's always going to be networking events going on in your town.

Don't choose that over your work. The reason I say that is because preparation - we know that - preparation plus opportunity equals success. If preparation is working on whatever it is in your business and opportunity is that networking event then let's think about what in that equation comes first: preparation plus opportunity equals success. That preparation has to be there. So, if your business is not prepared and you go to this networking event and you meet this next big client? But if your business isn't prepared? Because you don't have the system down for creating proposals or you don't have your order fulfillment system down properly or you don't have your web design system down properly, it means absolutely nothing and guess what? Another opportunity will come, but you gotta get prepared you can not postpone the being prepared part. You have to, have to, have to be prepared.

I always like to think about working on the business versus working in the business. For the first year and a half, I stressed out so much because I spent so much time working in the business and I have this dream of one day working on the business. I worked in the business, I built so many websites in that first year, did so many logos, the team, once we started adding more people to the team, we sold so many hosting packages, we did, we just cranked it out and for me, personally, I can only say, for me personally, it was a lot of hard work. I know the team felt it as well, but for me? It was a lot of hard work because I was working in the business and I don't know if you guys know, but building a website is a draining experience because it's not something where you can say "I'm gonna work on this for two hours a day," well for me it's not; it's not like "I work on this two hours today, I'll work on this two hours tomorrow," it's like, "Okay, I'm in the flow, I'm in the design zone," so most of the time, you just knock it all out in two days. So, you're working like 10 hours a day on one project, you're being super focused, so it takes a lot out of you. It was just so, so, so, so draining, but as a result I ended up getting really, really, really good, so good that I was able to package my design - my unique design style and delegate that responsibility to junior designers.

Now that other people are doing a good amount of the labor on the web design, our project management, people are doing the labor, the part that takes hours and hours and hours, now that I got so good that I was able to package it up and delegate that responsibility, now I can go and work on the business, which is networking, but I couldn't do that until I got really, really, really, really good at in-the-business. I could have never have packaged up and delegated that

responsibility a year ago or six months ago or maybe nine months ago, because I wasn't good enough to be able to do that. I am pretty sure that over - I mean, I've been designing websites since 2010, and so now we're up on 6 years, I know for sure, if you do something full time - I'm sure you guys have heard of the 10,000 hour rule - you're not really a professional until you've put in 10,000 hours. So, if you do something full time, that equates to about 5 years and nothing less, right? So, I got to the 5 year mark sometime last year, when our business started doing really, really well, and at four years I wasn't ready, to be able to delegate that.

So, now that we're - I've put in my 10,000 hours, probably a lot more because I did work way more than full time, for a long, long time, I was able to delegate that and then I started being able to network - to work on the business, and guess what? Those networking opportunities, quotation mark networking opportunities, they didn't go anywhere at all.

I just wanted to kind of put a little - put it into perspective for you so that you can prioritize and understand that if you're not - if you don't have time, because it's so overwhelming, starting this new business for you is so overwhelming, if you don't have the time, it's okay.

Don't feel the pressure that you have to go out and network because if you get so, so, so, so good which happened with Lidy, our business. You get so, so, so, so good, guess what? People will do the networking for you. We literally get all of our business through referrals. People are telling other people about us and so, I don't have to go to an event.

For instance, there's an event tonight, but guess what? I'm recording this podcast and some kind of way whatever was there for me, some opportunity, will still make it's way to me, and that's okay, because I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing right now. So, do not allow the pressure of networking, going out to these events, to take you away, to take you off your square, to keep you away from your focus, which is to getting really, really good at whatever it is that you're doing.

So, the number 3 rule that allowed me to get really good at networking is to follow up with people that you genuinely have an interest in building a friendship with. Times where I've gone networking in the past and people who I met and they insincerely follow up with me? It's so awkward. I don't know about you guys, but I feel really awkward. Okay, so they reach out to me, "Hey Nikki, I met you at such and such - I'd like to - Let's go to lunch," and it's like "Okay, I saw you, we talked, we exchanged cards, but alright, cool, let's go to lunch." And you get to lunch and it's like...

So, I'll give you a perfect example, so like a couple of years ago, maybe three years ago, I went to this event for the Chamber of Commerce and the business was very, very, very much so budding, but I was - I didn't really have any money. Like, I just didn't. I didn't have any money. I had my money to pay my bills and then that was it and sometimes that wasn't working. So, I didn't have any money, so I go to this event, this Chamber of Commerce event, and I actually went to the event on behalf of a client. So, met this guy, he was a financial advisor, y'know just

talking, we exchanged cards, and then, so, a little while later, he reaches out to me: "Hey, I want to link up with you." We go to lunch, and I guess he's just, y'know, whatever, whatever they tell financial advisors to do, doing his networking thing, and it's like, what a waste of time. I didn't have any money!

I didn't have any money at all and I was like totally, totally, totally in the zone. I didn't barely have any friends, I mean, I had friends but I didn't have anybody I was talking to regularly about having money and financial advisors and I was like in the zone working, working, working, working, working, working, working, working, so much. So, it was really a waste of time. So, like I sat down with this guy, he didn't need a website, he's a financial advisor. Financial Advisors, they can't do anything, in terms of entrepreneurship, outside of what they do, because it's a very highly regulated industry. They can't do anything. Even if he were to have a website set up for himself, he worked for, I don't know, let's say, New York Life. I'm just saying New York Life because my financial advisor now, now I have a financial advisor, now my financial advisor works for New York Life, but he didn't so, let's say New York Life. If he wanted to have a website for his practice at New York Life, they don't allow that at all. You have to get one through them, so I couldn't do any work for him, and he couldn't do any work for me.

But we didn't have a genuine - had we sat and talked, we would have known like, oh, okay, you're a cool person, he was actually really, really handsome, really handsome. You're a cool person, yes, you're handsome, and at the time I was single, y'know, maybe we could go and talk about other things outside of this, but because we didn't build a real genuine connection, then it was a complete waste of time.

So, now I really don't do those events because I charge 125 dollars an hour for coaching, so my time is very valuable and unless you can give me a real meaningful purpose to lunch, then I'm not going. You sit down and you pay for our time, not to just pick my brain.

Unless, I built a real meaningful connection with you? And I feel like, oh, this person could potentially be my friend, I think if I go to lunch with this person, we'll have a good time. And guess what? It may turn into business, it might not, I don't care, because I'm going to have a good time with this person that I've met who is really cool and interesting, and great.

It may return into a referral, a year down the line. That's happened. That happens all the time. It might not never turn into a referral, but guess what? I don't care, because I met a great person and you can't really put a price on that.

So, I'm going to conclude my whole rant about networking and I'm going to sign off. I hope you guys make a lot of money with your business this week, if not I hope you make a lot of progress with building the business and enjoy your day.