Raising Your R&R Factor – How Referable and Recommendable Are You

By Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

Revised 3/18

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Bob is available for purchase at:

www.netweavinginternational.com

ISBN 978-935038-02-3
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The reason I decided to write this book was the result of a struggle I was having with a perplexing situation that I was occasionally encountering. Some individuals who had either heard me speak or read one or both of my other two books on NetWeaving, were reporting that although they loved the concept, and in their opinion, were doing lots of it, they were not seeing much, if anything, come back around.

For those unfamiliar with the concept of NetWeaving, it is a Golden Rule and Pay It Forward form of networking which is all about helping others – no-strings-attached. And you do that either by connecting them with someone who might be able to help them, or supplying them with resources which either you can provide, or that could be obtained through one of the connections you have made within your Trusted Resource Network – a community of people you have identified as ‘givers’ and ‘exceptional’ at whatever it is that they do. You find a way to help them first, and hopefully then invite them to be part of your Trusted Resource Network. And assuming they view you in that same exceptional light, it means you will probably be invited to become part of their Trusted Resource Network as well.

NetWeaving recognizes that we all are human and although there are rare individuals who live a saintly life based on pure altruism, NetWeaving recognizes that for most of us, even some of our most altruistic actions, are directly or indirectly done out of what I would call ‘enlightened self-interest’. In other words, our motivation is simply to help the other person but it is also somewhat based upon a belief in
the concept that, ‘**what goes around. . .does come back around**’.

After all, the Golden Rule says, “*Do unto others, as you have them do unto you*” which sort of implies you wouldn’t mind if some good things come back around to you as a result of your benevolence.

And that was the crux of my perplexity. So when some persons emailed or called me saying that they had been doing a lot of NetWeaving but had seen very little if anything, come back around, I had to try and figure out why that was happening.

At first, I believe I acted a little overly defensive simply responding that, “**Well sometimes it just takes a while and you need to have faith and be more patient.**”

I would also try and point out that hopefully they at least found some immediate joy and satisfaction from having done it and most agreed that was definitely true.

But it began happening often enough that when the issue came up, I began drilling to try and discover why their NetWeaving wasn’t working. After identifying several flaws in the way people were actually NetWeaving, I also discovered there was another more plausible explanation which few in any books I have ever read were willing to verbalize. Maybe the person attempting to do the NetWeaving was the real problem; not the way they were trying to NetWeave.
In NetWeaving, the favor you are most often doing for someone is connecting or introducing them to someone they would benefit meeting or knowing. Along the lines of ‘what goes around, comes around’, the expectation on your part is that that person would return the favor by introducing you to, or connecting you with, someone he or she knows. That was in most cases what these persons were complaining was not happening.

This book will endeavor to do three (3) things. First, it will explain the “NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity” and why it is IRREFUTABLE –

“The more you refer others, the more you will be referred.”

Another way of saying this in NetWeaving terminology is –

“The more you connect others, the more you will be connected.”

But in line with both of these, we will examine several conditions which must be met in order for the law to operate effectively. Violate even one of these three conditions and it negates the operation of the law in part or in its entirety.

Secondly, IF, after ruling out the three primary causes why the person’s NetWeaving isn’t coming back around, even when they’re doing it properly, we’ll cover what the fourth and real problem may be.

And thirdly, assuming that is the case, we will offer a number of ways which can be of help to those
persons who are baffled why their NetWeaving has not resulted in more Referrals and Recommendations coming back their way.

In order to measure from where you are starting as a NetWeaver, if you haven’t done so already, I would encourage any reader to go to:

www.netweavinginternational.com

and take the “NetWeaver Aptitude Assessment” quiz

You will either score as: 1) a “Natural NetWeaver” – been doing it your entire life, just never had a word for it; 2) a “NetWeaver in the Wings” – you’ve been doing a lot of it but you now see a few areas in which you could improve; 3) a “NetWeaver’s Apprentice” – you’ve been doing some of it, but you now see a number of areas in which you could improve.

If you score below this, meaning you are a “NetWeaving Skeptic”, you may just want to email me for a refund or give the book to someone else. Realistically, there are a few people who, upon learning what NetWeaving is all about, just don’t get it. In their opinion, the world just doesn’t operate in a way where people do things without any immediate concern for how their benevolence may come back around to benefit them.

As mentioned before, we think that most NetWeaving will not be done out of pure altruism, but rather out of ‘enlightened self-interest’. Your motives are first and foremost to help the other person but you
have genuine confidence that somehow. . .in some way. . .now or sometime in the future, your efforts will come back around to benefit you.

The good news is that I’ve met some pretty dedicated “NetWeaving Skeptics”, who upon experiencing not only the satisfaction from having helped someone else, acting either as a ‘connector’ or as a ‘no-strings-attached resource provider’, find it to be so exhilarating, that they start doing it on a regular basis. And the more they do, they more they find how much they enjoy it, and the more they want to do.

And there are also many who go even farther and discover the ‘heart’ of NetWeaving. They learn that when you go beyond just practicing the skill sets and action steps, but also begin spreading the good word about Netweaving to others, it does two things. First, it elevates your own image in others’ eyes because it truly is just all about the Golden Rule. And secondly, it energizes you and actually makes you better at whatever it is you do.

So I hope you’ll enjoy learning how to answer the question, “How Referable & Recommendable Am I?” And whether you’re satisfied with the answer to that question but want to raise your R&R Factor even more, or if you’re not satisfied and realize how important raising your R&R can be in furthering your career, I’m sure you’ll enjoy the book.

Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver
It would be impossible for me to name all the persons who have helped me along my NetWeaving journey which has morphed in so many different directions since its birth in the late ‘90’s and I apologize to a number of people whom I have omitted from this list. One of the best things about NetWeaving, as well as the pitfalls, is the incredible number of new meaningful relationships which you create.

Judy Agerton, Burke Allen, Wally Anderson, Joyce Auskelis, Jay Austin, Chip Bell, Dr. Ernest Biktimirov, Arthur Blank, Kimberly Boim, Christine Born, Philip Bray, Buckhead Club & ClubCorp, Mo Bunnell, Art Butcher, Keith Calhoun, John Casey, Jansen Chazanoff, Ruth Cochran, Lee Coe, Jay Cohen, Tom Crawford, Robin Daniel, Tim Darnell, Jim Deupree, Mel Dowdell, Damali Edwards, Lee Ellis, Charles Fellingham, Jorge Fernandez, Jeff Fox, Sara Fountain, Hans Gant, Jane Gentry, Jeffrey Gitomer, Glen Gould, Jeff Gray, Larry Greene, Pat Haly, Ruth Ann Harnisch, Robin Hensley, Bill Hetherington, Susan Hitchcock, Orin Hudson, Jim Huling, Henna Inam, Ron Jackson, Lee Kantor, Klaus Kleber, Geoffrey Kridel, Bill Lampton, Pat Lavant, Chris Lemley, Jay Litton, Giovanni Livera, Orlando Lynch, Ross Mason, Diane McGee, Phil Minnes, Michael Moore, Dave Morales, Emory Mulling, Jim Munson, Bill Nordmark, Bob Ormsby, Marka Ormsby, Raj Pai, Raz Pataca, Dan Pink, David Ratcliffe, Dawn Randolph, Dr. Bob Rausch, Curtis Reed, Nancy Richardson, Judy Robinett, Debbie Rodkin, David Salyers, Abi Salimi, Jan Sauer, Jeff Scroggin, Anita Sharpe, Dr. Betty Siegel, Roop Singh, Maria Sipka, Kathy Smart, Dan Stotz, Debbie Stone, Judy Suiter, Ben Underwood, Michael Votta, Marguerite Watanabe, Frank Weber, Mark Whitlock, Jim Williams, Sam Williams, David Wagner, Waldo the Wingman, Ron Wolf, John Yates, Gary Young
“Never forget that one of the greatest honors you can bestow on someone is to introduce and connect them with someone who means a great deal to you.”

R&R Doesn’t Stand for ‘Rest and Relaxation’

If you are involved in any area of sales and marketing, in the long-run (often in the short-run as well), your degree of success will be directly related to your “R&R Factor”. It represents the most important ingredient for longer-term success in sales of any kind, and in most cases, for success in any field.

**R&R** stands for your **Referability** & your **Recommendability**. Your R&R Factor™ represents the degree to which you have developed a persona and habits, as well as methods and strategies (both intentional and unintentional), that make people WANT to recommend and refer you to others.

According to a December 2003 “Harvard Business Review” article by Frederick F. Reichheld, the single most reliable predictor of growth for a company, which I believe equates to success, can be measured by the answer to a single customer satisfaction survey question:

“How likely is it that you would refer this company to a friend or acquaintance?”.

That same question is just as applicable on an individual level – “How likely is it that you would recommend and/or refer this PERSON to a friend or acquaintance?” And it’s also just as applicable for persons selling a product as it for those offering or providing a service or services.

A Recommendation . . . and especially a Referral. . . Represents a Risk on the part of the Person Referring

It’s fairly intuitive that when someone is willing to put his or her own reputation on the line by recommending a company, a product or service, or the person who
represents or delivers same, they are taking a risk. That is why tracking a person’s recommendability and referability is such a reliable indicator of longer-term success.

A recommendation, and in particular, a referral (the difference to be clarified later), is a ‘manifestation of trust’.

Whether you represent a company, or are a consultant, a personal or executive coach or trainer, you should ask yourself two important questions and be very honest with your answers:

1. How Recommendable and Referable am I today?
2. Are there ways that I could raise my R&R Factor™?

First, what makes up someone’s R&R Factor™, and more importantly, are there things you can do to improve it?

There are a variety of ways which we’ll cover, but let’s first be realistic and understand that there are some persons who start out with a natural advantage in this all-important area. They have a natural aura about their persona and whether you want to call it charisma, positive vibes, body chemistry, or just natural beauty or handsomeness, it somehow creates an almost instantaneous attraction to, or comfort level with, people.

We know that ‘physical attractiveness’, especially for females, has a definite impact. Studies have also shown that male CEO’s, especially of larger companies, tend to be taller, better-looking, and have a bigger bone structure, especially larger hands.

As a former chairman of a large national organization, one year they hosted a breakfast for past presidents. When we came into the room, there were several tables set up for 8 persons, but with one seat left vacant at each table. Colin Powell, the featured speaker at our meeting, came in and spent about 20 minutes at each table. Almost instantaneously, he established a comfort level and rapport with each person at the table that made you feel as if you had known him your entire life.

But, for most of us, this process of building rapport and establishing a level of trust sufficient for someone to put his or her neck out on the line to be willing to recommend and refer us to someone else, takes more than just charisma and good looks, both which most of us, myself included, wish we had more of.

This book covers what I believe is a more natural way to increase your R&R factor™, built upon the ‘law of reciprocity’ or the belief that, ‘what goes around, does come back around’. One of the absolute best ways to increase your R&R Factor™ and one which is catching on in business circles here in the U.S., as well as spreading around the globe, is called, “NetWeaving’.
NetWeaving is a Golden Rule and “Pay It Forward” form of networking which is all about helping others, both as a connector and as a ‘no-strings-attached’ resource provider, and doing so with the sincere conviction that, ‘what goes around...does come back around.’

Is this pure altruism? No. When someone is NetWeaving for someone else, I like to say they are doing it out of ‘enlightened self-interest’. They are genuinely providing help without thinking how they will benefit – directly or indirectly – but they do have faith in the law of reciprocity – and that their good deeds will somehow be rewarded now or somewhere down the road.

NetWeaving is not an attack on more self-focused 'networking'. To be successful in life and in business, you have to do both networking and NetWeaving. It would be naive to think that people are not going to look out for what’s in their own, or their family’s, or their company’s best interests. But, those who are a little too ‘What’s In It For Me?’ tend to only listen during conversations with a single pair of ears and a single set of antennae, tuned in to only answer these questions:

- “Is this person a prospect for me?”
- “Are there some ways this person could help me, now or sometime in the future?”
- “Do they have something I need?”

And if the answer to that question is ‘probably not’ or ‘no’, you notice how the person tends to start scoping out the rest of the room for his or her next landing spot.

NetWeaving is really about learning how, as you’re communicating with someone else - whether it’s in-person, or on the telephone, or on the internet – to ask yourself three (3) questions in addition to the ones focused on your own needs:

1) “Is there someone I know who would benefit meeting or knowing this person?”

2) “Could this person provide information or resources to someone else I know?”

3) “Has this person impressed me so much just during the short time we’ve been talking that I need to get to know him or her better. And if over time, he or she continues to impress me with the quality of their work, their sense of urgency, integrity, etc., I need to first find a way to help them, and then stay in touch and eventually make him or her part of my “Trusted Resource Network”.
If, instead of networking – that is trying to identify that PERFECT prospect who unfortunately usually never ends up becoming a client, and never refers anyone your way, you spend the same amount of time NetWeaving, your results will be many times greater and more profitable.

The most important 'how-to' element of NetWeaving involves ‘hosting’ meetings to introduce two people to each other with THEIR needs, interests, and opportunities in mind rather than just your own.

NetWeaving ‘hosting’ meetings are conducted in a way that help to ‘inspire meaningful dialogue’ as well as increase the probability that something good will come back as a result of your help.

Conversations between and among persons who have just met each other for the first time tend to stay at a fairly superficial level. This prevents the relationship from really progressing to a level where a deeper connection is made and trust can be established. One of the roles of the moderator in a NetWeaving hosting meeting is to act as the catalyst – to throw out some probing questions that will elevate the conversation from a fairly superficial discussion to one in which people have the opportunity to see another side to the other person which they wouldn’t have ordinarily experienced.

One such stimulating question we use a lot as an ice-breaker question goes something like this:

“If you were to look back over your life and identify someone – OTHER THAN a parent, grandparent, or spouse – such as a teacher at any level, a boss or mentor – someone who at some important point in your life, did or said something that helped make you the person you are today - who would that be, and what was it they said or did which had such an important impact and influence on you?”

There are many questions like this which could be asked, but what they all have in common is that they are meant to inspire ‘meaningful dialogue’ where there is learning and growth - so that you see this person in a different light. As people share their deeper thoughts and real-life experiences - passing on wisdom shared by some great mentor, or even revealing vulnerability - they become more human to us and often that’s what makes us want to get to know the person better.

For a more complete sample of these questions which can inspire meaningful dialogue, see pages 58 and 59.

There are four (4) levels of NetWeaving connections:

**Level 1** – You simply connect two people to each other on the phone or over the internet:
“John, after getting to know you, there’s someone whom I believe you would really benefit meeting and getting to know – Mary Jones. Here’s her phone number (or email address). Give her a call and tell her I asked you to contact her.”

All you are doing is loaning your good name.

**Level 2** – Same as Level 1, except you go one step further and add some credibility by phoning or sending an email of introduction, often with a bio about the person.

“John, after getting to know you, there’s someone whom I believe you would really benefit meeting and getting to know – Mary Jones. Would you send me your bio and any other information (e.g. LinkedIn) that I could send on to Mary in way of introducing you to her. Then give her a call and I’m sure she’ll want to meet you.”

**Level 3** – Same as Level 1 or Level 2, except you offer to set up a conference call to make a ‘virtual’ introduction. This is very easy now using one of these tools:

- [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)
- [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)
- [www.freeconferencecall.com](http://www.freeconferencecall.com)

It’s often good to have both persons exchange bios ahead of the call, or to send them to each other’s LinkedIn profile if available.

**Level 4** – In-Person Hosting and Facilitating

But by far, the most powerful form of NetWeaving involves setting up and then ‘hosting and facilitating a meeting between two (three at most) individuals.

One of the most important books I’ve ever read is by Judy Robinett, “**How to Be a Power Connector**”.(McGraw-Hill – Copyright 2014). If you think you could never become a skilled NetWeaver which is almost synonymous with becoming a “Power Connector” read what Judy relates about her own transformation:

> “If I can create a valuable network of high-caliber, strategic relationships, anybody can do it. I was a social worker from Franklin, Idaho. I didn’t know a soul with any money, power, access, or clout, But I discovered that everyone has problems that they need help solving”. . .”.Every-one is looking for some kind of value in what is ultimately an inefficient market, composed of a lot of other people wandering around looking for value too.” (Page 27 – “How to Be a Power Connector”)
Without calling it “NetWeaving” – a term she had never heard of before we talked and she gave me permission to summarize her book, here’s another quote from her book which is her definition of how to be a “Power Connector”. You could easily replace the term ‘power connector’ with “NetWeaver” and you’d be right on:

“A power connector creates high-quality connections between individuals and their networks. Power connectors seek to add value by putting the best people in touch with the best resources, with the goal of creating greater success for all concerned.”(Page 36- “How to be a Power Connector”)

‘In-person’ hosting meetings, where the Net-Weaver not only sets up the meeting with the two (or more) individuals, but where the NetWeaver acts as moderator and is physically there to introduce the two persons to each other and act as facilitator and catalyst, are much more powerful. Unfortunately, unless new business development is your only job function, hosting more than one or two in-person meetings a week, or even one a month, can be challenging.

Here’s an example showing how easy it is to set up a virtual hosting meeting. As you are wrapping up a conversation with Mary, here’s what you could say:

“Mary, as you and I were talking and as I learned more about what you do (or what your company does), I just thought of someone whom you really need to meet. Why don’t you send me some information on your company and your bio or current CV… and let me send that on to my friend with a note from me as to why I believe the two of you would benefit meeting. And I’ll check back to make sure you’ve made contact and hopefully, the two of you will get together soon. And please let me know when and where you agree to meet, and if I can be there for at least a portion of the meeting, I’d love to do so.”

But, I’ve discovered that if you really want to become a skilled NetWeaver, and if you really want to see your R&R Factor™ rise, you need to host some in-person meetings.

Here’s an example of how you’d set up an in-person hosting meeting:

“John, you know, as you and I were talking, I just thought of someone whom I met recently and who really impressed me. You really need to meet Steve Jones – he’s (brief 1 or 2 sentence description of what Steve does). Send me your bio and some information on your company and I’ll call Steve get him to do the same and then assuming the two of you agree you would like to meet each other, I would like to host a meeting to introduce the two of you to each other. Would that be ok?”

And I used to think that all NetWeaving hosting meetings had to be ‘strategic’ – meaning that I already had in mind how the two persons could help each other or why they would benefit meeting. Then I started hosting some ‘non-strategic’ meetings and some of them have turned out to be the most fun, creative and productive ones. Here’s how you could set up one of those meetings.
“John, I have a friend (new friend, acquaintance, associate at work, etc.) whom I believe you would really benefit meeting. But to be perfectly honest, I haven't the slightest idea what the two of you have in common, or how you might be able to help each other. All I know is that I think a lot of you both...you’re both ‘givers’ and are always looking for ways to help someone and I just feel the two of you would enjoy getting to know each other and you'll probably find ways to help each other as well.”

But there are several other advantages of hosting an in-person meeting over only setting up virtual hosting meetings where you do not need to be present.

First, when you are present, you get to plug into the positive energy that flows at just about every single hosting meeting either I’ve held, or ones conducted by others which people love to tell me about. Without even trying, when you host an in-person meeting, you will elevate your own image by having made this connection. And you're there to get credit for doing so.

Secondly, if you genuinely like helping others, after you've gotten to watch the persons you’ve introduced to each other find ways they can help one another, as well as discover people they know in common which they never would have guessed had you not made the connection, you end up walking out of that meeting higher than either of them.

In other words, when you host in-person meetings, it energizes you and makes you better at whatever else you do.

Thirdly, we have found that at the end of between 8 to 9 out of every 10 in-person hosting meetings, something else magical happens. One or both of the people you have connected turn the tables; look at you, and say something along the lines of:

“Bob, this has really been great and we’re very grateful to you for having set this meeting up, but you haven’t said a whole lot. How can we help you?”

Now, of course, with a lead-in like that, you could certainly ask for some returned favor or referrals which you’ve earned, but that wouldn’t be consistent with the NetWeaving philosophy. Instead, we recommend that you simply ask each of the two persons you have connected to just “Pay It Forward” and do the same thing you’ve done. Either take turns hosting a meeting to introduce someone they know to their new friend, or just commit to hosting a meeting to introduce any two other people. And then at each meeting, the host of the meeting, challenges his or her two connections to do the same, to ‘pay it forward’, and so on and so on.

This is why, with permission from Catherine Ryan Hyde, the author of the book, “Pay It Forward”, on which the popular movie of the same name is based, NetWeaving is now known globally as “the business version of Pay It Forward”.

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Will this always work? Maybe not always, but you will find that the more you help make connections for others, and more you provide ‘no-strings-attached’ resources to others, the more it will come back around to you.

But there’s one more thing we should point out that typically happens after you surprise your two ‘hostees’ by simply asking each of them to just ‘pay it forward’ after they offer to repay the favor to you in some way. They will always agree to do that, but they will still come back and literally INSIST that you tell them some way they might be of help to you.

It is true beyond the shadow of a doubt that:

*The more you Recommend and Refer others, the more you will be recommended and referred – so long as people view you as ‘qualified’ - and even better – ‘exceptional’ or better yet – ‘remarkable’ - at what you do.*

This is the irrefutable “NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity”.

What is the absolute best way to raise your R&R Factor™? It’s simply to learn how to become a better NetWeaver and a better recommender, referrer, and connector of others – and to sincerely believe that what goes around WILL come back around - so long as you truly deserve it and qualify as exceptional or remarkable in the eyes of others.

So you must also ask yourself the toughest questions of all:

“*Do I DESERVE to be recommended and referred as a consequence of my attributes, qualities, skills and abilities?”* . . .“*Do people recognize me as unique or exceptional at what I do?”*

And if the question to either of these is “No” or “I’m not sure”, then you have areas on which you need to work. But that’s ok because constant growth is really what life is all about. The BEST in every field NEVER consider that they have arrived and can quit growing. They constantly strive to improve and become better.

“*What are things which I could be doing which would make people see me as more UNIQUE or even REMARKABLE?”*

I’m living evidence of the fact that you can grow to become a better NetWeaver. Here I’m the guy who created the NetWeaving concept. . .or at least put a word to what many people have been doing all along just without a name for it. And yet, I can honestly report that as a result of always looking for ways to improve my own NetWeaving, I am **ten times better** as a NetWeaver today than I was just a few years ago. And the best news is, the more you do of it, the more you **want** to do.

Remember the motto of NetWeaving – “*Good things happen to those persons who MAKE good things happen*”.
“The more you refer others...the more you will be referred” – The NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity

Is There a Difference Between a Referral and a Recommendation?

In every day conversation, the difference between a referral and a recommendation would only seem to be a matter of semantics. But, for the purpose of this book, we will draw an important distinction between the two words, with a ‘referral’ actually representing a much stronger form of introduction than a ‘recommendation’.

It’s also important to understand another distinction. For persons who are in sales and marketing, the word ‘referral’ traditionally connotes someone who has been referred to you. You are the ‘refer-ee’.

This is a common saying you hear in every form of selling. “I’d much rather work referrals than make cold calls”

So it’s important to understand that contrary to what you usually think of when you’re talking about referrals where you’re looking for them to come to YOU, in a “NetWeaving” context, a ‘referral’ typically means the ‘act’ of connecting, introducing, recommending, or referring someone you know to someone else you have just met or already know and the NetWeaver is the refer-er.

In the context of this book, we’ll be talking about both forms: the NetWeaver makes recommendations and referrals – but when your NetWeaving comes back around to benefit you (i.e. ‘referral reciprocity’), we will be talking about you receiving referrals.

But now back to the first distinction between a Recommendation and a Referral.

Think of a recommendation more like a favorable review you might read about for a book or a recommendation for a restaurant or something new you’ve bought. It’s still powerful but not nearly what the case would be if someone mails you a copy of the book, or takes you to the restaurant and continues to rave about the food and the great service, or demonstrates the use of their new toy.
There was ‘action’ involved in the latter three examples. A ‘referral’ involves something BEYOND simply saying something nice about someone or something but moves it to a higher level.

Pretend that you and I meet for the first time at some event and we are having a nice conversation when someone I know comes up and joins our discussion. Before I can open my mouth to introduce the two of you, the person joining our conversation says,

“Oh, I can see that you’ve already met Katherine, the finest interior decorator I’ve ever known. Katherine did our home and then I had her do our offices and there’s almost never a time when a new client comes in that he or she doesn’t make some comment about how gorgeous offices looks. And as a result, I’ll bet you I have ‘referred’ Katherine to well over a dozen friends or associates. And to her credit, every one of them has come back later and thanked me for referring her”

In this example, the difference might be splitting hairs but I like to think of the act of making a referral as an ‘action step’ – actually writing a letter or email to introduce someone to another, or actually introducing or connecting the person you are referring to the person whom you want to help. On the other hand, for our purposes in this book, a ‘recommendation’ is more like a ‘nomination’ but not quite as strong. Once again, think of it more like a restaurant or book review, or online feedback about a good experience someone had.

You may recommend someone after you get to know him or her and build up some level of confidence. But, when you have been totally won over. . .by the quality of their work. . .their reliability and sense of urgency. . .their service after the sale or after their work is done, as well as the pleasantness of the overall experience, this is when you decide to become a raving fan and you choose to go out of your way to refer that person whenever you have opportunity. The strongest form of referral takes place when you ‘host’ a meeting to introduce someone to someone else whom you believe could use her or his product or services.

As Seth Godin points out in his great book, “Unleashing the Idea Virus”, the goal is to create an army of raving fans who love you and/or your company. He calls them “sneezers” meaning that they like you so much that they want to spread your ‘virus’ to others.
Chapter 3
The NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity
“The more you refer others . . . the more you will be referred”

“A Referral in particular is a manifestation of Trust”

What is the Cause When the “NetWeaver’s IRREFUTABLE Law of Referral Reciprocity Doesn’t Work?”

As I personally have discovered, as have many others who had been practicing or expanding their NetWeaving activities, the good things which come back around (often in the way of reciprocal referrals), far outweigh the results from more traditional ‘what’s in it for me’ networking activities.

But occasionally, I would have someone come up to me – usually very sheepishly - with a concern they expressed that really puzzled me.

Sometimes this comment came from someone with a fairly aggressive personality which sometimes can play against being viewed as a NetWeaver, even when done with good intentions.

Other times the lament came from someone making an almost apologetic plea or confession. But in either case, they were saying something along the lines of:

“Over the last (6 months to a year), I’ve been doing much more of your NetWeaving, and to be real honest, I haven’t seen much, if anything, in the way of good things coming back around in the way of favors or returned referrals.”

At first, I believe I acted a little defensively - simply responding that,

“Well sometimes it takes a while and you just need to have faith and be patient. And, hopefully you are at least finding it rewarding and energizing whenever you make a connection?”

But over time, I believe I have discovered the real reasons. When I drilled down in my questioning about ‘how’ they were NetWeaving. . . ‘with whom’, as well as ‘how they were following up’ after helping someone, I identified four conditions - any which can totally or partially negate the operation of the Law of Referral Reciprocity.
First, I realized that some of the individuals making the observation – usually the more aggressive types – may have called what they were doing “NetWeaving” but I could tell that they were either implying, or coming right out and suggesting that somehow, in exchange for making a connection or offering resources, that they were EXPECTING the other person to do something in return. I tend to call some of these more aggressive types ‘disguised NetWeavers’. After suggesting this as a possible cause, some realized what they had been doing wrong, while others wouldn’t accept that as a possibility and didn’t seem to have a clue.

But at the same time, I always want to remind people that NetWeaving is NOT an attack on more traditional networking. Looking out for one’s own best interests, as well as those for his or her business or family is not only instinctive and natural, but is absolutely necessary if you are in sales or marketing, or an entrepreneur trying to build a business.

You need to do both, but each involves a different mindset and when you purport to be ‘NetWeaving’ and yet it comes across as more ‘what’s in it for me?’ networking, it confuses the message and the person whom you are supposedly ‘helping’ feels little or no obligation to return the favor.

EXAMPLE - "John, I'm doing this for you purely out of the goodness of my heart, but, oh by the way, if you wouldn't mind, there is one thing I'd like you to do for me in return”.

The world does seem to be made up of ‘givers’ and ‘takers’ and all shades in between. When you NetWeave for a pure ‘taker’, he or she will take, and take, and take. I like to say that some of these people seem to be missing the ‘reciprocity gene’. It just never occurs to them that they should reciprocate and look for a way to return the favor.

Actually believe it or not, in the Tuesday, October 11, 2011 issue of the Wall Street Journal – Personal Journal section, there’s an article by Kevin Helliker entitled “It’s Mine! The Selfish Gene”. From a study of children in a scientific online journal PLoS One, within about 1/3rd of children who weren’t as ‘sharing’ as the other 2/3rds, many of them had a variation in a certain gene in common, known as AVPRIA which regulates a hormone in the brain associated with social behaviors. So maybe what I’ve been saying all along in a joking way, is really a scientific fact.

**Condition #1** – You must make sure that you are genuinely "NetWeaving" and not still networking.

**Condition #2** – You are NetWeaving, but are you sure you are doing it for ‘givers’ and not ‘takers’?
Whatever the actual cause, ironically when you finally wise up to the fact that this person has no interest in ever looking for ways to return any favors, and you decide to move on, the taker may even get upset:

“Say whatever happened to all those leads you used to send me?”  Go figure!

Now I’m not suggesting that you should never NetWeave for a ‘taker’. Just be realistic and don’t expect anything to come back around. And some of them will eventually come around and I’ve even seen some near miraculous conversions from ‘taker’ to ‘giver’ because they discover how much fun and how energizing NetWeaving can be.

**Condition #3** - Are you following up on introductions and connections you have made for the benefit of others?

I’ve discovered that there's a disappointing side to human nature with respect to our failure to adequately credit and thank someone who makes an introduction for our benefit, especially when it comes back around to benefit us in some extraordinary way.

And I’m as guilty of it as anyone, maybe you are too.

When someone refers someone to us, that is when they make an introduction to someone for our benefit, and especially if we end up finding real value in the new relationship (e.g. a high-level introduction), we tend to take 'ownership' of the new relationship. We often forget that had it not been for the person who initially introduced us, none of the good things which have since taken place down the line would have ever happened.

This is especially true when the real benefit occurs one or two steps removed from the original introduction. That can be in the form of actual new business created, or just an additional introduction to someone else.

As the NetWeaver, you are one who needs to follow back up on connections which you make, realizing that it’s not the person’s fault that he or she doesn’t remember. It’s a weakness almost all of us have.

**EXAMPLE** - Philip says,

"Say Mary, whatever happened with that introduction I made between you and Ann Jones?"

Mary responds –

"Philip, I am so sorry. I forgot that you were one who introduced me to Ann. Well, Ann introduced me to Shirley Weber and she has now become one of my best clients. . .all because of you making the introduction to Mary. I need to find a way to return the favor."
Don’t feel badly if you can identify with this, or you can think of situations where you ask some high level contact or customer or client,

*“Do you remember how we met or who introduced us?”*

and you can’t remember!

We are all guilty of not remembering to trace those connections back to the original source and give him or her the real credit they are due. I maintain that it’s the NetWeaver’s responsibility to do so and not the persons we connect.

Some time ago I had a situation which is a perfect example of this as well as the benefit of following back up on connections we make for the benefit of others, even if it’s years later.

Almost a decade had passed since I had made a high level introduction for the benefit of a reporter who was a mere staff reporter at the time. He had called me as a resource for a story he was working on and after I supplied useful information which later was used in the story, I asked the reporter how I might help him.

He seemed rather surprised, but went on to name a well-known individual in the city who he said he would love to interview. I asked him, “When do you want me to set up the interview?”

The interview went very well and the interviewee subject ended up on the cover of one of the earliest issues of the magazine.

So here it was, 10 years later at a reception to which I had been invited. I was introduced to this individual who was now the editor of the magazine and although I reminded him we had met years before, I didn’t mention anything at the time about the circumstances of our original meeting.

Several days after the reception, through a new connection I had made with someone at the same magazine, I told this person the story of how I had connected the now-editor in his staff writer days with the well-known celebrity. Evidently he went back and told the story to his editor. Guess who got a call the next day wanting to do a story in the magazine on me and NetWeaving. You never know!

**Condition #4 -** Maybe it’s ME!

So now though, what happens when you go back and genuinely analyze how well you have been NetWeaving (i.e. ‘connecting’ others which is one of the most important skill sets of NetWeaving, as well as supplying gratuitous information and resources). After this analysis of how well you are following the Law of Referral Reciprocity, you conclude that you have been successfully meeting all three criteria:
First, you have been TRULY NetWeaving, and not still networking. You introduced (i.e. referred) this person or these persons to others with their Needs in mind rather than your own — without any implied or overt suggestion that you expect something done in return.

Secondly, you have been aware to NetWeave for 'givers' and not 'takers', or at least you were realistic in knowing that NetWeaving for ‘takers’ seldom comes back around. This one is more difficult because there are some very clever ‘disguised’ NetWeavers and I’ve found that this one often fools people and they spend too much of their time NetWeaving (i.e. making introductions) for the wrong people who don’t feel any obligation to return the favor.

Thirdly, you have been following up on connections you have made for others so others were reminded of who made the original introduction, and so you at least received thanks, recognition, and hopefully, credit for your good deeds.

So what’s the answer if you find that YOU fall into this group who are doing NetWeaving correctly, but not seeing much if anything come back around in the way of returned favors, especially in the way of connections or referrals being made back around for your benefit?

And the problem isn't that persons in this group were really ‘disguised NetWeavers’. I find most of these persons to be very genuine and 'nice' folks whom I could tell had been going out of their way to help others.

That's when I began to realize that what was lacking were elements in this person's personality, their demeanor or appearance, or just the way they generally came across. These were the root of the problem. The honest truth was that I would have had a difficult time myself making a returned favor connection since I wasn’t impressed enough that there was sufficient substance to warrant putting my own reputation on the line as their referrer, or even possibly as a recommender.

That’s when I finally realized that there was a 4th reason why someone’s NetWeaving often does not come back around to benefit them. Others don’t have enough confidence in them to take the ‘risk’ of making an introduction for their benefit.

Finally, I began helping people look in the mirror, and ask themself, "Maybe it’s ME!!". . . “Do other people see me as Recommendable and Referable?”

- How do I come across to others?
- Do others truly see me as competent and qualified in what I do?. . or better yet
- Do they see me as Unique?. . .better still. . .
- Do they see me as EXCEPTIONAL or REMARKABLE at what I do or what I can provide others?
NetWeaving offers many opportunities and ways for people to differentiate themselves from others and to demonstrate ‘uniqueness’. But one of the discoveries I made while doing the research for Raising your R&R Factor is that sometimes Net-Weaving isn’t enough.

As we’ve said before, any time you ‘refer’ or ‘recommend’ someone, you are taking a personal risk. You are putting your own reputation and credibility on the line. And the higher the level of the refer-ee or recommend-ee (i.e. the person to whom you are making a referral or recommendation), the greater the risk.

That also supports Frederick Reichheld’s premise for why someone’s willingness to recommend a company (and I added – ‘an individual’) to a friend or colleague is so predictive of growth, which I believe translates to... success across almost any industry.

So if you want to grow, learn more about how to make the NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity work for you. Much of the balance of this book will be dedicated to ways to differentiate yourself; make yourself more unique, and to become more REMARKABLE.

Not only have I included many tips which I have discovered over the years, but many of the best tips come from people I’ve interviewed or have known who are masterful at obtaining referrals and being recommended by others.
“What is the most unique thing you have EVER done to differentiate yourself from what others in your same industry do? WOW, no wonder you’re so referable!”

We’ve already mentioned a few natural advantages some persons have when it comes to being more ‘referable’ and ‘recommendable’ such as physical appearance, charisma, etc. But, anyone who sets their mind to it can develop characteristics and qualities that over time can make up for, and often totally over-shadow these more basic ones.

There’s a level below ‘natural’ qualities which add some degree of credibility and therefore add to a person’s “R&R”. These would include such things as education level attained, college attended, advanced degrees, current job title and position, organizations in which involved or headed. Here’s an example of a glowing introduction of someone which would unquestionably accelerate her ‘referability’.

“John, I’d like to introduce you Judy Jones. I’ve known Judy for 15 years when we both started at the same consulting company. Judy graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Duke and got her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Harvard. She’s now an independent consultant to some of the Fortune 50 companies who hire her to aid in top executive recruitment selection as well as delicate management and personnel situations. What’s especially unique about Judy is that she does no marketing. It’s all ‘word of mouth’ and she has ‘waiting list’ of companies looking to acquire some of her time. I believe this is partially due to the passion she has about what she does and her uncanny ability to recognize key executive leadership qualities in others which you and I might miss as well as an ability to see through some of those glib ‘communicators’ who can ‘talk the talk’ but who don’t walk the talk in real life.”

In actuality, who wouldn’t love to be introducing this high profile person to someone? This is important in that the way the person introduces Judy, not only completely describes what Judy does and accentuates what is unique and special about Judy, it also elevates the introducer’s image in Judy’s eyes.
This is one of the most important elements of making NetWeaving introductions for others. You have to get them to help you identify those things which are their `strategic differentiators`.

Someone else might make this less impressive introduction this way.

“John, I’d like to introduce you Judy Jones. I’ve known Judy for 15 years when we both started at the same consulting company. Judy is a psychologist by training and education and she works with companies and helps them select and hire top candidates.”

If you were John, which introduction would make you most desirous of having a subsequent meeting with Judy? Put another way, which introduction would give you an almost immediate confidence to want to introduce Judy to someone you know, realizing it would actually enhance your own image to do so?

**Developable Skills Sets Which Add to Your Referability**

- Ability to be a good listener and to be a repository for later use of the key points discussed
- Ability to be a good communicator including being a good ‘questioner’
- Ability to put forth a ‘professional’ image - adjusted as the situation warrants (a coat and tie at Microsoft or Google might not be appropriate).
- Ability to demonstrate PASSION in whatever it is you do. ...from the grocery bag-boy whose story you probably already know, to the executive recruiter.

“Passion is energy exuded”.

**The 9 P’s – Some Come Naturally – Some Are Developed**

Below those ‘natural’ attributes which make someone more R&R, as well as below the next level - education, position and job title, education, background and work history, there are other developable skills. These are typically attributes and qualities which usually can only be recognized over a longer period of time as a relationship has been developed.

I call these “the 9 P’s” although as you can see from my list, I’m fudging a little bit in only calling them “P’s”. My goal is just to make it easier for people to remember all 9. And although I’ve met a few persons over my life whom I would grade at the
highest level in each and every one of these, it’s more typical that even outstanding people who are highly ‘referable’ excel at some, but are not so outstanding and exceptional at others on the list.

This list of attributes and qualities include:

**Professionalism** – whose foundation is integrity. As we’ve seen repeated over and over again with corporate malfeasance, absent this building block, sooner or later, the building becomes a *house of cards* and tumbles down.

**Empathy** – the ability to walk in others’ shoes – to shadow their feelings and experiences as closely as is humanly possible. Empathy is expressed by being a great questioner and a great listener.

**Purpose** – to be seen by others as someone leading a purposeful life – hard to exactly explain but you know it when you see it. They ‘walk the talk’.

**Passion** – a *joie de vie* (joy of life) that radiates and others want to plug into their energy. Already mentioned, but it is also one of the easiest to learn.

**Persistence** – a dogged determination to finish whatever you start.

**Perseverance** – the ability to pick yourself up from your defeats knowing that these setbacks just represent approaches that didn’t work, on the road to the ones where victory is awaiting.

**Performance** – a reputation for being able to strategize and to execute plans and whether that’s in a business context or coaching a Little League Team or a Girl Scout Troop, or on the Board of a Non-Profit.

**Pursuit of excellence** – a burning desire not only to be the best that you can be but to inspire others to reach or exceed their own potential.
**Positive Creative Buzz** – a Positive ‘can-do’ mental attitude; empowered by Creativity, that creates a ‘Buzz’ about the person

But there’s one other ingredient which is very possibly the most important and that is ‘trust-worthiness’.

In some ways it’s the most difficult to see and to measure, but it’s also one that truly does make someone ultra-referable.

Now it’s time to grade yourself. At which ones of these do you excel? If you say, “All of them”, get a reality check. Ask your spouse, or a friend willing to be brutally honest with you.

This book will not tackle each point on this list but this makes for a great foundation for working with a professional coach who can not only help you accurately assess where you genuinely stand with these, he or she can help you also determine which are the best suited for your style and personality to work on.

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**Now for the Actionable Steps**

You know the saying, “*Actions speak louder than words*”. Some of the above “P” attributes are action-oriented but for the most part, they are ‘qualities’ which others hopefully observe in you. Now we’re going to shift to ‘actions’ which in some ways are the real keys to becoming more R&R since people can readily recognize these, and EVERYONE can work to improve in the following two areas. But first let me emphasize that if you don’t focus on improving in areas of the 9 “P’s” your increased R&R Factor™ will not be as meaningful either to those to whom you are now being recommended and referred, as well as to your own ‘life story’.

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**Want to Live a More Purposeful Life?**

A great friend, Giovanni Livera, has written one of the best books I have ever read – *Live a Thousand Years*. It makes it very clear that it’s NOT the time between the year you’re born and the year you die that measures the kind of life which you led during these few short years we each have to travel on life’s highways and backroads.

The real measure is,

*“How thick is your DASH?”*
In other words, what did you do with the time you had – short or long – between your DOB and DOD. I like to use the Boy Scout analogy, “Did you leave your campsite cleaner than how you found it?” In Giovanni’s book, “Live a Thousand Years”, he not only examines this “How are you living your life?” message through a series of chapters, each written as parables around the ‘twelve chimes of life’ as on a clock, but he has created a set of strategic plans and charts which can help you assess your current location on the journey, and what it may take for you to ‘maximize’ your life’s experience. And, depending upon your age, if you reach the zenith in each chime, it would allow you to ‘live a 1,000 years. See


And if you are a business or personal coach, or trainer, you may want to look into the workshops which Giovanni runs out of his state-of-the-art conference center in Orlando.

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Follow Up and Follow Through –
There’s a BIG Difference

One of the most important things that NetWeaving does that makes it so powerful and much more effective than traditional networking is that it offers a step-by-step method for building and strengthening relationships. That requires building and then maintaining trust.

The major weakness of all networking and this applies as much to NetWeaving, as it does to traditional networking, is a lack of “follow up” and “follow through” after meeting someone for the first time. And the difference between the two is important to understand.

"Following up" applies to the time frame immediately following a conversation or introduction to someone whom you want to get to know better. Within 24 hours of a first meeting, you should drop a note, send an email, or make a phone call and acknowledge some of the things the person said which had an impact on you and inspired you to want to follow up. That’s also why you need to write notes on the back of the person’s business card you collected when you met, or make notes following a telephone or internet introduction.

But ‘following up’ doesn’t usually do anything to move the relationship to the next level. It takes more.

"Following through" applies to the 'quality' and 'creativity' with which you follow up over time and this is where true NetWeavers really excel.

Say you read an article in a magazine or journal which you really like. Send a copy of the article to someone whom you think would benefit reading it, but go the extra mile
and pick out the two or three main points in the article which were most important to you and put that in your message that goes along with the article. The chances of the person actually reading the article, as a result of you pulling them into it, go up exponentially. That also increases the chance that they will call or write to thank you for sending it.

That’s ‘follow through’.

Here’s the difference: A followup note to Mary after meeting her at an event.

“Mary, really enjoyed meeting you and learning more about what you do as an image consultant. For that reason, I’m enclosing an article I came across which I thought you would enjoy. Look forward to seeing you again soon.”

Contrast that with this note:

“Mary, really enjoyed meeting you and learning more about what you do as an image consultant. You helped me realize some things to which I need to pay more attention in both my dress and the way I present myself. Also, I’m enclosing an article I came across which I thought you would enjoy. And to me, the key points in the article which were most meaningful concerning tips on introducing yourself:

- directly face the person; not turned at an angle and good eye contact
- repeat person’s name two to three times to help ingrain it in your memory
- firm handshake but not over-powering
- give total attention rather than letting your eyes wander

I would love to have breakfast or lunch sometime within the next week or so. How does your schedule look next Wed. for breakfast or would Thursday for lunch work better?”

In the first example, the enclosed article either went in the person’s trash can or in their ‘to-be-read’ stack.

In the second example, by including some good points which were mentioned in the article, the person is not only drawn into the article, but the chances are much greater she will respond back, thanking the NetWeaver for sending the article.

I also recommend doing the same thing when you read a good article by writing to the author or to a speaker you just heard. Make sure to include the key points you really liked, or even how it triggered a thought for another idea.
But without question, one of the most powerful forms of “following up” and “following through” is by offering to ‘host’ a meeting to introduce your new connection to someone he or she would benefit meeting. We’ll cover this in detail in Chapter 7 aimed at those persons who already have a fairly high R&R Factor.

Even among the most generous and benevolent souls in our world, there will be **HUGE** difference whether things will come back around depending upon what you do in the area of “following up” and “following through”. Which group would you fall in:

**Group 1** - Those who meet people who could become great assets to them, as well as to people they know, but because of a lack of ‘follow up’ on their part after a first connection, the relationship never grows roots, and therefore dies over time.

**Group 2** - Those who meet people — even outstanding individuals — and make some effort to follow up with an email, a personal note, or even a phone call, but who fail to really do anything in the way of following up which might impress their new contact in a way to move that potentially powerful new relationship to the next level.

**Group 3** - Those who meet new people who **knock their socks off**, and who by demonstrating an obvious ‘giver’s spirit’ and do something in the way of ‘following up’ which will make that new person say, “**WOW, no one has ever done THAT for me before**” - making the person often want to reciprocate in some way.

I label these differences not just ‘following up’ but rather ‘following through’. It’s the **QUALITY** but also the **CREATIVITY** with which someone follows up.

The first group doesn’t follow up at all. The second group follows up but does nothing particularly extraordinary. The third group both follows up AND follows through – WOWing the person in some creative way.

Which group would you fall into on a consistent basis? If you want to help make increase the chances that your NetWeaving will come back around to benefit you, you must find ways to not only ‘follow up’ but also ‘follow through’.
Chapter 5
The “NetWeaver’s Pyramid of Trust” – accelerating the trust-building process

“Trust is the reward you receive for being transparent and genuine.”

In my previous book, “The Heart and Art of NetWeaving”, I dedicate a good deal of space to what I call the “NetWeaver’s Pyramid of Trust” and how the process works from the time we first meet some-one up to the point at which we are able to build, attain, and hopefully retain trust – the pinnacle of relationship-building.

Recommendability and Referability are not possible without Trust so a quick review of the Pyramid of Trust can help explain how NetWeaving not only helps accelerate the process by which you can go from first meeting someone, to gaining and maintaining trust.

How does the process start when we first meet someone?

Trust

Small Talk & Overcoming Awkwardness

Body chemistry...Vibes – biological or genetic?

There are things that we don’t fully understand when we meet someone for the first time. Whether you want to call it body chemistry, vibes, or something biological or genetic, they may attract us to someone or actually make us a little cautious or stand-offish.
We usually try to get over this awkward initial conversation by starting with small talk - the weather, the traffic, sports, the economy, etc. The problem is that when people are in the small talk stage, the relationship never really goes anywhere.

“Meaningful Dialogue” is any conversation in which there is learning and growth. It is the exchange of information which allows you to see the side of someone you don’t see when engaged in small talk.

But if someone takes the initiative – sometimes requiring a little courage – and elevates the conversation to “meaningful dialogue”, things start to happen.

One way to inspire ‘meaningful dialogue’ is what I call GLP – Global – Local – Personal.

First, this requires that you make sure you initiate the conversation and you be the first to find out about the other person – their industry (Global) – their company (Local) – their role within the company (Personal).

By then asking, “(Name), if you had to name the two or three greatest challenges that your entire industry is facing these days, what would they be and are those the same ones you’re struggling with at your own company and within your own role, or have you discovered some unique ways to overcome those challenges?”.

As mentioned in the first chapter, you can refer to pages 58-59 for a series of questions we have used individually as well as within groups and organizations – all intended to ‘inspire meaningful dialogue’.

Unfortunately most relationships still die at this stage because people don’t follow through.

Without realizing it, when you engage in ‘Meaningful Dialogue’, it tends to raise appreciation and acceptance for the other person.

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Without realizing it, when you engage in ‘Meaningful Dialogue’, it tends to raise appreciation and acceptance for the other person.
Even after you have had a great first meeting and conversation with someone where there was great meaningful dialogue and a strong feeling of mutual appreciation and acceptance for each other, most relationships still die at this stage, because one or both of the individuals fail to follow up or follow through in any meaningful way.

Over the last decade as NetWeaving has continued to grow and expand nationally and internationally, it has been demonstrated over and over again that NetWeaving helps keep the relationship-building process advancing. Also by virtue of the connections made as well as the gratuitous resources provided, it ‘enriches’ the experience which psychologists tell us is what we really retain in our subconscious. So much of what we will be emphasizing in the balance of the book are ways to enrich the experience and make it more memorable.

So now that you have bonded and attained trust, does that mean you have it permanently?

Absolutely not. If you don’t have good follow up and follow through, after you have built and attained trust, you can lose it quickly. If you don’t stay in touch and continue to look for ways to be of help, you may create doubt that your NetWeaving was just a ploy to make a sale or get them to do something you wanted.
Chapter 6
What Prevents Many People from Being More Referable or Recommendable?

“Sometimes NetWeaving just isn’t enough to give someone the confidence to risk making a referral for someone else’s benefit”

Appearances can be deceiving

You’ve heard this saying: ‘appearances can be deceiving’. And although most would agree that it’s often true, for the most part, ‘what you see is what you get’. Someone who pays little attention to his or her appearance and dress, or hygiene, is often deficient in some other areas – lack of attention to detail; poor follow up, poor self-image, etc.

Now that said, if you’re talking to a brilliant rocket scientist with hair like Albert Einstein and one shirt tail hanging out, you may want to look beyond the appearance which could definitely be deceiving.

If you don’t have confidence in the way you dress and in your appearance, you may very well want to meet with an image consultant who can definitely give you many tips on making a good first impression.

The saying is true, “You only get one chance to make a good first impression”.

Poor Elevator Statement (ES)

An extremely useful exercise is to get with a group of people whom you know well and whom you trust and who trust you, and practice your ‘Elevator Statements’ (ES) on each other.

An ‘elevator statement’ gets its name from the idea that you happen to get on an elevator with Mr. or Mrs. Big, whom you’ve been trying to meet for months, and you have only a certain number of floors to impress this person and/or to sell them on your great idea. Therefore your ES has to be concise, powerful, and engaging so that the person will want to know more, either about you or your idea.

I am often surprised to hear how bland, confusing, or in many cases, how too cutesy some people’s elevator statement sound. Now there are many theories on what is appropriate or most effective and my intention here is not to ‘knock’ someone’s ES for
being to cute or gimmicky. In some industries and with some products or services, a catchy (even gimmicky) ES may be perfectly appropriate and effective.

But make sure to bounce it off enough people, including different groups, who are willing to really give you honest feedback. A much bigger weakness which I see is a lack of good, clear definition, and an absence of anything which makes the person...or what he or she does. **unique.**

Which of these introductions from a financial services perspective would be more appealing:

“Hello, I’m Tom Jones and I help provide my clients and their families with financial security”.

Which is he? Investments. Insurance. Financial planning. all of the above? There was also nothing which indicated **uniqueness,** or something which would catch my attention if I was possibly in the market for what he had to offer.

How about this instead?

“Hello, I’m Tom Jones. I’m with ABC Life, one of top 10 insurance companies, and we’re ranked #1 by (XYZ rating service) for overall customer satisfaction. I specialize in life, disability, and Long-Term Care insurance and over 90% of my business comes to me by referrals from my existing clients and that gives me the time to also serve on boards of several non-profits.”

The 2nd introduction is more appealing in that it is much more specific but more importantly, it demonstrates uniqueness with a little bit of ‘humanity’ thrown in. Of course, this ES could only come from a fairly seasoned veteran in that he would have had to have ‘earned’ the trust of clients over time for 90% of his business to be coming from referrals.

Becoming a more proficient NetWeaver, while also learning how to make yourself more unique and even remarkable, will allow you to end up at the top in any field.

As you are working up your own ES, here are a series of questions which will help you:

- **Does this clearly and succinctly state what I do so that persons unfamiliar with me or my industry will understand?**

- **Will it make someone who might already be thinking about the product or service you’re describing want to learn more about you and what you have to offer?**

- **Are there at least two points in my ES which help differentiate me and/or my company from others in that same industry or profession?**
Here’s another idea which we previously mentioned on page 42. It can be very effective, especially within a group setting. I call it GLP – Global – Local – Personal.

First, as you’re meeting someone, always try and have the other person describe what they do first:

- **Globally** - their industry – meaning within the context of their entire industry – national and international if applicable.

- **Locally** – their local company which may or may not be the same division or have the same mission as the larger organization

- **Personally** – what do they wake up at night worrying about in their individual role?

**Global** “Name, so John/Mary, you said you are in the Widget industry. If you had to describe the 2 or 3 major challenges confronting your industry today, nationally or globally what would they be and . . .

**Local & Personal** . . what are you doing within your own company and in your own role to overcome these or have you figured solutions no one else has thought of which you would be willing to share?”

Now, armed with that information, describe in generic terms first - a Need you help your customers or clients fulfill, OR, a Problem you help them solve, OR an Opportunity you help people take advantage of.

Then come riding in on your white horse to more specifically help in one or more of those areas, hopefully framing your description in ways that align with what you learned about the other person if it is applicable to your product or services.

Finally, finish with a short example or story of how you did exactly that for someone with a similar, Need, Problem, or Opportunity.

**EXAMPLE**
You are a financial planner or advisor, wealth manager, personal banker, or executive coach, personal banker, each dealing with high net worth individuals. The person you just met happens to be a business owner of a successful company which means he or she probably could use your services.

“(Name of person with whom you’re speaking), ________ thanks for sharing that information about you and your company.

The key challenge that I often see with persons like yourself is that the demands on their time are so great, they have to depend on the advice of other trusted advisors because they realize you can’t be an expert on everything. During my (10, 20, 30, 40?) years of experience working with highly successful individuals, I believe the most important first step is to establish
a level of trust, and that’s most often even before they become a client. I’d like to learn more about you, your company, and both of your objectives so that I might offer some ways I could see adding value to our relationship.

(Tell story of one such situation where that person whom you helped has now become a top client).

I would love to have coffee or lunch sometime just to get to know each other better and to see if there are any persons I know whom you might benefit meeting and knowing, or some resources I have, or that someone within my network might have and be willing to share – ‘no-strings-attached’ – just as a way of establishing a trusted relationship.

Would that be of interest to you? OR

Could we do that? OR Would that be ok?”

The last final chapters of this book will focus on ideas which will help people learn how to think more creatively and how to better differentiate themselves. You have probably seen this analogy but if not, this phrase refers to a puzzle in which people are challenged to connect 9 dots by drawing 4 lines while not picking up the pen or pencil as they connect the dots.

![Diagram of 9 dots connected by 4 lines](image)

The point to this exercise is that we tend to start out by trying to solve the problem by only connecting dots with lines that are within the inside range of the 9 dots and it can’t be done. It’s only when we begin to use our creative minds and to recognize that a line can extend outside the range of the 9 dots that the solution to the puzzle becomes apparent.

One of the most important ways to become more Referable and Recommendable is to be viewed by others as an ‘outside-the-9-dots’ thinker - as someone who is different from the others in that same business or industry. And since there are an infinite number of ways which people can differentiate and distinguish themselves from others, anyone and everyone can do this.
Chapter 7 –
For Those with a Lower R&R Factor,
What Specific Things Can You Do to Raise It?

“Sometimes NetWeaving may just not be enough and it’s time to look in the mirror”

The Courage to Admit You Need Help

For those who have read the book up to this point and who are willing to admit that maybe they ARE at least partly the reason why they aren’t seeing more ‘referral reciprocity’. . .Congratulations! It takes courage to recognize and accept this. Those who don’t do so will just go through life figuring that others are just luckier or smarter and that’s why business is referred their way and not to them.

We started out in Chapter 4 pointing out some of the specific things you can do to make a stronger first impression as well as attributes which in the long-run make persons more R&R. Hiring a coach is one of the best ways to work on these attributes and more on this in Chapter 9.

But persons who fall into this category of having a lower R&R Factor™, must accept that to change and to grow, they must be willing to step outside their comfort zone.

One of the best ways to not only improve your NetWeaving skills, but to be seen in a different light by some of your closest connections is for you to help create and form your own ‘NetWeaving Enrichment Group”. When YOU introduce this “Golden Rule” form of networking and the way to organize the group, you will experience first-hand the power of being the NetWeaver who helps other people get to know each other below the superficial level.

Creating deeper relationships is largely accomplished through ‘inspiring meaningful dialogue’ in a group setting which, as we said earlier in the review of NetWeaving and in the chapter on the NetWeaver’s Pyramid of Trust, allows you to see a different side to someone. And that often sheds more light on their humanness and that’s what often helps form a bond.

Without really being aware of it, this process tends to raise your appreciation and acceptance level for the other person and vice versa, especially if you can empathize with the experiences they are sharing. That’s what allows you to really connect with them..
Why Form a NetWeaving Enrichment Group?

On an individual level, learning how to ‘host’ meetings to introduce two other people is one of the most valuable NetWeaving skill sets. The meetings can either be set up virtually over the internet or by phone, or an “In-Person Hosting” meeting where you are there to act as the introducer and moderator.

But more and more people are discovering that forming a NetWeaving Enrichment Group – to learn more about the concept as well as to enrich new and old relationships - is a wonderful way to accomplish both and easier for some people to do.

If the answer to any or all of these questions is ‘yes’ or even ‘probably’, you will derive a great deal of satisfaction from forming a NetWeaving Enrichment Group.

Would you like to:

- make new relationships with other like-minded people who share your same NetWeaving ‘givers’ mindset and outlook?
- learn how to practice the 3 skill sets of NetWeaving on a more regular basis by doing so in a trusted environment among new and old friends?
- better understand the process of relation-ship-building by learning more about ‘meaningful dialogue’ as well as how to inspire it with others?
- learn how becoming a skilled NetWeaver makes you more referable so long as you are proficient at what you do. . .and even better. . .if you are remarkable at what you do?
- become more of an outspoken advocate of the NetWeaving concept not only to elevate and enhance your own image, but to discover how doing so energizes you and makes you better at everything you do?

A NetWeaver’s Enrichment Group can also help some within the group who, like yourself, feel you are not as Referable & Recommendable as others. Once trust has been established, genuine feedback to those needing to develop ways to become more Referable & Recommendable can be one of the most valuable outcomes.

You set as one of the goals within the group to brainstorm ways that EACH person might be able to differentiate themselves and to be seen by others as more unique – even remarkable.

There are as many ways to form a NetWeaving Enrichment Group as there are ideas. The key to forming a successful group is begin with the right nucleus of persons who are genuine ‘givers’. They may or may not have already been practicing
NetWeaving in one form or another – but you feel they will definitely like learning about it.

I recommend starting with either 4 or 5 of these like-minded persons. First you have an organizational meeting and share the concept with them if they aren’t familiar with it already. Much of the material in the NetWeaving review at the beginning of this book will be sufficient to give them the overview they will need although we do recommend purchasing “The Heart and Art of NetWeaving” at the website: www.netweavinginternational.com and also downloading, “The NetWeaver’s Creed” by going to the website. We also recommend having everyone take the “NetWeaver Aptitude Assessment” free quiz, available at the NetWeaving home page.

Then each of the four persons who initially formed the group bring up the names of a couple of other people whom they think would fit into the group.

You then invite this second group of 4 or 5 and hold your 2nd meeting. The group now totals 8 – 10 which is just right since there will usually be 1 or 2 who can’t make one or more of the meetings and you still end up with 6 or 7 leaving plenty of time for individual contribution and sharing. We have held some of these meetings in restaurants or a bar (so long as it’s quiet enough that you can easily talk and listen) or in someone’s home with everyone bringing their own beverage and ordering out Chinese food or pizza.

At this second meeting, you repeat the process of reviewing the NetWeaving concept (important to set the tone of the meeting) and that the purpose of the group is to establish deeper relationships – not to create business leads and referrals although some of these will naturally flow as a consequence of looking for ways to help each other.

The first and second meetings start with a fairly in-depth background history - personal and business – of each person. It’s no problem that the first tier of members repeats their background and history a second time for the newcomers. We also suggest that someone takes notes during these initial sessions and circulate this background information to the group. It really helps with the retention of the key information (spouse’s name, profession, family, pets, hobbies, schooling and business background).

One area of emphasis involves trying to get everyone to carefully describe his or her ‘strategic differentiators’ about their company and/or their job. This is to help each member be better enabled to make an introduction for another member. The better someone is able to describe what is UNIQUE about them or their company, the better prepared each person in the group will be to make that next important connection as well as to know what resources they could possibly provide.

As noted in the previous chapter, this is an ideal group within which people can test their ‘elevator statement’ (ES). Often, someone’s ‘elevator statement’ is confusing, or too cute, or just bad. If the group has built sufficient trust with each other, acting as a
non-threatening sounding board to critique each other’s business messages or missions is one of the most powerful functions the NetWeaving Enrichment Group can provide. And boy does it help build trust.

After the introductions and backgrounds are made, the group typically picks out one or more questions meant to ‘inspire meaningful dialogue’.

Here are a series of some of the ones we’ve used or which have been used by other groups. Refer also to the one we mentioned previously on Page 7.

“Who is someone – a business, political or military leader or anyone of historical significance whom you most admire and why?”

“What is your favorite fiction or non-fiction book and why?”

“If money were no object and you could be doing anything you’d really want to be doing, what would it be and why?”

“What was the low point in your business life and career, and what did you do to pull yourself back up?” “In so doing, what did you learn about yourself?”

“If you could go back in time and do a 60 Minutes type interview with anyone, who would it be and why?”

“If you could look down at your own funeral and summarize what you hoped others might be describing about your own life, what would you hope people would be saying?”

“What is your favorite quote?”

“What personality trait do you most admire in others?...The one you most dislike?”

“What is the most important issue facing Georgia (or your state. . .or your town)?”.

“What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment to date and why does it give you so much satisfaction?”

“How would your friends describe you? Is that the same way you would describe yourself?”

“What do you consider to be your greatest strength? What about your major weakness?”
“What can you count on for a good laugh or to cheer you up? (Or) When you feel like you need a good laugh, what do you do?”

“What has been your (and spouse’s) favorite vacation of all time? Where did you go and did you discover any secret out-of-the-way places you could share?”

“Now that you know more about NetWeaving, who is the best ‘Connector’ of others you know and why do you say that?” “Who is the best ‘no-strings-attached’ Resource Provider for others you know – a real ‘go-to’ person and why do you say that?”

After the first two initial meetings, usually scheduled within the first month after organizing, you can take the group in any of several different directions and most groups shift to one meeting a month, each usually lasting 2 – 2 ½ hours:

Hold a meeting in which one person gets to pick the theme (or the ‘meaningful dialogue’ question’) and acts as the moderator.

• Have a series of 3 meetings – with each one focused on one of the 3 skill sets of NetWeaving:
  - 1) being a better connector of others;
  - 2) positioning yourself as a ‘no-strings-attached resource for others so you develop the reputation as the ‘go-to’ person;
  - 3) creating your own Trusted Resource Network made up of persons who are exceptional at what they do.

• Bring in a speaker on a provocative topic or review a book as a book club might do.

The “Don’t Need to Read the Book” book club

Several years ago, I came up with an idea which has now become another one of those wonderful benefits of NetWeaving. It is also one which I had never envisioned. But it also represents something which I can bring to the table to help those who are looking for ways to become more Referable and Recommendable.

Being a very active member of a business club, I lamented that our club’s book club events usually only attracted only a handful of our members. Probably the number one reason is that the people who would love to come are extremely busy in their own
careers or running their own business, and don’t feel that they could contribute to the discussion, especially since they hadn’t had the time to actually read the book.

I had (and still do) have a pile of great business books which I have accumulated over time, or which others have sent to me, but just haven’t taken the time to dedicate to reading them. Well, I decided that since I love to write, I would try something definitely outside the 9 dots.

I began by emailing Daniel Pink, the author of one of the most important books of our time – “A Whole New Mind” – describing the transformation we are experiencing, going from the ‘Information Age’ where pure technologists and anyone who could write code ruled, to the ‘Conceptual Age’ where right brain thinkers and innovators will dominate.

I sent him my written summary with an explanation, mentioning that I wasn’t summarizing the entire book and actually including ‘teasers’ with page references for why someone would not only want my summary but to also own the book.

As of the date of the recent re-self-publishing of this book, I am now on my 50th book summary and we have had as many as 70 persons attending one of the book club meetings with the average being 25 to 35.

One of the benefits of going through one of my NetWeaving programs will be that these summaries will be available to those who purchase this book.

I decided that this could be a real ‘win-win-win’:

- a ‘win’ for those who, like me, feel they don’t have the time to read some of the greatest business books of our time.

- a ‘win’ for the authors, to whom I have shown, we sell more of their books than they would with a more traditional book club. You’ll get the summary but probably also end up wanting to also own the book.

- a ‘win’ for those persons who decide that they want to make “NetWeaving” training a part of their business model, and that this can become one of the ‘value-add’ offers they can provide.

Once again from this point on, the possibilities are only limited by the group’s imagination and creativity. At some point, you will want to decide if you want to remain as a group; enlarge the group, or split up and form several new groups to build relationships with a different group of people.

I would also recommend that it’s a good idea to suggest at the very beginning that this group should hold 4 - 6 meetings over about the next 4 to 6 months and then split up. The group can still decide to continue as is but this also opens up an avenue for exit if for any reason, the chemistry isn’t there or if there’s one or two persons in the
group who just don’t really fit with the NetWeaving philosophy or with the personalities of some others in the group. Believe it or not, we seldom all get along with everyone.

Host Meetings for Friends

The most powerful aspect of NetWeaving is learning how – during conversations or communications of any kind - to constantly be asking yourself “Who do I know who would benefit meeting this person?” And when you think of someone, YOU be the one to suggest ‘hosting’ a meeting to introduce that individual to the person whose name you have come up with.

You can review how to set up a hosting meeting by referring to the NetWeaving primer section in Chapter 1. We suggest that you start out hosting a meeting for a couple of close friends who don’t know each other and who would easily agree to meet. You will see the power of ‘hosting’ just by bringing them together; explaining a little about the NetWeaving concept and then following the procedures we have outlined:

- Introduce each other with special emphasis on strategic differentiators so you can identify points of uniqueness – sometimes this takes work
- Throw out a question which will inspire ‘meaningful dialogue’ so that you get to see the side of each person you wouldn’t ordinarily see in a normal conversation.
- Help them focus on ways to help each other and possibly to help each other fine-tune their ES’s.
- When one or both of them thank you for setting up meeting and ask how can they help you, **you simply ask each of them to ‘pay it forward’** and possibly host a meeting for each other – to introduce him or her to someone he or she knows.

After you host your first few hosting meetings, you will understand the power behind the concept and you are now ready to really begin pushing your comfort zone.

You will be ready to try some of the NetWeaving ‘outside the 9 dots’ ideas in the next chapter.
“The stars who shine the brightest are always looking for ways to shine brighter”

Those fortunate individuals who, over time, have learned the secret to becoming very Recommendable & Referable will almost to a person validate the “NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity”. They frequently get referred and are introduced to others because they consistently refer and recommend others as well.

But the best news for them is that if they will follow some of ideas and guidelines we lay out in this chapter, they will benefit from becoming even more R&R.

Nest with Other Eagles

One of the problems I have personally had with many ‘networking’ groups is that they often put people together with an understanding of making reciprocal referrals without establishing the quality of each individual’s work and their ‘client/customer service’ orientation. That’s one reason why I recommend that when persons first form a NetWeaving Enrichment Group, they start with a small core of persons whom you already recognize as exceptional at what they do.

Eagles tend to hang around with other eagles. Therefore when you expand the group by asking each of the 3 or 4 core group members to invite one or two persons whom they know to join, with an understanding that: a) each is exceptional at what he or she does; b) each is a truly ‘giver’ and not a ‘taker’, the entire group will be eagles or eaglettes.

You can refer to the previous chapter for how to run the meetings. The big difference is that when you put these people who already have a high R&R Factor together via ‘virtual’ or ‘in-person’ hosting meetings, the ripple effect of connections made and resources provided expand almost exponentially.

Become a Resource to the Media

Members of the media are always looking for good newsworthy content and for newsmakers. The mistake which most people make is always trying to grab the
limelight for themselves. Public Relations firms are paid big bucks to get coverage for their clients and for prospective clients but I’ve been doing it for years without being paid. And yet, the payoff comes when that article on a client or prospective client is published and they come back to you and say, ‘Thank you so much. How can we help you?”

And when you help an editor or contributing editor or freelance writer for a publication by recommending someone for an interview or an interesting topic for an article that just turns out great, you have created a very important relationship.

This is not an overnight process. The media is naturally distrustful of persons approaching them and often for good reason. You begin by being a voracious reader of articles within a wide range of publications. When you read a particularly great article, you find a way to contact the author, either by email, letter, and/or telephone, and let them know how much you enjoyed the article and how valuable it was to you.

But the most important part is not the ‘follow up’. . .remember from a previous chapter, following up is doing something (e.g. an email) but not enough to move the relationship forward, whereas ‘follow through’ involves the quality and creativity with which you follow up.

To follow through, when you write the email or letter, or make the successful phone connection, you want to be very specific about how their article helped you or a client, or someone you know. Secondly you might make an observation about how a particular point in the article triggered a new idea or concept in your mind. Not only is this a compliment to the author, but I know that over the time I have been doing this, I have given some of these authors an idea which I’ve seen later in another article or in a book they’ve written.

And finally, you explain a little about your field but say that you have a rather extensive network and if they are ever looking for a source for a story, you would be glad to refer the writer or editor to one of those individuals who are truly exceptional in their field. You never try and promote yourself.

Become a Speaker

As you’ve probably heard, fear of speaking to an audience, is the Number One fear people have – above fear of heights, spiders, and snakes. WOW!.

I overcame this fear, and people who see me speak now, would probably say, “Oh yeah, sure. I'll bet you've always been a natural speaker”.

I used to only do speeches by writing out every word and then attempting to memorize it so that I would only have to occasionally look at my written speech. I’ll never forget the time that I mixed up a couple pages and when I lost my place, I panicked. I don’t even remember what I said, but I can promise you I was never invited back to speak to that group.
The secret is to ‘face your demons’ head-on and to do it in a ‘safe environment’. That’s really what “ToastMasters” is all about. Also companies like SpeakEasy train people to speak. I did both.

Today, I’m as comfortable speaking to an audience of 1,000 as I am talking within a table of three people I know.

So how does ‘speaking’ raise your R&R Factor? Easy. People already recognize your excellence at what you do, and they want to know your secrets and your wisdom about your area of expertise. Becoming a sought-after speaker will create ripple effects which once again will accelerate your R&R Factor™ exponentially.

Find a topic that fascinates you and something which will differentiate you. With the internet, it’s very easy to become an ‘expert’ on almost any topic you’d wish to choose.

**Become a Teacher**

In much the same way, volunteering to teach, at virtually any level, but especially at the college level where you can provide important insights and tips for success, will accelerate your R&R Factor. But more importantly, ‘teaching’ is all about ‘paying it forward’ and passing on what great mentors of yours have taught you.

In addition to programs I have been teaching at the college MBA level, several years ago, as part of a collaborative program with the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, I volunteered to be a “Principal For A Day”. This program is part of Atlanta Partners for Education, a collaborative effort among the Metro Chamber, the Atlanta Public School System and the business community. The idea is to bring corporate leaders and successful entrepreneurs into the classrooms. I was assigned to an all-African American elementary school in south Atlanta where many of the K through 5th grade students are coming from very low-income families.

Prior to my day of ‘shadowing’ the Principal, I asked this dynamo of a school principal if I could try an experiment. I wanted to try teaching her students about NetWeaving and Pay it Forward.

We toured almost every classroom and I was amazed that this principal knew the names of at least 2/3rds of students in every room. Then she escorted me to a larger room where all of the 3rd-graders from the school were assembled. I would estimate there were about 65 of them seated in 4 rows of chairs.

First, I told them a little about the two concepts – that NetWeaving is a way of making new friends and growing stronger friendships by finding ways to help your friends and then asking them to do the same for their friends. I explained that that’s what “Pay It Forward” is all about. Instead of paying the person back who helped you,
you have to 'pay it forward' and find someone else to go help. I said that, “It’s all about introducing your friends to other friends, and then asking them to 'pay it forward' and to do the same with their friends, and even with some students which neither of you know. That way you can have more friends!”

Then I had each student stand up and introduce him or herself. The first time through, I didn’t try and coach them even though a number of very shy ones mumbled their name while looking at the floor. Nevertheless, the first time, I let it go.

Then, after the whole group had done this exercise, I had each person stand up together with the person next to him or her and shake hands, and introduce him or herself to the other person. And this time I made sure they had good eye contact and that each said their name so it could be understood.

Finally, I asked for volunteers and there were plenty of hands waving. In each case, I had the person who volunteered and who was now standing down front with me, pick out one of his or her best friends in the class, and bring him or her down front. Then the two of them had to pick someone else from out of the audience whom neither of them knew. With all 3 of them down front, the two friends had to take turns shaking hands with good eye contact - introducing their friend - to this student whom neither of them knew.

When it was all over, I was really happy with the response, but what I didn’t know was whether this was just going to be a fun one-time exercise or if any of this would really stick.

The following day, having sat through the debriefing session at the Four Seasons Hotel, I emailed Donna Lowry, the emcee of the program and a news reporter from WXIA (the NBC affiliate). I told her a little about what I had done and she said she wanted to go back to the school and re-do this and film it to show on TV.

I decided to wait several weeks before calling Pat Lavant, the principal, because I wanted to see if there had been any lasting impact. When I finally called her and said that WXIA might want to come back and film the exercise, she was thrilled, but she also asked me if I had received the letters from her children yet?

What I didn’t realize was that I’d had a package which was too large for my Post Office box sitting there at the post office for a couple weeks, and with long lines, I hadn’t picked it up thinking it was just a little Christmas gift from one of the companies with whom I do business.

When I opened it, there were several poster-sized cards with many thankyou’s, pictures of kids, and drawings about Pay It Forward and NetWeaving. I must admit I had a handkerchief out while I was reading some of the cute posters as well as some of the charming letters that came with them. Things like: “I’m NetWeaving so-and-so with so-and-so” or “I’m “Paying It Forward” and helping so-and-so because so and so helped me.” It was truly ‘handkerchief’ time.
I’ve now gone back each year in the Fall and repeat the same three exercises with the entire 3rd grade class. I’ve also visited the classes I had previously taught and I’m now a little bit of a celebrity..

We also formed a Pay It Forward and NetWeaving Council where we worked with the students to apply for ‘mini-grants’ for up to $500 for ideas they came up with.

[www.payitforwardfoundation.org]

I believe these two concepts could really be taught at the grade-school level and maybe they would help stave off some of the ‘cliquish’ behavior that starts later on when it’s not ‘cool’ to know anyone except your own friends.

A few years ago when my first class of 3rd graders got ready to graduate as 5th graders and go on to Middle School, I once again contacted the principal to see about adding NetWeaving and Pay It Forward to the Graduation ceremony. In the Spring now, each 5th grader gets his or her “NetWeaving – Pay It Forward Ambassador” diploma – with their name on it - challenging them to take the concepts with them into Middle School and hopefully on through life.

I have a feeling that some of these kids will still have that diploma the day they graduate from college because you never know the impact that one little bit of encouragement and recognition can have.

If you would ever want to do this at some elementary school, I would be happy to share the process and the template for the diploma so you could print them out as well.

Expand your Trusted Resource

If you already have a relatively high R&R Factor, you probably already have assembled a Trusted Resource Network made up of persons who are exceptional in their field or industry. But as you learn more and more about NetWeaving and using NetWeaving ‘hosting’ as an easy way to introduce very high profile individuals to each other – with you being the NetWeaver host/moderator, just watch how quickly you can make new additions.

NetWeaving within a Charitable Organization

It wasn’t that many years after I had kicked off the NetWeaving concept that I discovered a very valuable application of the NetWeaving concept, skill sets, and action steps as it related to the value to Non-Profits.
I had been asked to do a Board Retreat for a major national non-profit. What became apparent was that although many of their high-profile board members knew each other from a fairly superficial standpoint, they really didn’t know each other down at a deeper level.

My presentation not only helped these Board members get to know each other at a deeper level, but even more importantly, it allowed me to see how NetWeaving could help any non-profit with high-profile board members - using NetWeaving ‘hosting’ - as a way for board members to approach some of their closest friends to get involved, without feeling they are really ‘hitting on them’.

Simply ‘hosting’ a meeting to introduce two of their close friends who don’t already know each other, can not only create a new friendship, but also generate connections to benefit the cause, sometimes almost immediately.

Here’s how a NetWeaving introduction phone call by a high profile board member to a close friend might sound:

“(Name) just recently, I was introduced to a concept call “NetWeaving” – a Golden Rule and “Pay it Forward” form of networking which is just all about connecting two people with their needs in mind, rather than your own, and also providing them with resources you might be able to provide – just as a way to build a trusted relationship.

(Name) I feel that you are one of those individuals I’ve known over my career who have been practicing this concept and the skill sets, just without a word for it.

I have a good friend to whom I would like to introduce you and wondered if you would be willing to meet sometime for a breakfast or lunch. I’m sure the two of you will find ways to help each other and also will discover other people who you know in common.”

We have found that at the end of most of these meetings, one or both of the parties will turn the table and say, “How can we help you?”

Here’s a response with the charity in mind:

“(Name), I didn’t want to do anything that would infringe upon our friendship, but if you’re really asking me that, I would like you to know that I’m PASSIONATE about the XYZ charity and whether you ever would be willing to give of your time, energy, or money to that same cause, I would love to know about it, or if you know or meet someone who also shares my same passion, please let me know that as well.”
As we’ve shown over and over again, learning how to improve upon the skill sets, strategies and action steps of NetWeaving is extremely effective in raising your R&R Factor™ and growing your business. But, if you will go even farther and become an outspoken advocate to others of all aspects of the NetWeaving concept, you will not only notice how it will elevate your image in the eyes of others, but it will supply you with an additional source of energy, the kind which only comes from helping others.

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As mentioned previously we recommend that you re-take the “NetWeaver’s Aptitude Assessment” quiz at least annually, or better yet, every 6 months, and you will be surprised how you will keep improving in areas where you previously were weaker.

There will be two NetWeaving online courses that be available in the near future. One of them – “The NetWeaver Diplomat” is a ‘certificate course’ intended for those who want to learn the basics of NetWeaving and especially to be able to clearly explain the concept to others.

A second, and much more intense year-long program – “The NetWeaver Emissary” is aimed at an elite group of NetWeavers who recognize the power of ‘hosting’ NetWeaving meetings on a regular basis, as well as coming up with truly creative ways to act as a ‘gratuitous resource for others’. The definition of an Emissary implies that the individual is on a specific mission and the action steps involve the two key elements of NetWeaving – connecting others and acting as a trusted resource.

Those who already have a high R&R Factor™ can do a tremendous service to those whose referability is below par. One of the greatest joys you can experience is watching someone you have helped, raise their R&R factor™ and blossom into a full-blown skilled NetWeaver whose acts of kindness and generosity DO come back around to benefit them.

Become a NetWeaver Diplomat or a NetWeaving Ambassador
"A good coach can help you discover and uncover your goals and mission in life; establish a plan to accomplish those goals; help you monitor your progress, and most importantly, hold you accountable"

Why Hire a Coach?

When you take the "NetWeaver's Aptitude Assessment" quiz either at www.netweavinginternational.com, you will find out how you stack up currently as a NetWeaver.

But whether you score as a "Natural NetWeaver" (i.e. been doing it your entire life – just without a word for it); a "NetWeaver in the Wings" (i.e. been doing a lot of it but see a few areas in which you could improve), or even a "NetWeaver's Apprentice" (i.e. done some but see many areas in which you can improve), you should consider hiring a coach.

A good coach will help you: 1) discover and uncover your goals; 2) strategize and help you establish a plan to achieve your goals and even your mission in life; 3) help you monitor your progress toward those goals and probably most importantly, hold you accountable for executing the plan.

Uncover and Discover Goals

One thing that people don’t necessarily connect with making someone more 'referable' is having goals. Goal-oriented people exude an air of confidence which comes from having set goals and having a plan.

Just think of the difference in confidence level when you were back in school and you went in to take a test for which you had fully prepared. You had gone to all the classes; taken good notes, and read all the assignments. Contrast that with someone who missed many classes and only crammed the night before the exam. I break into a cold sweat just thinking about it.

Why are you working? Sure, it’s to help earn a living for you and your family, but if that’s all, it’s an empty existence. Setting goals – business and personal - adds spice to life.

A coach can help you uncover and discover your real goals, some of which you might not have even been aware.
Strategize and establish a plan to achieve your goals

Remember the Lewis Carroll quote, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there”.

A good coach has seen it all. People don’t ‘plan to fail’...they usually just ‘fail to plan’. Matching the plan to your own personality and to your own strengths is important and professional coaches have a case full of tools to help map out the right plan.

As we’ve said before, highly analytical and more introverted persons who are looking for ways to become more ‘remarkable’, and thus to become more ‘referable’, are going to require a different plan than more extroverted and gregarious souls.

For example, the strategies and plans for these highly analytical types will center more around ways from them to get recognized as a generous ‘go-to’ person – willing to serve as a helpful ‘no-strings-attached’ resource-provider and a creative problem-solver.

Hold You Accountable for Executing the Plan

Although some in the coaching profession would probably disagree with me, I believe the most important function of a coach is the accountability aspect.

It’s the ‘Follow Up’ and ‘Follow Through’ which really thwarts most plans – even great ones.

Referring back to Chapter 4, there’s a difference between the two terms. Following Up involves taking some action on a timely basis, but not enough that it moves the relationship to the next level. Those who SAY they are going to follow up by doing something often don’t. Procrastination is often our Number 1 enemy.

But when you say ‘by when’ you’re going to do something and your coach holds you accountable and periodically checks up to see your progress, it will often get you back on track where you’d fallen off or fallen behind.

Just by being someone who Follows Up in a timely manner on a consistent basis puts people way ahead of the curve and adds to your R&R factor™, but it’s the Follow Through which truly makes someone ‘ultra-referable and recommendable’ – the ‘Quality’ and even more importantly, the ‘Creativity’ with which you Follow Up.

Creativity and innovation coaching is something which often calls for a different set of skill sets. Great planners and strategists are sometimes not the best at helping people come up with ways to amaze and astound people.
There are more and more coaches these days who are carving out their reputation as creatologists and innovators. There is an increasing number of great books, tapes, and programs which focus on this critical element of becoming REMARKABLE!!.

One of my favorite books on creativity is “Leading on the Creative Edge – Gaining Competitive Advantage Through the Power of Creative Problem Solving”, by Roger L. Firestien, PhD, a Professor of creativity and innovation at Buffalo State College. Incidentally it’s also one of the books I summarized in connection with the “Don't Need to Read the Book” book club.

To really confront and attack where you stand as an innovative and creative person, you first must be willing to move outside your comfort zone.

You probably know the exercise in which you are asked to cross your arms. Then you are told to reverse the order of whichever arm was on top so you could feel how awkward that feels. Stretching your ‘creativity’ is something which certainly can be done by yourself, but it is much, much easier with a coach or within a group of highly creative people.

Finding a coach who can do all the above well may take some searching. Like with most things, getting referrals and recommendations from someone whom you know who has had a transformational experience with a great coach is always the best way.
“Creativity is the ability to look at something and to see what others don’t see”

Chapter 10 – Creativity and Innovation

Pretend you’re a Kid again

When we are very young, our parents and teachers serve as our ‘creativity’ managers, cheer-leaders and coaches. They see to it that our senses are flooded with all sorts of stimulations – visual and auditory. We are encouraged to stretch our imaginations and expand our creativity in infinite directions.

But as we age, and there’s too much emphasis on ‘conformity’ rather than ‘creativity’, much of that outside encouragement disappears and it is left up to us to continue on our own creativity journey.

Luckily that’s changing now. There are many new programs at many colleges, universities, and technical colleges which are totally focused on creativity and innovation. It’s truly the wave of the future.

I’ve always found that whether it involves writing an article, a book, or working on almost any problem, the best first step in any creativity exercise is to start by writing down a series of questions. The key is to resist the temptation to begin answering any of the questions, especially the ones which make you want to start writing because it triggered a great idea. Write a couple words down to not lose the thought, but go back to coming up with more questions.

I like to use the example of a coin jar. Before automatic coin counters, I used to collect my loose change in a big container, and then at some point when it’s mostly full, I would sort the coins into denominations and put them into coin holders. I always would start out by pulling out all the quarters. I found it fascinating that when I thought I had found the last quarter, there were still 10 more quarters hidden beneath those other coins. And then when I found those ten additional quarters, and I was sure I had found them all this time, there were still probably 3 to 5 more and even after that, and still more beyond that.

It’s the same way with questions. When you think you’ve written down every single question surrounding whatever topic or problem you’re working on and that you can now start writing the answers to them, fight the temptation and commit to writing down 5 or 10 more questions, and repeat that process a couple more times.
I like to start by writing ‘question’ trigger words such as *what, why, when, where, who, how, how much, what if, if not*, etc.

Then, once you have written down all the possible questions you can think of, and repeated the process several times to ferret out some of the ones you didn’t think of to start with (and the best ones often come during this repetition process), you will usually find the questions can be categorized, and these become the chapters. Then you can usually see a logical sequence and shuffle them into an order and when you actually start writing, everything flows very smoothly.

Brainstorming is something which everyone should be doing on a regular basis and always asking the question:

“What could I do that would make someone I’m trying to help as a way of building a relationship exclaim, ‘WOW, no one has ever done that for me before’ “.

When that happens, you have truly arrived as a skilled NetWeaver.
“Every square in a quilt is an individual work of art, as is every individual who occupies one of the squares in ‘The NetWeaver’s Quilt’ “

Imagine a quilt made up a number of connected squares – each one different and each one representing a different person who in some way is connected to someone who knows someone, who knows someone, etc., etc. who finally knows the ‘target’ person you are trying to meet.

As shown in the diagram above, imagine that you are located in the bottom right-hand square and the person with whom you are hoping to connect is located in the far diagonally upper left-hand opposite corner.

Each of the 3 squares that border the target individual’s square represents someone who can either serve as a GO (a Gate-Opener) or a GK (a Gate-Keeper). They can either open a door and help make a quality introduction for your benefit, or they can keep you from ever connecting with that individual.

There are two axis’s. The right-side vertical axis represents ‘Power and Influence’. The higher you go up vertically, the higher the power and influence of the individual in the square.

The horizontal axis below the quilt represents “Things in Common” which the person in one of the squares shares with the target individual. The farther a square is located to the left, the more things the person shares in common with the target (e.g. went to the same college; grew up in the same city; have the same hobby, etc.) and therefore more likely to possibly be able to help.
As the numbered lines indicate, there are three separate routes which you could take on your way to possibly meeting the targeted individual.

First, pretend you somehow have such a strong personal ‘power & influence’ connection, as well as things you personally share in common with the individual, you can go directly to him or her by-passing all the squares and even the Gate-Keeper and not even needing a Gate-Opener. That’s rare.

The number 2 route shows that you have a great way to connect with either a Gate-Opener, or a strategy and way to make a connection with Gate-Keeper who you will transform into a Gate-Opener. This is quite often possible with the right strategy.

But the 3rd route is the most common one, especially if the person you are trying to meet is a very connected individual him or herself. Each square is someone who has some connection who then connects you with someone else who is a little higher and closer to the targeted individual.

At this point, you might ask whether the NetWeaver’s Quilt actually represents NetWeaving rather than networking since the goal is to meet anyone YOU want to meet. Sounds a little bit selfish doesn’t it?

But the NetWeaving part is that at every step along the way on your journey to meet the target individual, you first must find a way to help the person within the square. That means that you will be doing a string of favors along the way and if you remember, we said at the beginning that NetWeaving is not done out of pure altruism, but rather out of ‘enlightened self-interest’.

With the NetWeaver’s Quilt, you will do a favor or favors for each person within a square which will enhance your chances of it coming back around to benefit you which will eventually help you be introduced to the individual with whom you really wish to connect.

“Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen.”

But over the last several years, I have discovered another very valuable benefit of being a NetWeaving ‘connector’ of others.

My newest motto reads like this:

“When you open the door for someone else, you never know who you will meet as a result”.

On your journey to opening the door for someone else, especially as you put the “NetWeaver’s Quilt” into practice, you will discover this for yourself and if you would like
to read a real life example, read the story in Appendix about the connection I made between an Irish musician and a Nashville music producer.
“Whatever you will achieve is only limited by what your mind can conceive . . . and then believe.”

Just as establishing a professional reputation, Raising your R&R Factor is not something you achieve overnight unless you already have a high R&R Factor and you’re just looking for ways to move it even higher.

I sincerely hope this book has helped you. I meant that particularly if you are one of the ones who have really taken to NetWeaving. You may have learned that you have been violating one or more of the conditions which partially or completely void the operation of the *NetWeaver’s Law of Referral Reciprocity* (i.e. the more you refer others, the more YOU will be referred) and that’s why some of your NetWeaving was NOT coming back around to benefit you.

And if you have concluded that you’ve been NetWeaving properly, and yet you don’t understand why you aren’t seeing more good things coming back your way, I hope the book has helped you have the courage to look in the mirror and ask, “Maybe it’s me?” “Do others see enough in me which is unique and remarkable that they are willing to take a risk, to refer and recommend me to a close friend, acquaintance or business associate?”

Acknowledging your need to discover ways to become more unique and remarkable is the first and in many ways the most important step in changing the way people view you.

Transformational change in anyone is possible and for a more complete road map for that, I would refer you to a great book called “Influencer- the power to change anything” by Kerry Patterson and several other co-authors.

But probably the best note to end on is that as your NetWeaving skill sets grow stronger, and especially as you begin ‘hosting’ more meetings to intro-duce persons to each other – virtually or in-person, that will make you ‘unique’ and ‘remarkable’ enough to Raise Your R&R Factor. Then, over time, watch how many more things DO begin coming back around. And to accelerate that even more, become a ‘vocal advocate’ and ambassador for NetWeaving and by spreading the good word to others, just experience how it further favorably impacts your R&R Factor.

As stated in the last chapter but which bears repeating, the original NetWeaving motto read:

“Good things happen to those people who MAKE good things happen”.  

Chapter 12 – Conclusion
But I have found out personally that my newer motto is just powerful, if not more so:

“When you open the door for someone else, you never know who you will meet as a result”

There are so many situations where connections I have made for the benefit of someone else have allowed me to meet people whom I never would have known, or had the opportunity to meet, had I not been involved in that connection.

As you connect more people – purely with their needs in mind – I’m positive you will find the same thing to be true. Happy NetWeaving!
The Bob Littell and David Johnson Story

Back in 2012 I was introduced to David Johnson, the CEO of Decooda, a fairly new company that had created a unique engine that could manipulate terabytes of data to be able to analyze and interpret customer attitudes and sentiment about virtually anything. Most customer surveys don’t accurately measure how the customer or client truly feels about a company or their products or services, but Decooda, through their sophisticated algorithms, can accurately predict success of a new product or service, as well as give reliable feedback for the likelihood or unlikelihood of a customer to be a repeat buyer.

I went to a couple meetings and got to know some of David’s team and I was so blown away by their system as well as the group of ‘brainiacs’ they had assembled, I volunteered to nominate them for the MAX Award – a prestigious competition of technology co-sponsored by “The Atlanta Business Chronicle” and the J. Mack Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University. Decooda ended up becoming a runner-up winner (see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFT0_CbTLX8&feature=youtu.be).

Later, through a connection I had with Ralph de la Vega, then the CEO of AT&T Mobility, who later became CEO of AT&T, I helped organize a NetWeaving introduction of David to Glenn Lurie and his team in charge of “Emerging Technologies”. AT&T became Decooda’s first major client.

A couple years later, I was approached by David Johnson, asking if by any chance I had a possible connection with Fred Reichheld, who was with the major consulting firm, Bain. Fred is the creator of the Net Promoter System (NPS), a system for measuring and tracking customer satisfaction and loyalty used by many, if not most, of the Fortune 500 companies. David felt there could be significant natural synergy between NPS and Decooda’s model and engine.

I had read one of Fred’s early articles about the one question on a Customer Survey that was predictive of growth across all industries, “How likely are you to recommend our company to a friend or associate?” As follow-up research to his earlier work, Fred had developed a numerical system, the NPS, which was covered in his book, “The Ultimate Question 2.0”.

Ironically, I had chosen this book for use in my “Don’t Need to Read the Book” book club and so I had actually spoken with Fred to gain permission to write my
summary. Therefore, I was able to make the introduction of David and Fred and many exciting meetings have taken place in the interim.

Today, Decooda boasts the most powerful Customer Feedback Management (CFM) solution available in the market along the most robust suite of products and solutions to help marketers synthesize vast amounts of market data into actionable insights that enables them to justify investment recommendations, accurately forecast outcomes, and make intelligent investment allocation decisions all based on facts. Visit the website for more information: www.decooda.com

Oh, and by the way, a couple years into our relationship, one day, I received an envelope in the mail which was a stock certificate for ownership shares in Decooda. Without ever asking for anything, “What goes around, does come back around”.

The Bob Littell and Curtis Reed Story

Back in May of 2013 I was meeting with a friend and client of mine, John Wesley. John had attended a memorial service for someone whom he had known and there he met someone who sang the eulogy – Curtis Reed. (www.thisiscurtisreed.com)

John gave me a CD of Curtis’s and when I heard his voice and learned that he had written all the songs on the CD, I asked John if he would introduce me to Curtis. There was one song on the CD that especially blew me away, called “Take Me Back to Georgia” and I thought, “Wow, this could be a modern version of Georgia On My Mind” and could be used to promote Georgia - both for travel and economic development.

Over the next several years, Curtis and I became close friends and I began NetWeaving for Curtis – opening literally dozens of doors.

On one trip to Newnan, Georgia, another good friend, Rick Walker, an Intellectual Property attorney, and the founder of the Georgia Automotive Manufacturing Association, accompanied us. We met with Mark Whitlock, the founding CEO of the Central Education Center (CEC) – a remarkable organization created in 2000 as a joint venture among the Coweta County School System, West Georgia Technical College and the local business community. The CEC exposes high school students who may not be interested in pursuing a traditional college education to training and opportunities in different trades, occupations and careers that businesses currently need.

Mark is also totally involved in economic development and as such invited us to tour their then new Centre for Performing and Visual Arts in Coweta County. Our tour guide was Don Nixon and all of us were amazed at what we saw and heard. Since then, the performance centre has been renamed “The Donald W. Nixon Centre for the Performing and Visual Arts”.

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One reason Rick wanted to come was that he was also a musician himself and he was just as amazed at this 1000 person performance center and acoustics as Curtis and I were. And the art - paintings and sculptures displayed - was world class.

As we played “Take Me Back to Georgia” for Mark, he really liked it but pointed to the fact that it was more of a ballad and would be in direct competition with “Georgia On My Mind”. He suggested that what was needed was a more upbeat, up tempo tune, and he was right on.

Several weeks later, Curtis called and told me he had written a new song, “Georgia’s Got It All”.

In the intervening years, we’ve met a wide array of people who are all playing a role in helping make this song, the economic development theme song for Georgia. Probably the one person making the biggest ‘connection’ contribution has been Roger Wise who was first introduced to me by Kent Sharp. He’s taken us all the way down to the Capitol where Curtis has performed the song for Casey Cagle, Lt. Governor, who is currently running to be the new Governor, and several others on both sides of the aisle.

The people whom I have met along the way, as I have been opening doors for Curtis, have totally enriched my life and rewards have come back to me in many different forms. The ripple effects from John Wesley handing me an artist’s CD will continue to spread and expand for many years to come.

Liam O’Connor – Jeff Teague
NetWeaving Story

On a trip to Ireland well over a year ago, my wife and I spent the first half of the trip in Dublin, with side trips out into the countryside and the last half in Killarney. Two nights before returning back to Atlanta, the hotel in Killarney had strongly recommended going to a show at their sister hotel starring Liam O’Connor. They said his show always sells out.

To be honest, I wasn't that excited about going when I heard he played the accordion. I had memories of being forced to watch Lawrence Welk as a child and I always equate an accordion with polka music. Nothing against polka music. I just like German beer better than dancing.

Later I learned Liam had toured with Michael Flatley's "Lord of the Dance"; plays 20 instruments and is in the Guinness Book of Records for having the world's fastest fingers.
The show was awesome and we were on the front row sitting next to a couple from Cork who come to see him whenever he performs and they had seen him 7 different times. And the way he plays the accordion - it ain't polka music. He blends rock, r&b, reggae, jazz, you name it.

Being on the front row, we were some of the last to come out and I was wondering why it was taking so long to do so. As I got to the door, I peeked around the corner and there was Liam, standing there shaking hands with everyone who came out - just like a minister after church. That impressed me. As I shook his hand and told him how much I enjoyed the show, I asked him if he happened to know the name, "David Foster"? His eyes got very big, and he said "YOU know David Foster."

I said, "No, but some clients and friends of mine in Atlanta stage and produce many of his shows featuring stars like Celine Dion, Josh Grobin, Michael Buble, Kenny G, Andrea Bocelli, and many others." He pointed over to a corner and said, "Would you stand over there?" We had coffee that night and then he drove me around the Killarney countryside the next day and we really got to know each other. Really down to earth guy.

When I got back to Atlanta, I called my friend, Michael Marto, CEO of Executive Visions. Look at their incredible website (www.executivevisions.com). I had sent him to Liam's website (www.liamoconnormusic.com) which really doesn't do him or his music complete justice. Although Michael was impressed and he said he would probably find ways to use him in some of the projects they create on their own, he said they he has never actually presented talent to David and would feel uncomfortable doing so. Liam had even volunteered to fly Michael over at his expense but he didn't want to do that and felt that might create some feeling of obligation.

So I put that piece aside.

A couple days later I happened to be talking with one of my closest college friends from University of Colorado - Rick Rouse. Rick and I managed to get into a lot of mischief together our freshman year and have stayed close friends. Rick and I happened to be talking and after telling him about our Ireland trip, he told me his best friend from the Army was Jeff Teague who is now a very successful music producer in Nashville. Jeff and I had a short conversation on the phone and I gave him Liam's contact information, not really expecting that anything was really going to come of it since I knew Jeff gets thrown new talent every day – "The newest great star" – he hears all the time.

A couple weeks later. I get a phone call. . . ."Bob, this is Liam. I'm here in Ireland and I'm having dinner with Jeffrey." I said, "Who's that?" Liam replied, "Someone you connected me with from Nashville".

Jeff has come here to Atlanta several times since and I've put a number of one-on-one meetings together with a few key people including Paul Gleeson, the Consul General of Ireland, Dave Fitzgerald - an former-neighbor of mine, Paul Conboy – head of the Irish-
American Chamber, and Hans Gant, head of economic development for the Metro Atlanta Chamber. I also put him in touch with Public Television and they may do some special program on Liam.

And by a strange coincidence, my former neighbor – Dave Fitzgerald – just happens to be head of that year’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade and guess who came over and was the star of the parade and then performed later that day at the Buckhead Theater.

Who knows if the ‘ripples’ from that first meeting will just keep expanding in many directions but as we say with NetWeaving, “When you open the door for someone else, YOU never know who you will meet as a result”.

That’s so true for me and this has been a wonderful real-life example with all the great new people I am meeting which never would have happened had I not made the connection between Liam and Jeff.