

Lessons from the Green
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Want to know how to make it to the top of your game? It's easy, if you throw out many of the things you've been taught over and over. Throw out all that John Wayne rugged-individualism. Throw out that prideful "I don't want anything I don't earn myself" B.S. (I've been told I can't say bulls**t in here). The biggest lesson we need to internalize is *you cannot get there alone*.

And, it doesn't matter where *there* is for you: VP sales at the start-up you are working for, president of that company you toil away in while someone else makes all the bucks, or, great entrepreneur, launching the world-changing dream you've had for years. We depend on others for all of our successes.

John Wayne looked great on screen, but he couldn't have done it without a crew of hundreds. Remember, we all have our own crew, our partners, employers, employees, emotional supporters, friends, prospects ... the list goes on.

I started at the bottom, growing up in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, carrying the golf bags of the local rich and famous as a caddy at the Latrobe Country Club. I soon discovered their secret. There really *was* an old boys' and girls' network. The network helped wealthy kids get the great internships, helped friends get interviews for prime jobs, and lent money to start businesses.

The transactions from that golf course went on and on. Some caddies saw this and were content as voyeurs, watching from the outside.

Not me.

For me, the path to success was as clear as reading that uphill break left on the third hole when the pin placement was at the back of the green. I started taking mental notes and have zealously been building close personal relationships ever since. Starting as the son of a steel-worker and cleaning lady, I became the youngest chief marketing officer of a Fortune 500 company in my early 30s. Those long-memorized notes have since led me to the boardrooms of many more Fortune 500 companies, and to the CEO-ship of a successful start-up.

With this column, I will not intend to try to convince you that networking is

valuable. If you took the time to get to this Resource Center, you *know* it's valuable, and you also know that you can be better.

TOGETHER, WE'LL MAKE YOU BETTER!

Start by knowing that a broad web of genuine intimate connections with people will be the most valuable thing you can create for your career, your company and, indeed, your entire life. We will begin by revealing specific principles I've come to know as truths in building these deep intimate connections, truths that lead to sales, career growth, and, yes, intimacy. Then, once we are all thinking alike with the same principles, we'll explore the most important techniques -- methods that are helpful for building your community of cheerleaders and active supporters, an essential part of it all.

To some, "Networking" has become a dirty word - and rightfully so. It conjures up rooms of unemployed job-hunters desperately and frantically searching for a quick way in to a position. Or, it's smarmy salespeople collecting business cards that they toss away when the quick buck doesn't appear as quickly as hoped. Together, we will do something very different with the word *Networking*. We will define it as *forming genuine relationships and building genuine community* -- a community of relationships that helps everyone's well-being and success.

With this column, you will learn how to form and then maintain and nurture these meaningful relationships. Stay tuned for column one, which is also principle number one, "Never Keep Score." Column two will pick up with "Creating Your Own Nepotism for Career Growth (Even When You're a Poor Kid Like Me)."

This is going to be a journey that I'm so damned (darned, they want me to say) excited to take with you!