

Keith Ferrazzi's Networking Tips # 251 to 253

Tip 251 - Yes, It's Worth Catching Up with Your Boss, Even 3 Years Later

Have you ever wondered if it's worth reconnecting with a lapsed professional contact?

Your mission: Reconnect with a professional contact whom you haven't contact with in 3 years or more, in person or via phone. As part of the conversation, ask the contact for information or advice on a current work project.

I actually pulled this "mission" from a study recently published in the *MIT Sloan Management Review*. The experience of hundreds of executives who reconnected with an old contact was that, YES, it's absolutely worth it.

Professors Daniel Z. Levin, Jorge Walter, and J. Keith Murnighan found that the advice the executives received was as useful – often even more useful – than the advice they received from current contacts.

Here's another tip: Don't get too stuck on who's the "best" person to contact. According to the study, when executives were asked to rank their top 10 lapsed contacts and reapproach them all, it turned out that the 10th most valued contact offered as many rewards as the 1st.

Have you tried this? If not, will you? Let me know on [the blog](#).

Tip 252 - Hot Question: How to Get a Reference From a Lapsed Relationship

You guys seemed to like the mission I gave you last week to [renew a lapsed relationship](#). But someone asked this question on the blog, and since people ask it a lot I'm addressing it here:

I've been thinking about reaching out to the head of my old group for quite a while. I would love to use him as a reference in the future, but hate the thought of calling someone up under the pretense of reconnecting, only to ask for a favor in the same breath. Any tips on what to say or how to approach this conversation?

If you've read *Never Eat Alone*, you're familiar with my recommendation to "build it before you need it" – to make sure that your network is strong and well fed with generosity so that it is a ready resource when the time comes to tap into it for help.

But what do you do if you haven't built it and you need it, *now*?

If the relationship was never strong, then you may be SOL. But if it was once strong, and you've just dropped the ball, then I recommend being really upfront about what you need. At the same time, make it clear that it's equally important to you to renew your relationship.

You might say something like, "I'll be honest, your name came up in my head because I'm going to be needing references soon, so I got to thinking about the people I had great working relationships with. My thoughts went to you immediately, and I realized it's been far too long. Could I take you to coffee to catch up, or give you a call? I'm making some changes in my career and I'd love your advice on ...x."

Everyone has an agenda – in fact, most of us have many agendas. The key is to not pretend otherwise. That's a recipe for making people feel used rather than needed.

Do you see the difference? [Tell me on the blog](#).

Tip 253 - Three Tips from My Doc on How to Improve Your Memory

Head to my blog [to see the video](#) – it's me sharing the tips my doc gave me when I went in to get help with my failing memory.

At least, I think that's what it's about...

Warmest,
Keith

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