

# How Scary Is Networking

One of the most unsettling, some say scary or terrifying, aspects of transitioning is the act of networking. When you are in the military, you are networking. Surprised? You attend a conference or a social or a meeting where you don't know anyone. You then start chatting with folks. That's networking.

The big difference between this and other scenarios is that you are usually in a uniform that helps define initial connections with others. These would include the branch of service, rank, name, and whatever badges, etc. that you are wearing. These all help identify you. There is now a connection to start a conversation.

Now, let's talk about networking in civies. There may be some visual connections like golf clothes if you are a golfer. However, most time not. The connections become more intangible. It could be the location such as your place of worship. That does make things easier.

Normally, however, it's up to you to find a connection through conversation. To some, it comes naturally to start a chatting with someone you don't know. For others, the sentence of death is more welcoming. It's time to step out of your comfort zone and talk to those you meet.

Even a conversation about traffic or weather or something as mundane as these may be enough to break the ice. If you are at an event, commenting about the venue or topic is a good start. Use your imagination to start the ice breaker. Then you are off. You are now making a connection with your conversant. The conversation will then continue from there.

It's now up to you as to the next steps. You may want to exchange contact information. You may want to set a next meeting. The choices are yours. However you choose, the connections, even those that seem without possibilities, may be gems. Your cordiality in these situations may pay off in the future. As the saying goes, don't burn any bridges.

Networking is an essential ingredient in the job-hunting process. Embrace it. The rewards in new friends and contacts are immeasurable. Best wishes.

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