

**Minding the Gold from Your  
Networking Contacts  
Toolbox Teleclass Transcription  
By Debra Russell**



**Professional Program  
Track 4: Be Seen: Promotion, Marketing and  
Sales**



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## INTRODUCTION – TWO KEYS TO MINING THE GOLD

Welcome to the Artist's Edge Membership Toolbox Teleclass for October 2010. We are going to be talking tonight about Mining the Gold from your networking contacts. Has anyone called in since I dropped off to turn on the recording? Okay, so perhaps people will chime in as we go along, but in the meantime I'm going to just get started and dive right in. I have a lot to cover tonight.

So, the whole thing about ---sorry, I'm having trouble with my computer. I'm trying to look for the...yeah, I guess that'll do. The whole thing about...I'm starting over.

### RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Mining the gold from your networking contacts. Everywhere you go in life you're going to be meeting people. Sometimes it's going to be an official kind of way, like you're at a conference, a trade show, at a networking event, where you're kind of...it's more scripted that, yes this is networking, but really you should be collecting people everywhere you go in every interaction.

So I'm going to talk about this more from a perspective of a, "Okay, you're at a networking event," whether it's a conference or a meeting of some kind or a class, but all of these things do apply across the board wherever you meet people.

I have met people that led to gigs at parties on...literally, on the train, you know, on Bart in San Francisco or on a subway in New York. You just never know. So you want to be kind of be awake to these opportunities.

### *HOW TO INITIATE AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS OVER TIME*

So first of all, what we're going to cover tonight is how to initiate and maintain relationship over time, and that's the thing that it's going to be a rare interaction where you meet someone, and the first time you meet them, that's it. They're ready to go with you.

In general, you need to bring people along deeper and deeper into a relationship with you, and that's relationship marketing. It's what I teach to the Multiple Streams of Arts/Music Income Model. It's all about creating relationships. It's been said in the arts and entertainment industry that it's not what you know, but who you know.

And it's more than who you know, it's what is the nature of your relationship with who you know, and how have you been building it and improving it.

### REQUIRES A SYSTEM TO MAINTAIN WITH CONSISTENCY



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The other thing that you have to know before we get into this is that it absolutely requires a system to begin, build, and maintain your relationship, your networking contacts.

If you meet someone at a conference and you take their business card and 3 years later you call them and say, "Hey remember me?" They won't. So you want to be continually in contact with people over time, and that's just impossible to do unless you have systems.

#### *DON'T DEPEND ON YOUR MEMORY. THIS WILL LIMIT YOUR REACH*

You cannot depend on your memory, and if you are depending on your memory, this is going to limit your reach and limit how successful you'll be in your networking efforts.

## THE FIRST MEETING

So let's start with the first meeting.

### LIVE/IN-PERSON EVENTS

The first meeting that you have is going to be really critical. It's where you establish your relationship with people. It's where you get that first impression, and you know first impressions are everything, but that first meeting is kind of where you launch from.

#### *PREPARE IN ADVANCE*

So when you're--when you know you're going to a place where you're going to be making connections and meeting new people, prepare yourself in advance. So here are some ideas for how to do that.

#### **Have business cards on hand**

First of all, always have business cards on hand. Make sure that your business cards are easy to read, have all of your key information on them. They should have your phone number, your email, your website, and having your phone number, your email, and your website is the minimum.

If they also have your social networking information, your Twitter, your Facebook, your LinkedIn information, that's great too, but primarily name, phone number, email, website, okay?

I know a lot of artists like to have really fancy-schmancy business cards, and a lot of times that ends up actually getting in the way of them serving the function that



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they're meant to serve, which is to give people information that they need in order to contact you.

If they can't read that information, if the print is so small that they need a magnifying glass to see it, and since a lot of people in power are over the age of 40, you can bet that they need reading glasses, using a font smaller than 10 point for the key information is a mistake.

Using a lot of fancy graphics or a lot of fancy fonts, which will make it harder to read, is a mistake. So you want your business card to be clean, clear, easy to find the key information.

If you want to give more than the basic information, use the back. I can't tell you how often I get business cards from people and the back is blank. What a waste of real estate. So use the front and the back on your business card. So have business cards with you.

Did I hear someone ring in?

Diane: Hi it's Diane Larson.

Debra: Hi Diane! That's great. You can go ahead and put yourself on mute \*6 if you have background noise, and I'll give you a heads up when to come off mute to ask questions.

Diane: Okay.

#### **Do you research – who is going to be there?**

So have business cards on hand and do your research. If you're going to a networking event and you could find out who's going to be there in advance, do some research on those people.

Find out which venues cater to your genre of music. Find out which people you already have some connection to who are going to be there, so you can go and say, "Hello." Remind yourself of past interactions with people, so that when you run into them you can, you know, be up to date, and you can remind them of who you are.

So, do some research. If you can let them know you're going to be there say, "Oh hey, I saw that you're coming to this conference too. Hope I get to see you. Come drop by my table," if you're going to have a table." That kind of thing.

I have a client who does 90% of his booking at Art Center conferences, like the APAP and Arts North West and WAAH and Arts Midwest. And one of the things that he does is he'll send postcards with his booth number and his showcase time and place to the venues. He wants to make sure come and see him the venues he's interested in booking with.



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So in advance, maybe a week or two in advance, he'll send these very sweet-looking postcards to those people. Now that requires a bit of investment--financial investment, but if you're spending several thousand dollars to go to these conferences anyway, and believe me that's what these conferences cost if you're going to do them right. You know, what's another \$50 or \$100 to send postcards and make sure that you connect with the venues that you really want to connect with. So do your research, and do some advance marketing if you can.

#### *YOU HAVE ONLY ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION*

Here's the other thing, you only have one chance to make a first impression. Dress nicely. Be on your best, outgoing, you know, behavior. Really set yourself up to be making connections, okay?

#### **N It's all about them**

When you are in an interaction with people, it's all about them. Instead of talking at people, ask questions. "Oh great, you're some from such and such venue. When you guys do your booking? Oh, do you come to these events often? What's your favorite thing about them? What is this thing that you most love and most hate when artists try to connect with you?"

You know, be inquisitive, be curious, be about them, because I will tell you that if in a conversation you make it about them, they're going to remember you, because every other artists you're talking to is all about the artist, "Oh, and I'm doing this," and "I'm doing that," and "You should listen to this CD," and "Oh, I played at this venue, and I just won this award...and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah."

#### **Rapport - relation; connection, esp. harmonious or sympathetic relation:**

And I will tell you people really don't care in that initial conversation, and what you want to be doing is not promoting yourself. What you want to be doing is initiating relationship and think about it like it's a first date.

What do you do on a first date? Usually on a first date you ask questions. You get to know the person. You find out who they are, what they love, what they're passionate about. Get to know people.

And I will tell you that when you call them a week later or 2 weeks later, they'll remember you, because you're the only person who is interested in them. So always be about getting to know them, because you'll have time to get them to know you, okay?



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##### *HAVE CARDS, BUT IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET THEIR CARDS*

Now I've said that it's important to have cards and always offer your cards, but it's more important that you get their cards, that you get their contact information, because if you give them your card, then in order for your relationship to go further, you're counting on them to take action, and more likely than not, they won't.

##### *PUT NOTES ON THE CARDS – WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN*

##### **Never depend on your memory**

So do your best to get their contact information, and in fact, what you can do is, you know, if they don't have a card, you can have a little mini notebook, like little...you know...little 2x3 memo pad, and ask them to write their contact information in it.

And that way, anyone who doesn't have a business card, they can make up a business card by writing their contact information in your little memo pad, okay? So as much as humanly possible, get their contact information. Yes, give them yours, but assume that they will throw it out because they probably will.

When you're complete with your conversation with them, step away, take out your pen and put some notes right on their business card—anything that you need to write that you want to remember about them.

##### **Make notes on the cards like – talked about daughter's wedding, etc.**

Did they talk about their family? Did they talk about what they want you to do? Did they talk about when they were available to talk? Any information that you could put on the card that will...so that you remember information they gave you, but also put on the card anything that's going to remind you of who they are.

So you know, red sweater, black jacket or dragon tattoo on the right wrist, anything...you know...bad toupee. I don't care, but anything that you...will help jog your memory about who this person is, because if you're working a networking event well, you may meet anywhere from 15 to 500 new people at an event, depending on the size of the event.

I go to the Taxi Road Rally every year. There's about 3,000 people at that event. I generally meet somewhere between 300 and 500 new people at that event, and the bottom line is, there's no way my memory is going to retain those people. There's just no way!

You know, I'll remember the people that I had a deeper conversation with, I'll remember the people that I had a private consultation with or...and half a time, one-to-one mentors I won't remember, because in 10 minutes and I'm seeing 12





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people in 2 hours, and I won't remember...you know...5 minutes later, who these people are, unless I take notes on the business cards.

So don't depend on your memory. Take notes.

*IF THERE IS THE SUGGESTION OF FUTURE CONTACT – I.E. LET'S DO LUNCH*

#### **Schedule it specifically right then and there, if you can**

If there is a suggestion in your interaction with someone, if there's a suggestion of future contact, "Hey let's get together for coffee. Let's get together for lunch," my recommendation is that you schedule it right then and there, which means you need to have your calendar with you. It's one of the main advantages to having a smart phone. You have your calendar right then and there.

If they're not open to scheduling it, schedule when you're going to schedule it, because the truth is people will say to you, "Oh yeah, let's have lunch. That's great!" They don't mean it. They don't!

It's just...it's like saying have a nice day. That's what it's become in our language, in our conversation, you know. It doesn't mean anything.

In fact, I heard an article on NPR, a story on NPR a couple of weeks ago about a book for foreign visitors to American soil, and you know, what are the things to look out for, what are the things to be aware of, what are the idiomatic expressions, and one of the things to never believe if an American tells you, "Let's do lunch," unless they (and they said this in the article, it's so funny) unless they schedule an exact time. It means nothing.

You know you Europeans will show up, you know, a week from Tuesday on your front doorsteps ready there to have lunch, you know. In America, it means nothing. So schedule it specifically right then and there.

#### **If you can't, schedule when you'll schedule it**

If you can't schedule it because they don't have their calendar with them or they're waiting to hear about something, say, "Hey, you know, well let's talk on Tuesday afternoon or are you going to be in the office? I'll give you a call and we'll schedule it then, okay?"

If they hem and hawed, they probably didn't mean it, and you know what? That's fine. Let them off the hook, okay? You have to be a little intuitive with people, because if you push it and they didn't mean it, it puts them in a really awkward position, and that is the last thing you want them to remember about you from an initial meeting is that you were someone who wouldn't let them off the hook. You were pushy and wouldn't take a "no" for an answer.



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That's does not create rapport. That's does not make a relationship that they're going to want to pursue, okay? So be a bit intuitive about it and see how real it is, but if you feel like it's genuine, then schedule it right then and there.

#### VIRTUAL CONTACT

So that's for first meetings if you meet someone live, but in this day of social media, a lot of those initial meetings are going to be virtual meetings, such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc., etc. Even email, I swear to you.

I will come home from a conference, and I will have 40 to 50 people who have added me to their newsletter, because they picked up my business card at my table or came to a class, and they add me to their newsletter.

And you know what the truth is I do the same thing. You give me your business card. I'm going to add you to my newsletter. To me that's tacit, you know, that's tacit acceptance that you want to be in contact with me.

But don't do it unless you've got a way for them to unsubscribe without actually talking to you, and believe me that avoids a lot of discomfort on both ends. So, make sure if you do that that you have an unsubscribe button on your newsletter if you're using a newsletter mailing service that gives the option for safe unsubscribe, that's what it's called.

#### MUCH COOLER CONTACT

Here's a thing about virtual contacts...they are much cooler.

#### *CREATE SYSTEMS FOR FEEDING AND WARMING UP THOSE CONTACTS SUCH AS HIGHLY INFORMATIVE NEWSLETTERS – SHOW YOUR VALUE*

It is not nearly the same thing as if you meet someone face to face. And what you want to do is you want to create a systems for feeding and warming up those contacts, such as your highly informative newsletters, such as a really valuable social media feed where you're giving good information in your Tweets and your Facebook updates and all of that stuff.

#### *MAKE IT EASY, OBVIOUS AND PAINLESS TO BOTH COME INTO RELATIONSHIP AND ALSO LEAVE RELATIONSHIP*

But in whatever way you connect with people, you do want to make it easy, obvious, and painless to both come deeper into a relationship with you, but also to leave the relationship if they want to, and that was my point in making sure that



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your newsletter has the safe unsubscribe button for them to press it if they don't want to be receiving your newsletter.

A great way for feeding and warming up contacts is a pink spoon, which I talk about in the [Multiple Stream of Art/Music Income class](#)--pink spoon being your free initial offering. Having some kind of regular connection with people. Talking to people when they...you know. If someone is following you, watch their feed, and look for opportunity to initiate contact, to initiate conversation...you know, back and forth.

One of the things that will really work well is if someone comments on something on your status on Facebook, always comment back, even if it's just, "Hey, thanks! I'm really glad you liked it!" But if you can make it more substantive, I recommend it. You know, give them another...you know, if they say, "Hello, wow, I really like that!" "Oh really? Here's another great tip!" or whatever.

Even if they disagree with you and they say in their comment that you're full of it, go from a place of good feedback, you know, and add information that perhaps will clarify and sharpen, so that they are more clear about what it is that you're offering or what it is you're saying.

On Twitter, one of the things that I try to always do, and I'm not always good on it if I'm really crazy-busy, but always say, "Thank you," if someone re-tweets you. Always say thank you. Always thank people for doing Follow Friday if they mention you at all. Always thank them, because basically they're promoting you to their feed, to everybody who's following them. So it's a gift, so always say, "Thank you," but doing these kinds of things is...helps to warm up the connection, okay?

So great! So, I did want to give you guys an option for asking question. If you have any questions about what I've talked about so far, and if you have a question, just take yourself off mute by hitting \*6 and say hello.

Okay, so great!

## SYSTEM FOR CONTACTS

The next thing I want to talk about is that system for contacts.

Now I really strongly recommend, strongly, strongly, strongly recommend, that you use a computer system for contacts, but I know some of you guys are really tactile and you want the physical connection.



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So if you really want the physical connection, in the resources section of the main website, the Artist's Edge website, I have what's called a 3x5 card system, and this system came to me, and I used it long before I took thing onto the computer, but it was given to me by an old salesman. This is really like was the standing methodology used by sales people, the world before the computer made it unnecessary.

This 3x5 card system is...the problem with it is you really, really, really have to manually maintain it, whereas a good contact management system or database system is going to help you maintain it.

#### DATABASE SYSTEM FOR NEWSLETTER (MORE ABOUT THIS IN DECEMBER)

So let's first all talk about database system, and here's the thing, you're going to have two-levels of contacts. You're going to have kind of really cool contacts, where they signed up for your newsletter at a gig or they gave you a card but you didn't really have a conversation with them or they gave you your card but they're not really someone you want to be going after like for a gig for, you know, they're not a venue or a booker or an A&R guy. They're really much more likely to be perhaps a fan.

Those people you want to feed into your database system, and I recommend doing something like either Constant Contact. Aweber is the general business newsletter systems, ReverbNation, iFans. Gosh there's another one that's really much more for newsletters for musicians. Any of those will be good. What they provide that your own email will not, there's a couple of things.

First of all, you will get a much higher rate of delivery. If you are sending the same email out to multitudes of people through your ISP, you are very likely going to get labeled as a spammer by the receiver's ISP and believe me they can tell.

However, these really good newsletter systems like Constant Contact, ReverbNation, Aweber, who have a reputation for not allowing spammers to use their system to sense stuff, send unsolicited email spam. The ISP's that are receiving these are much more likely to let them go through.

The other thing that they have is this kind of passive way for people to unsubscribe, so they don't have to ask you personally to take them off your list. They can do it without dealing with maybe they'll hurt your feelings. It just takes all of that weirdness out of play because they just click a button that says, "Unsubscribe." Done!

Another thing is that it will stop you from having duplicates, because you can clean these lists pretty easily, and the most important thing from a marketing stand point is that you can track your results.



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You can find out...With Constant Contact, I know how many emails bounced. I know how many people unsubscribed as a result of an email. I know how many people clicked through and which links they clicked through on, so that tells me which messages are most attractive to them. I know how many people opened, you know, so maybe I have...my list is about 3300 right now.

If I sent 3300 emails, maybe I've got a few hundreds of those might bounce for one reason or another, and then you know 600 or 800 people open it, that means I've got a 20-25% or a 30% open rate, which is pretty damn good.

So, it tells you how many people opened it. If a lot of people are not opening it, either you've got kind of a low-quality list or people are...all you're sending is sales, sales, sales, and people are bored. And maybe they haven't gotten around unsubscribing from you lately, but they're bored so they're not opening it, because they know all you're doing is selling at them.

So that's kind of what you can see. Any of the good newsletter systems are going to give you those kinds of tools, and they're critical.

#### CONTACT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

For the people who you want to follow up personally, who you want to call about booking a gig, who you want to call about reviewing your stuff or getting it up on a radio or whatever, a publisher or an artist manager, who you like to talk to about their other artist buying your music or whatever those people you want to be keeping a bit closer than your database management system.

Now I personally actually use IndieBand manager, even though, hello, I am not a musician, because IndieBand manager build on Microsoft Access, does everything I needed to do for my private coaching, for my speaking business. It gives me a way to track conversation, to nudge me, to remind me when I need to do the next follow up call for that person, to remind me if I have a follow up action after I have a phone call with someone.

There are more sophisticated systems like Act or Daylight for Mac users, but probably for most of you, those systems are more equipment than you really, really need. They're just...the learning curve is going to be so steep that you may not even end up using them, and while they're extremely powerful systems, they're probably more than what you need.

Some people use Outlook, and Outlook, actually not Outlook Express, but the full version of Outlook, actually works pretty well, unless you get really high-volume email, which I do. I get 20-30 emails an hour during regular business hours. So,



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Outlook became overwhelmed, and I couldn't find anything, which takes forever to find anything. So I switched over to Google Apps for my email, but Google Apps is not yet a good contact management system. They're working on it, but they ain't there yet.

So I use IndieBand manager. By the way all of these resources I'll have links to on the call, but I think it works pretty well for doing this kind of thing.

What you're looking for in a contact management system is obviously a place to keep all of their data in one place: their name, their phone number, their address, best time to call, website, all of that, and the other most important thing is the history of your contacts with them, because if someone mentions in a phone call, "Oh, you know, next week wouldn't be a good time to call me back, because I'll be in Hawaii." "Oh really? What are you going to Hawaii for?" "Well it's my daughter's wedding."

You want to make a note of that, so that the next you talk to that guy you say, "Oh, how was Hawaii? How was the wedding? Oh, that's great." And you're not going to remember. Trust me. You're not going to remember. That's why you want to take good notes.

If you say to someone, I'll call you back in 3 months. Call them back in 3 months. It will impress the hell out of them! How are you going to remember to do that? You're not, unless you have a system to remind you, okay? So you really, really need a system to manage this stuff.

#### *3X5 CARD SYSTEM FOR THE NON-TECHIE*

##### MAINTAIN IT EVERY WEEK

Once you get yourself up and running on this system, you do want to maintain it every week because if you give yourself a reminder to do something, you want to do it when you remind yourself to do it. So it does require being maintained, okay?

Any questions about this stuff while I take quick drink of water?

## FOLLOW-UP

So the next thing is follow-up, and the magic to any contact management is follow-up. Diane did you come off of a mute? I heard a beep.

Diane: I did. I was trying to ask one question.

Debra: Sure, go for it.





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Diane: The IndieBand Manager, that is more of a musician website than...and would work for individual as well as band?

Debra: Oh yeah, now I use it. I'm neither a musician, nor a band, and it works great for me.

Diane: Okay, this is all. I'll check it out. Sounds great. Thanks.

Debra: Yeah, you're welcome. Charlie Cheney, who's the web programmer, designer who created it is an independent musician. He's a touring musician. And he just happens to be a total, you know, computer programmer--geeky kind of guy, and he'll love that I say that on a recording, and so he designed that for his own use and then he thought, "Huh gee, other people probably want this too!" And so he made it available for sale.

What I love about Charlie, like I had trouble with it the other day, and I sent him an email and said, "Charlie, I'm struggling with this!" And I got him on the phone within 24 hours and we fixed it. And I'm sorry, but you can't do that with Microsoft Outlook.

Diane: Not without any fee.

Debra: Right, exactly! Without a fee! You know, and it's not just because he and I are buds, which we are, but that is he services his program. You know, if you have a problem with it, he services it.

Diane: And wouldn't it be a step up then, in the sense, that it's not only a contact manager, but it's also a promotional site, where you can have mp3s and things like that?

Debra: It's not. It's strictly a contact management system.

Diane: Okay.

Debra: You may be thinking a ReverbNation. ReverbNation is a promotional site.

Diane: Okay.

Debra: Neither one of them use all of it. I don't think ReverbNation operates as a contact manager system, but ReverbNation does operate as a database and newsletter system.

Diane: Okay, thank you!

Debra: Yeah, no worries.

Yeah, and you know, I actually recommend that you--to some degree--keep separate the people you want to have contact with, personal contact with, from your larger database, because you know ideally you want your database to be like thousands and thousands and thousands of people, and that's going to overwhelm you if you try to do all of that through something like Indieband Manager or Outlook.

You're just not going to be able to find people, and things are going to fall through the cracks. So while I think you should have everybody in your IndieBand Manager on your newsletter, you know, in your newsletter database, but not the other way around. So okay, follow-up, follow-up, follow-up.



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Here's the thing about follow-up, most people quit too soon. Most people call once. They don't hear back. They quit. Some people may be call twice. They don't hear back. They quit, but here's the thing you've got to know, and this has been studied extensively by advertising and marketing organizations, studied and studied and studied.

#### RULE OF 7

Think of it as the rule of 7. People need 7 exposures to your name before they have any name recognition. Now there are exceptions to that rule, but for the most part, that's the rule, which means if you meet someone at a conference and you have a 5-minute conversation with them, that's only one contact.

And you call them and you leave them a phone message, that's only two. And maybe they see your name because you're playing close by, well, that's only three. So you got to be thinking in the rule of 7.

I recommend...and this doesn't mean being a pain in the butt. This doesn't mean calling every 15 minutes until you reach someone. In this day and age of caller ID, believe me, we know when you've called, even if you don't leave a message.

But if you call someone once, and then a week later a second time, and then a week later a third time, and then maybe two week later a fourth time, and another two weeks later a fifth time, maybe a month later a sixth time and a month later a seventh time, so overall we're talking about over three or four months, and you still don't get a call back, then quit.

Most likely the reason they don't call you back has nothing to do with you. They're out of town. Their secretary quit. They're sick with a cold. They're under a deadline gun, and they mean to get back to you. They lost your phone number. Someone erased the message, God only knows. Most likely has nothing to do with you.

So, follow-up and follow-up and follow-up, because no return message is no information. The purpose of our brains is to supply information, even in the lack of information, and so you'll make shit up. You'll say, "Oh, that person isn't calling me back, because they don't like me or they're not interested or I'm not right for their venue..." Stop making shit up. You don't know what you don't know. And no return phone call is just that it's an absence of information, okay?





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#### ASK PERMISSION

When you call someone and you actually reach them, because probably 75% of the time you're not going to reach a human being, you're going to reach a voicemail, because that's just the way life is.

When you call someone and you reach them, the first thing to do is ask permission. "Hey, my name is Debra. We met at such-and-such conference. Is this a good time? Do you have a minute to talk?" Okay? Always ask permission.

Welcome. Who has joined me?

Puela: Puela.

Debra: Hey, Puela! Great. I'm right in the middle. I'll be opening it up for questions in a minute, but just go ahead and put \*6 to mute yourself in the meantime.

So what I was saying is that when you get them on the phone, ask permission. And really listen to the tone of their permission, even if they say "yes." So if they say, "Well, yeah...I guess I've got a minute." They probably don't. They're saying "yes" because they want to be polite, but really now is probably not as good a time.

So check, "Are you sure? It sounds like you're kind of busy. Would there be a better time for me to call?" Ask permission, okay? It's A - Really gracious, B - You will stand out above all of the people who have called them today, who didn't care whether or not they are busy, right? So you know, ask permission.

If they say, "Oh yeah, sure, now is a great time!" Then go ahead and talk to them, you know, but always gauge whether or not they are really, truly available.

#### SET YOUR INTENTION

Before you get on the call, set your intention.

#### *DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIRST CALL, FOLLOW-UP CALL AND CLOSING THE BUSINESS*

There's a difference between your initial call, your follow up call, and closing the business. So the initial call is, "Hey, you got your business card at an event" or they sent you an email or whatever, and you want to follow up with them.

That initial call is really just about setting the terms of your relationship. It's about finding out who they are, how they like to work, what it is they want and need. Very often, it's going to end with a, "Hey great, send me your marketing package," or "Great, we're not really booking right now but call me back in March," or whatever it is right?



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Very often, that initial call is kind of a "Oh well, I might be interested" kind of call, and it's going to require follow up.

So at the end of that call, determine when the best time the follow up would be. You know, a lot of times when I'm following up someone says they're interested in private coaching, and I'll call them to follow up with them. That initial phone call, you know, maybe they're interested, now is not a good time. "Great! When would you like me to follow up? Should I call you back in a month? Do you want to call me when you're ready? What would work best for you?"

Again, asking permission. And if they say, "You know what, that's great. Call me in a month. That's perfect," create a reminder so that you actually call them in a month. They're not expecting you to. They're assuming you'll forget. It is incredibly impressive to people when you actually call them and follow up with them.

So do that. Don't depend on your memory. Use your contact management system. That's why you have a system, okay?

In that second follow-up call, you're going for an answer, right? You want a Yes or a No. Maybes are not so great, and I'll come back to them. But you're going for an answer, which means either Yes, No. If it's yes, you're closing the business. If it's no, determine is it no for now? "Oh well, our season are all booked. We'll be--" "Oh great, well when do you start booking the next season?" "Oh well, we'll start booking the next season in Spring." "Really spring? So would that be like early April? Great! I'll give a call in early April"

So get specific information about when to follow up. If you're closing the business, in other words, they are saying, "Yes, we want to book you. Here is the dates." Great! You'll going to need a follow up because you need to send them a contract, and you're going to need to promote the event and all of that stuff. You want to really close the deal right then and there if you can.

#### *MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS*

As a result also, you want to be managing your expectations throughout this process. Don't expect to book a gig on an initial contact. At best, someone you met for 5 minutes at a conference or a party or whatever is a lukewarm contact. They're not really a warm contact.

You need to warm them up. So manage your expectations. They owe you nothing. I'm going to say that again. They owe you nothing. They don't owe you a call back. They don't owe you a listen to your CD. They don't owe you a booking. They owe you nothing.



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Remember, that a relationship based on obligation isn't a relationship. A relationship is give and take. So you want to be really aware of that. I can't tell you how many venues owners or booking agents I've talked to who say, "Oh man that artist so blew their relationship with me, not only with me, but with everybody I know." Because they left a rude message or whatever.

They owe you nothing. So always, always be gracious. Don't burn bridges. Don't be entitled. Don't have a chip on your shoulder. Be gracious, be generous, be caring, be genuinely interested in them. That's the process, okay?

And manage your expectations. One of my trainers way back when I was doing network marketing sales gave me a great analogy, and I'm going to give it to you because I think it's really key.

If I were to say to you, "Okay I'm giving you a bucket of a 100 oysters and I guarantee you that inside of these hundred oysters there is at least one pearl." And you start chucking oysters. So you open one. No pearl. You open two. No pearl. You open three. No pearl. You open four. No pearl. You open five--oh wait, there might be a grain of sand in there. Close it back and shake it and shake it. And squeeze it and squeeze it. And try to turn it into a pearl!

Does that work? No. Open sixth oyster. No pearl. Open seventh oyster. No pearl. Do you quit? No! Because you know inside that bucket of hundred oyster, there is a pearl.

Open 8th, open 9th, open 10<sup>th</sup>, you start yelling at the oyster because gosh darn it there should be a pearl in there. No. Open 11th, open 12th--every no you get gets you closer to a yes. So manage your expectations. Don't allow someone saying no to you to mean anything other than this isn't your opportunity. There are more opportunities out there.

#### YES VS. NO VS. MAYBE

*IF YES – KNOW YOUR NEXT STEP (SEND THEM A MARKETING PACKAGE, SEND THEM A CONTRACT, WHATEVER)*

Now if you get a yes, you need to know your next step. Are you sending them a marketing package because yes they're interested send in me a marketing package? Do you have that marketing package already put together and ready to go out except for the personalization of the cover letter and the address and stamp?



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You should start your round of booking calls with a pile of marketing packages ready to go out except for the personalization, so that you're not making one phone call and spending an hour putting together a marketing package.

If they say, you know, yes and you've booked and you got a date, then you want to send them a contract. One of the nice things by the way that Indieband Manager has are contract formats that will auto install the contact information when you book a gig, which I don't know any other program that does that. It's really nice.

So I book a contract, I press a button and it fills in the date, the price, the stage requirements, all the stuff, and you can personalized it so that its appropriate for what you're trying to do.

#### *IF NO – THANK THEM!*

If they say no, thank them. "Well you know, thanks for considering me and hopefully in some point in the future we'll be able to do business. It was great talking to you thanks so much for taking your time to talk to me" or "Thanks for taking time to listen to the cd."

Now let me tell you. If you're getting a lot of no's, if you're getting no after no after no after no, you need to really need to ask yourself some serious questions, which are beyond the purview of this phone call.

You need to be asking yourself, "Are my marketing materials up to par?" You need to be asking the question of "Am I going after venues I'm not ready for?" You know, if you've only got 50 names in your database, but you're going after a venue that seats 2,000, right? Are you ready for those venue?

You need to be asking yourself a question of "Am I going after venues that are the wrong genre for me? Or it's really just not my opportunity. We're not a good fit." So you want to be asking yourself those questions, and you might want to get an independent assessment from someone who is an expert. Not your mother, not your best friend, not your husband or wife, but someone who is actually an expert in the industry and in your particular branch of the industry.

To assess your marketing materials, to assess your cd or your live recordings or whatever. To assess whether or not, you know, you need to work on the quality in order to get these bookings, but I digress. I'm going to come back here.

#### *IF MAYBE –*

If you get maybes—maybes, I have to say from perspective of sales, suck because maybes are meaningless.



**Confirm that it's not a "no" in disguise,**

They could be truly a maybe, but more often they are no in disguise.

The person doesn't want to hurt your feelings. They feel like you're too invested, and you might get mad at them, so they say maybe but really they are saying no. You know, it's a really good thing to ask the following question:

"So I hear that you're saying maybe you might be interested, but we've talked a couple of times, you've listened to my CDs, and you've seen my marketing package. So I want you to know saying, 'No,' to me is not going to hurt my feelings. It's just part of the business. I get that, but I just want to get a real sense from you. Do you think that, you know, I'm not a good fit for you or do you really think that I might be a good fit, but you don't have any openings right now and I should call you back a few months?"

And you know, just let them know and be genuine about this. Let them know really honestly it's not going to hurt your feelings. You just want to have a sense whether or not you're a good fit for them, and if the answer to that is "no," that's great. That's cool. No worries. You may be more likely to get a real answer.

**Find out what they need in order to make a decision**

Find out what they need in order to make a decision. Maybe they need a specific price quote. Maybe they need to go back and talk to their board before getting an answer. That's happened to me a couple of times.

**Find out when to contact them again and schedule it,**

And sometimes they come back from the board with a yes or a no. You never know what the board is going to say, but maybe they aren't really the decision maker. In which case, you might want to say, "Well, you know, could I actually set up a conversation, you know, a conference call with your board or with your decision maker?"

The person you are talking to might actually be a gatekeeper for the real decision makers. So you want to kind of find that out.

If they need to get an answer from someone else, make an appointment. "So when will you have that answer by? Oh you'll have it by Friday. Great! I'll call you Friday morning."

And keep following up until you get an answer. And again, if it's a maybe and a genuine maybe, then find out when to contact them again and schedule it for yourself, so that you follow up when you say you say you're going to follow up.



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##### MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS

Now in the last few minutes before I do open this up again for questions, the most important key thing about this is managing your emotions, because I promise you if you get upset in a conversation, it will read. They'll hear it. They'll know.

Even if you're not upset with them but you're upset with yourself, it will color your tone, it will color your voice and they will hear it I promise you. So you need to manage your emotions. You need to build the skills around managing your emotions.

##### *DON'T EVER TAKE IT PERSONALLY*

First part of course is don't ever take it personally. Just don't take it personally. You know, again just because it's not your opportunity doesn't mean your opportunities aren't out there waiting for you.

##### *USE THE FEEDBACK CONSTRUCTIVELY*

And secondly, use the feedback of a Yes, No or Maybe constructively, because that's information that you can use to get better at this. And I have 2 calls that will follow up on that. In the "Don't Ever Take It Personally," [Turning Your Inner Critic Into Your Staunchest Ally](#) is a really good call and the [Emotional Intelligence](#), all of the Emotional Intelligence calls are really good. The [Overcoming Fear](#), [Transforming Your Beliefs](#)--all of these calls will help in building that skill.

And [How to Use Feedback and Criticism Constructively](#)--that call will help with the second piece which is to use the feedback constructively. Alright, we're just about out of time. I'm going to open it up for questions. Does anyone have a question about how to mine the gold from your networking contacts.

Go ahead if you've muted yourself just hit \*6 to take yourself off mute. And even if you don't have a question, go ahead and take yourself off mute.

Puela: I might have a question, and I think it relates. This is Puela.

Debra: go ahead Puela.

Puela: Like contact management system like where to start with that? That's a big challenge for me.

Debra: Yeah, I actually covered that before you came into the call so you might want to listen to the recording.

Puela: Yeah, I will.





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Debra: And then if you still have a question about it, go ahead and submit it for the Ask Coach Debra. We could talk about it in the private sessions as well, but I did cover some information about contact management systems earlier in the call.

Diana, do you have a question? Diane rather sorry. You can hit \*6.

Diane: So one thing I can say one thing about contact management systems...just a comment...is that I've used Act, and it is by far a thousand times easier to learn than Access and things like that. Just from that perspective, and it also helps you just simply remember. The last conversation you had with people, and it has calendars built in it so it's automatic. It's almost--very user, dummy-friendly for me.

Debra: Oh yeah, however have you used it on a private computer or have you used it as a network at a corporation?

Diane: Both actually. I'm unfortunately probably way more familiar with it than most people, but--

Debra: Right because your background. They may have fixed this, but I actually had Act shut my computer down. It blew my motherboard a couple of years ago, so you do have to make sure you've got a powerful enough computer to run it, because it can be a bit of a memory hog. But I agree with you. I mean it's an incredibly powerful system. I will also say about IndieBand Manager. It's built on Access, but you don't need to know anything about Access in order to run it. It is--it's just obvious how to work it.

Diane: I also heard on getting business cards and getting contacts, it's always the easiest way to ask for their card is when you handing them yours.

Debra: Yup! Good suggestion! As you are handing your card to them say, "Oh do you have a business card? Great! You don't have a business card? Here. Could you give me your contact information in my little memo book?" You know, and obviously, you don't want to do that within the first four seconds of a conversation because that's just weird, but if you've been standing talking to someone for 10 mins, it's absolutely not out of the realm to say, "Oh you don't have a business card. I'd love to get your contact information. Would you mind writing it down?" So yeah, absolutely. It's a great way to do it. I do that all the time. I just hand people my business card and say, "Oh do you have a business card? Great!"

Diane: I almost feel obligated, and other thing I had an issue with is which pocket did I put it in or where is it? And so, I tried to keep my cards in one pocket and their cards in a different one.



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Debra: Yup! And the other thing as soon as you go home, clip those cards with the events that you're-- they came from. I also-- You're just reminding me I forgot-- a recommendation. I use Card Scan to scan the cards into a system that I can then Excel via Excel or CSV and upload to my database management system. So I'm not by hand typing people's cards into my system. I scan it, and it saves your fingers. Oh my god! And it's also much faster than hand-typing cards. And it won't read every card. If you have a lot of cards that have dark backgrounds a lot of times I won't read it or there's a lot of fancy font or weirdness, Card Scan won't read it, which is yet another reason to have really clear, simple...you know...dark on a white background or a light background, because people do use Card Scan, and it does struggle a bit with the fancier cards.

Diane: Does it come with a little like a hardware scanner and then the software?

Debra: Yup, and totally worth the investment. It's maybe a hundred bucks or something. Yeah, it's a little tiny scanner. It's about maybe 2 inches by 4 inches, and it won't fit--it doesn't fit postcards, but it fits business cards of just about every, you know, shape, and it will scan both the front and the back. It's really cool.

Diane: So like, Fry's or some people would probably have it.

Debra: Oh yeah, Staples, Office Max, In fact, I got mine off eBay. Way, way back when like 2003. Got mine off eBay before eBay was even a thing.

Diane: That means you can probably get it cheaper now.

Debra: Oh yeah, undoubtedly. Great good questions, ladies. Any other before we call it a night? Very cool. I think the biggest thing is that you got to create a system, and that system need to include not only the management part of the contacts and where they go and how you track them, but also setting time in your schedule for follow up. For making the phone calls and doing that regularly.

Diane: One last thing, so you have a cd on making the most of your contacts or something?

Debra: I have a 3-CD set called Make the Most of Your Conference Connections, and a lot of this information is in there as well. There's a lot more information about how to just manage conferences.

Diane: I bought it last year and I listened to some of it, and since I'm going back to Taxi--

Debra: You're going to listen to it again? Awesome! Very cool. Alright, that's all for tonight. The next 2 calls will be guest speakers. Next month is going to be Peter McDowell, who is a PR and Arts Presenter Expert. He's done a lot of different jobs in the





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arts presentation business, and he's going to talk about writing a press release and making media contacts and all of that stuff. And then in December, we have Elizabeth Edwards, who is a former Artists-Edge member, singer-songwriter who is also an expert at building a newsletter list, and so she's going to talk about how you build and expand your newsletter list, which is a good segue way from this call actually. Very cool, you guys, and we'll be talking again in January after I have moved.

Diane: Good luck with that.

Debra: Thank you. Have a great couple of months everybody.

Puela: You too.

Debra: Bye.