

Making a Connection Workbook

WELCOME

Connections between and among women are useful and necessary. Throughout human history, having a community increased chances of survival for women and their children. In the modern era, although the urgency of survival is gone, connections between women are still extremely important for personal and professional growth/support. *In fact, research has shown that women learn significantly more through their communities than men do; up to 40% of women’s learning take place through relationships.*

This workbook is designed to help you leverage your community through an intentional cultivation process. As busy professional women, we often de-prioritize building or strengthening relationships to our own long-term detriment. Using any combination of the exercises in this workbook, you can quickly and easily identify how your connections can help you, where the gaps are, and how to fill them.

1 DEFINE A CAREER GOAL

To ensure you refine your network and learn new things strategically, **first** decide what it is you want. Options to consider include:

- Learn a skill in your current job
- Take on a new project
- Move to another department in the same company
- Position yourself for a promotion
- Change companies
- Change industries
- Retire and start a second career/volunteer
- Secure a Board seat
- Move into management
- Move out of management
- Start your own company
- Other: _____

Now, you need to write it down and define it a bit more. *Did you know that you increase your chances of meeting this goal by 40% if you write it down?* Here are four things to consider when writing down your goal:

1. **What:** Define what your goal is, as simply and specifically as possible. A good rule of thumb is that someone reading your goal should be able to quickly determine what you’re working towards.
2. **How:** Outline the strategies you will use to reach your goal. Remember, for women especially, a significant portion of this should include learning through relationships with others. Another significant source of learning is gaining experience, so be sure to factor this in.
3. **When:** If you have no end date for this goal, it is likely to continue on indefinitely or stagnate.
4. **Why:** Spell out why this goal matters to you to create an emotional and heartfelt connection each time you read/re-visit it.

Here are some examples of career goals:

What	How	When	Why
Secure a Board seat a XYZ Non-profit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen relationship with existing staff member at XYZ Non-profit and ask for introduction to Founder/CEO. <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Founder/CEO to learn more about XYZ Non-profit. <input type="checkbox"/> Attend open Board meetings of other Non-profits to observe. <input type="checkbox"/> Read everything publicly available about XYZ Non-profit to learn about their mission/services. 	12/31/15	The mission of XYZ Non-profit aligns with my values and Board representation would give me an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and give back to my community.
Learn ABC software to a comfortable proficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch youtube videos about ABC software to familiarize myself with the basics and outline my questions. • Find a tutor and/or skilled mentor in ABC software to spend 1-2 hours with me reviewing the software. • Find someone I can call with quick questions in the future. 	6/1/15	Increasing my comfort with ABC software will help me feel more competent in my job and collaborate better with my colleagues.
ACTIVITY #1: Draft Your Goal(s):			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Want to increase your odds of success in reaching your goal? Share it with someone you trust who will hold you accountable. *Making this commitment increases your odds of reaching this goal by up to 60%!*

PS – This process works for personal goals too. New Year’s resolutions, anyone?

2 INVENTORY YOUR CURRENT CONNECTIONS

Now that you have a clearly-defined goal and know what type of people you would like to develop/build relationships with in order to reach it, it’s time to outline your existing connections.

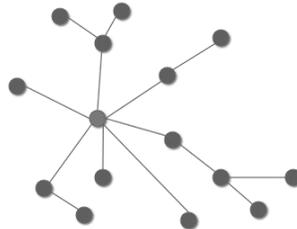
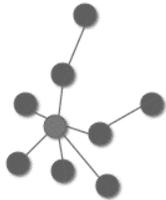
Generally, women tend to build closed, tight networks. Characteristics of these networks include close, deep relationships with a limited number of trusted connections. Men, on the other hand, generally build more open, expansive networks where the connections are far-reaching and the relationships are more transactional. Interestingly, your generation also plays a part in how you build your network.

Younger generations skew to the more open, broad networks, while older generations have narrower, deeper networks.

Which type of network do you have?

DEEP

EXPANSIVE



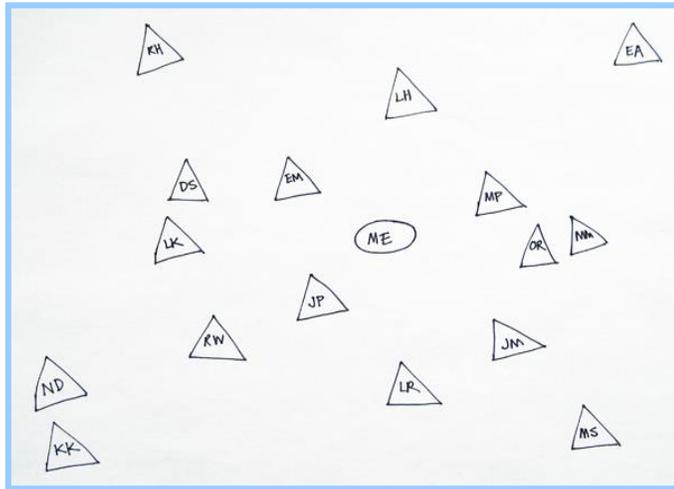
Is one type of network better than the other? *Not necessarily.* It depends on your goals. If your objectives are career mobility and promotion, an open network may serve you better. However if you want to focus on growth in your current role or deepening your skills, a smaller network may optimize your growth. **Ideally, you have elements of both types of connections for the ultimate in flexibility.**

ACTIVITY #1: Define the top 15-20 people in your network using the following categories as prompts.

Category	Initials
Crucial to my work: information, resources, getting my job done	
Crucial to my development: coaching, feedback, evaluation	
Crucial to my professional growth: creating opportunities or obstacles	
Crucial to my success: in the hierarchy or a primary influencer	
Crucial for business development: potential clients	
Crucial to my sense of belonging: my community, industry contacts, etc.	
Crucial to my personal needs: identity, independence, control, etc.	

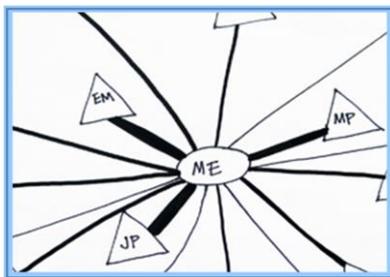
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY #2: Create a visual of your network.

Draw a circle with "Me" on the center of the page and place people in initials in proximity to you, depending on the closeness of the relationship.



Example:

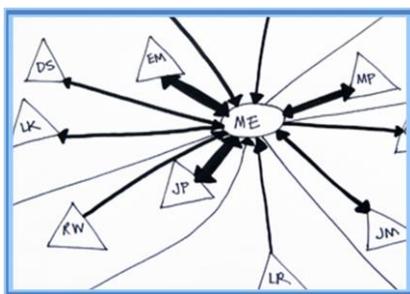
Now, use lines and colors to indicate strength of the relationship.



TRUST

Use a line to represent the degree of trust and genuine openness with the person.

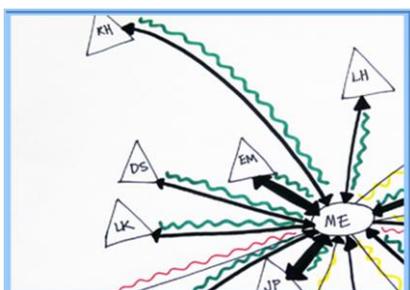
- Make the line thicker to show trust
- Make a dotted line to show a missing or undeveloped relationship
- Put an X to show a broken relationship



RECIPROCITY

Add arrows to represent the degree to which you initiate/give OR you benefit/receive in this relationship.

- Make the line two-way if reciprocity is equal



ENERGY

Use colors to show if the relationship interactions typically fuel your energy or demand an investment of energy from you.

Add color zig zags:

- Color 1 for energy-boosting relationships
- Color 2 for energy-draining relationships

3 INVEST IN CONNECTIONS

When you have defined what you want to learn and the ability of your connections to help you, it's time to invest in new connections to help you reach your goals.

“As with any investment, it can take a while for your network to pay off. But remember: Your next business opportunity is more likely to come from one of these loose connections than from a friend or colleague.”

Sallie Krawcheck, chair of the women's networking community Ellevest and former president of the global wealth and investment management division at Bank of America

Here are some strategies to consider and pitfalls to avoid.

Try	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a broad range of people who can give you multiple perspectives. Try enterprisejungle.com and trendr.com to find new people.• Start small by asking for advice on one problem or challenge you're facing instead of asking for a long-term commitment.• Nurture relationships with people you trust beyond your immediate circle. Aim to meet one new person each week or month.• Create a system for staying in touch with your connections. Leverage technology, like LinkedIn and Facebook, to streamline.• Network on your terms, respecting your preferences, boundaries, and energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expend unnecessary time/energy networking with people or in places that won't help you reach your goals.• Ask someone to be your mentor; it's not only an awkward question, it also rarely works.• Rely on a limited number of people to guide you in your career.• Only reach out to people when you need something.• Network for networking's sake because you think you should.

ACTIVITY #1: Critically assess your connections for areas to strengthen by answering the following questions:

1. What did you notice about the overall health and diversity of your network in step two?
2. Do you have the types of people represented that you will need to reach your career goal?
 - a. If not, how will you go about developing these new relationships? List 2-3 ideas with timelines and strategies that are realistic and achievable:

CONCLUSION

Creating a healthy, diverse, enriching network is like tending a garden. In step one, you determine what type of garden you want. Do you want to grow herbs for cooking, or vegetables for salad? Or perhaps some pretty flowers? In the second step, you assess what you have and what you need to create the garden – the seeds, the soil condition, etc. The final step takes the longest – cultivating and tending the garden. It may be difficult to see results, but continually developing and attending to important relationships in your life will produce the desired outcomes you set out to achieve.