



Net'play'ing



Everyone seems to hate the word 'Networking.' It implies hard work and represents one of those things you know you just have to do (or should be doing.)

My dad, who is a little old school, said to me once, 'Networking ... you mean with computers?' (Of course, he wasn't referring to social networking!) I'm not sure he quite understood how that was going to help me grow my coaching business. 'No dad,' I said, 'It's getting out and meeting people and building relationships.' He replied, 'Well why the heck don't you just call it 'Socializing?' I thought, 'Oh - he *SO* doesn't get it!'

Gone are the days of long-term careers at only one or two companies. I think we all probably know someone who unexpectedly found themselves without a job. The market is filled with bright, talented, high-caliber executives who never imagined they would be out of work. Unfortunately, a network is something you want to have before you need it.

I meet tons of people in transition who painfully confess that they never created or maintained a network. I know lots of people who are employed who haven't ever thought they would need one. Finally, I know lots of 'meet and greet' networkers who collect business cards and know how to tell people what they do but rarely build relationships from the experiences. Some people even feel guilty about networking thinking they should be doing something that feels more productive - something that produces more tangible short-term results.

Well, what if networking was easy, even fun? What if it was something you 'get to' do versus 'have to' do? What if we called it Netplaying?

Netplaying - taking the 'work' out of networking!

The good news? I get to witness people drink the 'Networking Kool-Aid' all the time. It's as if they are really playing! ... or just 'Socializing' and making new friends. You like meeting new friends, don't you? You would help a friend out if you could - forget your agenda - pay it forward without even thinking, wouldn't you? You would call on a friend you really respected when you needed some career advice or just someone to talk to, right? Wouldn't you connect two friends if you thought they would like to know each other? Maybe it's just that simple - 'socializing.' A change in perspective and work

becomes play - something you 'get to' do. Something fun and fulfilling - imagine that!

Maybe my dad had something after all!

