

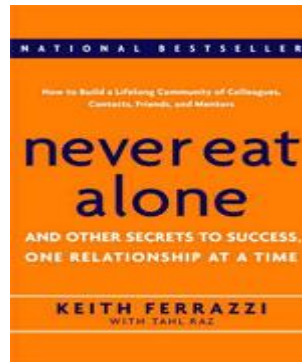
Never Eat Alone

Business Networking You Won't Hate

Book Summary

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The word “networking” has a very negative perception for most people; they imagine some guy shaking their hand, smiling, and marking them down in a Rolodex somewhere as merely another asset to tap someday.

While there are people out there that match this mold, the truth is that actual relationships with people are a big key to success, and it’s also true that most people simply aren’t very good at quickly building mutually beneficial relationships with others. They either don’t have the social skills, see it as being vampiric and cold, or simply don’t see the larger benefit.

[Never Eat Alone](#) is a guide to networking in a socially healthy and mutually beneficial way. The approach here isn’t shaking everyone’s hand in the room, grabbing business cards, and jamming them into an overstuffed pocket.

Section One: The Mind-Set

The first section of [Never Eat Alone](#) is rather introductory, as it mostly lays out the basic idea and explains some of the things that you *shouldn't* do.

Chapter 1 – Becoming a Member of the Club

Lays out the basic premise that *real networking is about finding ways to make other people more successful*. In other words, jamming business cards in your pocket like that somewhat disturbing example above doesn’t cut the mustard. Why is that? If you do something to make someone else more successful, they’re more likely to value your relationship with them, and the more relationships you have with value in them, the more valuable you become, not only to yourself, but to the world: your employers, your clients, and so on.

Chapter 2 – Don't Keep Score

You shouldn't keep score when it comes to networking. If someone calls you up and asks for a favor that you can easily accomplish, make it so and don't look back. Relationships are not finite things that are a straight-up exchange of one thing for another – they are living, breathing things. If you are going to take the time to connect with somebody, you should be willing to try to make that person successful. If they succeed, you succeed – it's that simple.

Chapter 3 – What's Your Objectives

Networking is largely useless unless you have goals. Before you walk into the real or virtual room, define what outcomes you want from the meeting. Do you want to connect with people at targeted companies? Do want to meet people from a certain industry or job role?

Chapter 4 – Build It Before You Need It

The main idea here is that you should begin reaching out to others and building your network of contacts before you need anything from them. If you start networking just as your job is about to die, it's too late.

Chapter 5 – The Genius of Audacity

Many people when building a new connection want to appear humble and want to make a "good" impression right off the bat. The author suggests a different strategy: if you want something, be up front about it. The worst thing that can happen is that they say no, which is the same answer you already effectively have, so what do you really have to lose?

Chapter 6 – The Networking Jerk

"Don't do anything like what you imagine a 'networker' to be like." Instead, he offers six rules that ensure that even as you try to build connections, you never become that kind of jerk. Don't schmooze: have something to say, say it with meaning, and focus on establishing a few good connections than spending your time surfing the room.

Be willing to give something away. Be transparent – if you want to meet someone and are happy to meet them, say so. Make genuine, individual connections. If you're going to take the time to touch base with a contact, write to that person individually,

Chapter 12 – Share Your Passions

If you want to build a stronger relationship with someone, invite them to share in something that you're passionate about, whether it be the theatre or a baseball game or whatever. Whatever it is that gets your fire going, share it with those that you want to build a relationship with.

Chapter 13 – Follow Up or Fail

Ferrazzi seems to treat this as the most important point in the book, so I'll put it in bold: **when you make a connection, follow it up**. You need to follow up on any connection you make that you feel is important. Ferrazzi also strongly hints that [a handwritten thank-you note may be the best way to go](#) to really stand out from the crowd.

Chapter 14 – Be a Conference Commando

Generally, you should go intending to reach a wide audience by speaking and/or establish a good relationship with a small handful of people. Most important, though, is that you don't sit there and do nothing and that you don't turn into the schmoozing networker, either.

Chapter 15 – Connecting with Connectors

Here, Ferrazzi borrows heavily from [the concepts in *The Tipping Point*](#) and brings up “connectors” – those people who have an incredibly large and strong personal network. Ferrazzi suggests head hunters, anyone remotely close to politics, public relations people, and journalists, for starters.

Chapter 16 – Expanding Your Circle

The biggest way to expand your circle of contacts, according to this chapter, is to merge your contacts with someone else. Offer to exchange invites to events with someone whose circle you don't know well – and who doesn't know your circle well. This enables a lot of connections to be made, because when people you're connected to form more connections, everyone wins.

Chapter 17 – The Art of Small Talk

This chapter is full of the “typical” stuff people think of when they imagine what a course in interpersonal relations is like: Smile At Others, Unfold Your Arms, Relax, Lean In, Shake Hands, and so on. This is basically a one-chapter compression of the book [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#), which I highly recommends.

Section Three: Turning Connections Into Compatriots

This part of [Never Eat Alone](#) is all about building upon those connections made in the previous section and turning them into people that you can rely on for a lifetime. It starts, appropriately enough, with freewill giving of yourself.

Chapter 18 – Health, Wealth, and Children

The best thing you can do to help another person is to directly impact one of the three things in the title of this chapter. Personal and financial health and the benefit of children are often direct keys to a person's heart. If you are capable of doing something that helps a person in one of these areas, you're often able to endear yourself to that person and establish a really fantastic and deep connection that will last for a very long time.

Chapter 19 – Social Arbitrage

The idea here is that you should strive to build connections in as many different areas as possible. Have connections in tons of different professions, social circles, and so on, and then make connections when needed between people who exist in completely different social universes. This makes you seem indispensable to both people that you're connecting, as you've benefitted both of them in a way that neither one was capable of independent of you.

Chapter 20 – Pinging – All The Time

I have a habit of making lots of quick contacts with my friends on a very regular basis just so the connection between us stays alive, strong, and healthy. Ferrazzi highly recommends doing that exact same thing with your entire contact list – just contact them every once in a while to keep that connection alive, because without some maintenance, even the best connection can wither on the vine. The chapter particularly recommends using birthdays as an opportunity to deliver a sharp ping, with a handwritten birthday note.

Section Four: Trading Up and Giving Back

The final section of [Never Eat Alone](#) is mostly about specific techniques for strengthening your overall circle, mostly by making yourself more valuable to them.

Chapter 22 – Be Interesting

No one wants to spend time around a boring person, so make yourself interesting. Beyond the obvious of keeping up with current events and having a point of view on the issues of the day, Ferrazzi offers several interesting ways to do this: ask seemingly stupid questions, always be open to learning something new and trying new things, take time out for vacations and spiritual growth, and never get discouraged if things don't go well.

Chapter 23 – Build Your Brand

Here, Ferrazzi goes beyond merely making yourself interesting into figuring out exactly what value you have for others. What do you bring to the table that others don't? What do you want people to remember you for or think of when they hear your name? Figure that out and cultivate it when you can by focusing and behaving in ways that will cultivate that image that you want.

Chapter 26 – Getting Close to Power

Many people want to know how to get close to those who have decision-making power, but often the generic straightforward methods end with no returned email or returned call. Ferrazzi suggests a different route: try being involved with political fundraisers, attending conferences, joining non-profit boards, and playing some golf.

Chapter 29 – Find Mentors, Find Mentees, Repeat

Ferrazzi makes the astute point here that you should always be looking for people to mentor you and help you, but you should also be looking for people who you can help and mentor. This means that not only should you seek out help from others, but you should also be willing to step forward and lead others when the time comes – and consistently do both.