



42[™]
Rules
for
Effective
Connections

2ND EDITION

For Women Who Are Serious About
Building Their Business Using Successful
Networking Strategies

BONNIE ROSS-PARKER
CINDY ELSBERRY




**SECOND
EDITION**

“42 Rules for Effective Connections (2nd Edition)” Book Excerpt

For Women Who Are Serious About
Building Their Business Using
Successful Networking Strategies

**By Bonnie Ross-Parker
and Cindy Elsberry**

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Foreword

We all recognize the value and importance of relationships in both our personal and professional lives. Often, it's helpful to 'step back' to consider whether we could be more effective, communicate to achieve greater results and leave a positive, memorable impact in the way we present ourselves.

When I read Bonnie and Cindy's collaborative book, '42 Rules for Effective Connections,' I thought that finally we have an innovative, stand out, easy to read resource to improve and enhance not only our casual encounters, but the ones we are looking to strengthen in the business community as well!

Their book is filled with fresh ideas, easy to implement strategies and a wealth of personal experiences. You can start anywhere. Read any rule and by the time you've digested all 42, you can't help but become a connections expert. All it takes is a little time and willingness to implement what you have learned.

I encourage you to take '42 Rules for Effective Connections' seriously if you want to improve the quality of your connections. After all, the marketplace is crowded. Everyone is vying for their share of attention and dollars. You now have in your hands a small, powerful resource serving as a guidebook to better connections for better results. Enjoy the journey!

Nicki Keohohou
CEO/Co-Founder
DSWA/The Direct Selling Women's Alliance

Intro

Tired of the same ole networking chatter? Do you think anyone is really listening to what you have to say? Wish you were somewhere else? Do you believe there is a better way to expand business than standing at a bar with a drink in one hand and a plate of warmed over chicken wings in the other? If you have to network to grow your business and find yourself spending money going to events, meeting as many people as possible and returning to the office with a handful of business cards without the results you want, you can benefit from the strategies presented in '42 Rules for Effective Connections.'

With significant combined years of networking experience behind this project, we decided to collaborate with great connectors to bring you proven, applicable ideas to strengthen your ability to dialogue with anyone at anytime to achieve the best outcome possible. Each of our contributing writers was asked, *What do you think makes you an effective connector and what do you think others would say about you?* Their answers are the basis of this book. Women wrote stories around what they are passionate about when it comes to being an effective connector. They wrote from their heart and experiences.

As co-editors, we were surprised and inspired by the ideas/strategies that women shared. Had we been doing this on our own, there is no question that we would have fallen short in identifying the diversity of responses we uncovered. This book runs through a complete and enlightening range of ideas.

For anyone who wants to improve communication, get better results in any networking environment and alleviate the stress and anxiety that comes from building a business where you have to go out to meet potential

customers '42 Rules for Effective Connections' is a must-read. The contributing writers provide a broad range of strategies that make the difference between networking that is 'hit or miss'—'trial and error' versus networking that hits the bull's eye. If you are serious about growing your business and simply are missing the mark on how to make your behavior stand out or if you are achieving success already and want to step up your game, this book will open the door to new possibilities.

There are literally thousands of networking events available for anyone wanting to attend. All you do is go online and search for associations and organizations in your area. They welcome your participation and your membership. You can continue to show up as you have in the past and get the same results you'd anticipate. If your results are exactly what you're looking for, that's terrific. Maybe, however, the investment of both your time and dollars is not producing the business you want! '42 Rules for Effective Connections' is not about which meeting to attend; it is about how to get better results when you arrive! In this book you will learn:

- How to position yourself in a crowded marketplace.
- How to start conversations.
- What to say to make yourself memorable.
- How to ensure that others will want to do business with you.
- How to improve your performance and the outcome.

It is our hope that the benefit you receive from reading '42 Rules for Effective Connections' will equal the joy we experienced in bringing this book to you.

**Bonnie Ross-Parker and Cindy Elsberry
Co-Editors**

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Make Every Connection Count**Bonnie Ross-Parker**

Uncovering special people is a skill worth developing. Special people exist everywhere.

I've been and continue to be a networking 'junkie.' Networking is in my blood right along with oxygen. I'm addicted! I love the anticipation of meeting new people and uncovering new talent and the satisfaction of introducing people to others they need to meet! For me, networking is like a walk on the beach—you simply never know the outcome of any encounter—no different from finding one special shell that stands out from the rest because of its size, its beauty or uniqueness. You pick it up, hold it in your hand and take it with you. Uncovering special people is a skill worth developing. Special people exist everywhere.

What I've frequently discovered during networking experiences, however, is how quickly someone can dismiss another person because they don't look beyond the surface of the individual to what is unseen. How can anyone know the talent one has, the resource someone can offer, the opportunity that a connection can generate if a quick glance is all that is offered? Only through a conversation, an exchange of ideas and a door open to possibilities can anyone really know the value one individual can offer to the life of another. That's why I adhere to the mantra: *Make Every Connection Count!*

There's no magic and no special skills or strategy to make this happen. You simply treat everyone you meet with a smile, with acknowledgement and respect. You express appreciation to the clerk who tenders your order at the supermarket,

the teller who handles your bank transaction, the postal employee who delivers your mail, the clerk who hands you your clean laundry and anyone else who serves or impacts you in some way. Replace 'Thank you' with 'I appreciate you.' Get in the habit of expressing this anytime you can under any circumstance and you will soon discover that making every connection count becomes natural and joyful. Someone holds the door open for you? "I appreciate you did that for me!" Someone does you a favor? Express appreciation. Make acknowledgement a habit.

Once I got in the swing of going the extra mile to bring value to even casual connections, I stepped up my game in the networking arena. I don't let any opportunity pass me by to make connections count. Others will say, "Make a good impression." I translate that to "Leave indelible positive imprints everywhere you go and in everything you do." You never know where a positive connection can lead. You never know the difference you can make in someone's life or the difference someone can make in yours. *You never know!*

I once had a casual conversation with a young woman I met at a Chamber of Commerce 'after hours' that ultimately led to a speaking engagement in Germany! Not long ago, I met a business coach at a networking event and introduced him to an amazing woman who was developing an innovative training program. They became partners! You might be thinking, "Will I ever get rewarded for having a generous spirit?" My answer is "Yes." The rule is simple. *Make every connection count.* Let others sing your praises and be raving fans. Do what you do out of integrity and you will experience rewards for your efforts. Sometimes, acknowledgement comes from an unexpected source, a circumstance you've long forgotten or because you gave someone your full attention. Just know that by making every connection count you are paving the way for incredible results.

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I Have Never Met a Stranger**Debbi McCloud**

The key to connecting and never meeting a stranger is being natural, friendly and genuinely interested in those we speak to.

There are so many ways to connect with people nowadays especially on the Web with such sites as Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, blogging sites and others all showing that people want to connect with others and want you to connect with them. But the best form of connection is an in person connection, meeting face to face. No matter where you go, there will always be people that you don't know whether at a networking event, a party, church or out shopping, etc. How do you break the ice? How can you get everyone you don't know, wanting to get to know you?

Haven't you noticed that people always gravitate towards those they know? Their friends or family members, people whom they feel comfortable with and have something in common with. I've seen this countless times and then I am left standing alone, while others are talking and laughing amongst themselves and a having a grand ole time. Well enough is enough! Over the years I have learned a couple tricks; if you apply them you will have everyone you don't know knowing you!

Here's what I do: When I walk into a room, I survey the room to observe who is there and yes, I check to see if there is anyone there I know. It's just human nature to do so. Then I pick out a couple of individuals whom I want to meet. I first try to make eye contact and smile. Depending on the response I receive I proceed to walk over and extend my hand for a warm handshake and bellow a warm hello and introduce myself.

Depending on where I am, I ask what business they are in or if they are moving here or just visiting. Some sort of small talk helps to put people at ease and causes them to remember me. Therefore, the key to connecting and never meeting a stranger is being natural and friendly and genuinely interested in those we speak to. Be a good listener and don't interrupt. Establish eye contact. Eye contact is viewed as an indication of interest in the person being addressed. *Smile!* More than any other bodily feature, our face expresses how we really feel, therefore a smile tells others that you have a kindly feeling toward them. Show sincere interest in the person, ask tactful, non-prying questions allowing the person to talk about themselves or their business. People love to talk about themselves! Get their contact information and give your contact information to them. It also helps to stand, move and speak in a calm dignified way that gives evidence of composure and self-confidence. Whew, that's a lot to remember!

However, after you have made that initial connection, it's important to keep the momentum going and thus grow your relationship. This can be accomplished in several ways—email, telephone or in person. Personally email is easier for me to use to follow-up. I have found various social networking sites to be a key in making connections. LinkedIn is a personal favorite and I have connected with many former workmates and schoolmates from other states using this site.

Networking events provide another ideal way to practice and hone your connection skills. It certainly won't come automatically but with practice and your big pearly whites showing, you too can say that you have never met a stranger!

About the Authors



Bonnie Ross-Parker (Rule 2) a.k.a. "America's Connection Diva," is a multi-dimensional businesswomen and entrepreneur with a background in education, franchise development, publishing, mentorship, network marketing, and community development. She combines vision with a unique set of skills. Formerly the Associate Publisher of 'The Gazette Newspaper/Atlanta,' she focuses her energies on supporting women. Bonnie is a graduate of George Washington University, and earned a Certification in Network Marketing at the University of Illinois. Several of her articles on owning one's own business and entrepreneurship have appeared in publications including 'Wealth Building,' 'Home Business Magazine,' 'Business to Business' and 'Entrepreneur's Business Start-Ups.' In 2002, Bonnie received The Athena Award an honor designed to acknowledge women of leadership in cities throughout the United States. In September 2005 she was honored by the Women's Leadership Exchange, a New York based organization,

as an Influential Woman of Georgia and currently serves on their Atlanta Advisory Board. Bonnie is a featured speaker with the Direct Selling Women's Alliance.

Bonnie was honored by The International Toastmaster's Organization of Georgia with their annual Communication and Leadership Award in May 2006. She's the author of 'Walk In My Boots—The Joy of Connecting,' and 'Y.O.U. Set A High Standard for Being Human.' Passionate about enriching the lives of businesswomen, in August 2002, Bonnie licensed an innovative customer acquisition/marketing program for women called The Joy of Connecting® (JOC). Over two thousand women have experienced JOC in her home since the launch. Currently, there are locations nationwide for professional women, entrepreneurs and business owners to share resources, establish and strengthen relationships and to grow their businesses by networking with one another. The Joy of Connecting® is looking to expand in additional cities throughout the country.

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Cindy Elsberry (Rule 9) is CEO and Founder of Bumble Bee Virtual Assistant Services. She began her career as an administrative assistant after high school. While working full time she earned her Bachelor's in Business Administration. After over twenty years in the corporate world, Cindy was thrown into the world of the unemployed.

Seeking a way to utilize her various skills, she established Bumble Bee Virtual Assistant Services in 2008. Cindy is able to handle any type administrative work you would have an in-office assistant perform—well, except for making coffee! Some of her services and abilities include: Creation and email blasts of newsletters, creating/maintaining databases, manuscript editing, proofreading of marketing materials, book-keeping, QuickBooks and other software training, payroll, Internet research and much more.

Cindy Elsberry

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Getting “42 Rules for Effective Connections (2nd Edition)”
(<http://happyabout.com/42rules/effectiveconnections.php>)

42 Rules for Effective Connections (2nd Edition) can be purchased as an eBook for \$14.95 or tradebook for \$19.95 at:

<http://happyabout.com/42rules/effectiveconnections.php> or at other online and physical book stores.

Please contact us for quantity discounts sales@happyabout.info or to be informed about upcoming titles bookupdate@happyabout.info or phone (408-257-3000)

Tired of the same 'ole networking chatter? Do you think anyone is really listening to what you have to say? Wish you were somewhere else? If you have to network to grow your business and find yourself spending money going to events, meeting as many people as possible and returning to the office with a handful of business cards without the results you want, you can benefit from the strategies presented in this book.

"*42 Rules for Effective Connections* is not just an idle suggestion when coming from Bonnie Ross-Parker and Cindy Elsberry. After experiencing the passionate and authentic 'voice' of contributing writers, you'll quickly see that what they provide are the concise, practical steps to truly experiencing the joy of connecting with others and getting better results TODAY!"

Mary K Weinhagen, Editor, www.TheNetworkMarketingMagazine.com

"I've often said it's who you know that gets you in the door, and what you know that keeps you there. *42 Rules for Effective Connections* is about both of these—building meaningful connections that open doors, and sharing yourself with integrity so that you sustain lasting relationships. It's a great book to read cover to cover or to just pick up when you have a moment or two. One idea could change your life."

Marnie Pehrson, CEO/Founder, www.ideamarketers.com

BONNIE ROSS-PARKER

A.K.A. America's ConnectionDiva, is an award-winning entrepreneur, author and speaker. Passionate about supporting women in business, in August 2002, Bonnie created a unique marketing program called, The Joy of Connecting. Expanded nationwide, JOC is a licensed program for women to develop business by creating stronger relationships that foster business success.



CINDY ELSBERRY

is CEO/Founder of Bumble Bee Virtual Assistant Services which she founded in 2008. She has over twenty years of administrative experience as well as a Bachelor's in Business Administration. Cindy marketed her business to success solely through networking applying the rules from *42 Rules for Effective Connections*.



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