

Transform Your Networking

1

Interview Two - Bob Burg, Burg Communications

Robert: Hi. This is Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing, and today I am interviewing Bob Burg. Bob is the author of several business books. The one I first read is called “Endless Referrals”, which came out in 1994. And then, just recently, he self-published a book called “Winning Without Intimidation”, which is a great title.

Wasn't the original book by...I can't remember his name, “Winning With Intimidation”.

Bob: “Winning Through Intimidation” by Robert Ringer, which came out in the '70's.

Robert: Right. So, Bob's turned that whole concept on its head and showed that business relationships can be win/win.

But, I called Bob because he is an expert networker. Not only has he written this book, he's given probably hundreds of talks on this topic. Right, Bob?

Bob: Oh sure. Over the years.

Robert: He's probably one of the top networking experts in the country. Not only does he write about it and talk about it, he does it all the time, and he has used his networking to leverage his business to great heights enabling him to do things like publish his own book and grow his business very successfully. We will get into that as we go.

Bob, what I'd like to start with is your big overview or take on networking, your philosophy or approach. How do you approach it? How did you come to it?

Bob: Well, I think, in a sense, the term networking, which was a major buzz word in the '80's and '90's and now still is, is probably one of the most used, yet misunderstood and misapplied concepts there is. As I go, I guess you could say, from sea to shining sea, and speak on the concept of networking and the how-to aspect, I get so many people who will say, “You

know, Bob, I can't network because I can't just go hitting people up for things and asking for things." I know right away that their definition of networking is not my definition of networking.

Robert: It's actually almost the reverse of what it really is in people's minds, in many cases.

Bob: You're exactly right. One of the things I will explain right away when I speak live is that when you say the word "networking", what comes to your mind? The picture of the stereotypical fast-walking, slick-talking sales guy type who sort of backslaps and shakes hands and sticks a business card into everybody's face and says things like, "Hey, give me a call. I'll cut you a deal" or "If you or somebody you know needs to buy a widget, feel free to call." Robert, as you know, that's absolutely the antithesis of networking.

I like to define networking as simply the cultivation of mutually beneficially give and take, win/win relationships. As you can tell from the emphasis, the most important part is the giving aspect. Most people will not understand that. You do that beautifully when you do your weekly ezine, which I just love. What you talk about is, you've got to give value before you can ever expect to receive value. And, I think so many people have the attitude of going up to a fireplace and saying, "You give me some fire first, then I'll throw some logs on", or going to a bank and saying, "First you give me some interest, then I'll make a deposit." In the real world, it does not happen that way, neither spiritually nor physically. A lot of people don't realize that.

So, we've got to know it's the cultivating of mutually beneficial give and take, win/win relationships. Now, there is a premise along with this. I did not make this premise up. In fact, I haven't made any of this stuff up. I probably never had an original thought in my life as far as I know. I don't mind that because there's plenty to learn from.

Robert: But, the book “Endless Networking” just has tons of great ideas all in one place. It’s really worthwhile.

Bob: Thank you. I appreciate that. One of the things, as you know from reading the book, is that the entire system, if you will, hinges upon a premise. And that premise is, all things being equal, people will do business with and refer business to those people they know, like and trust.

The key is developing relationships with these people, people you might meet on an everyday basis, people you might meet directly or very indirectly. And, just cultivating those relationships at a point where these people feel so good about you, they know you, they like you, they trust you. They want to see you succeed. They want to help you find new business. Hopefully, they want to be a part of your business if that is appropriate in this case. But, they definitely want to be a part of your life, which means they will be glad to give you endless referrals.

We have to earn that type of relationship. It’s certainly not a matter of meeting somebody one time and expecting, boom, “I’m going to get that person’s business” or “I’m going to get their referrals.”

The nice thing is the leverage that can take place. Because, it’s been proven many times, most notably in Joe Gerard’s book, “How to Sell Anything to Anybody”. I don’t love that title, but I love the rest of the book. Here is a guy who got the Guinness world’s record for sales fourteen years in a row. He has a lot of wisdom to share.

He came up with Gerard’s “Law of 250”, which basically, in a nutshell, says that each of us, in our lives, knows about 250 people, 250 people in our sphere of influence including anybody from immediate family, distant relatives, close friends, sometimes acquaintances, if the person delivers the mail, the plumber, the tailor, the person who cuts your hair, your accountant, banker, chiropractor or what have you.

Well, if everybody knows 250 people, you've got to figure that every time you make a connection with somebody and you're able to cultivate that relationship to the point that person, again, feels so good about you, they know you, they like you, they trust you. They want to see you succeed. They want to help you find new business. Every time you do that successfully with just one new person, you've actually increased your own personal sphere of influence by about 250 people every single time.

Do this on a consistent, daily basis, in a way that's fun, uplifting, encourage and helpful to other people, not just you. Do this following the system, and in no time at all, you're going to amass an absolutely enormous personal sphere of influence.

Robert: It seems like everybody knows you before long, if you're really networking effectively.

Bob: Absolutely. If you're the type of person who is continually adding value to the lives of others, if you are introducing people to other people where they can mutually benefit, if you are referring business to other people, you're going to be that person who people call up because they say, "I'm trying to find a Summer job for my son. Somebody said, 'If anybody would know someone, it's you.'" Then, you become that sphere of influence. The same kind of people you want to meet you become. You become a successful giver. You become a successful networker. And, those are the people who have abundance.

That's what you are doing so well in your work that you are doing which is catching on all over. I'm so glad to see that.

Robert: My type of networking these days is more electronic or Internet networking as everyone gets to know me and passes my name along.

Bob: It's very much "attraction marketing".

Robert: So many people sign up for my newsletter, not just because they find me on the web, but because someone else gets the newsletter, talks about it, sends it on to someone else. So, networking can happen in many different spheres.

Bob: Oh, I've mentioned your newsletter many times in my own ezine, in "Winning Without Intimidation". I've mentioned you because what I've done is taken some of your helpful advice, used it and said it. "For more information, go to..." So, I know a lot of people are doing that and that is because what you are doing is adding increase to the lives of a lot of people. And because you will then offer that they should go to your website, you notice the things that you're offering for free, people want. They see it. They get to, in that way, know you, like you and trust you. They see you as a person with whom if they do business, there is going to be an increase in their lives.

There's a great book that was written in 1910 called, "The Science of Getting Rich". It was written by Wallace Waddles.

Robert: I just copied that off the Internet a couple of weeks ago.

Bob: It's really an amazing book. His principles are so sound and wonderful. Here's what he said on page 75 in his book, "No matter what your profession, if you can give increase of life", which simply means having the person feel as though by knowing you they're going to make more money, have more friends, have better relationships, some sort of increase, you'll be better off, "and make them sensible or aware of this gift, they will be attracted to you and you will get rich."

You can say rich as far as money. You can say rich as far as more relationships. Rich encompasses much more than just money, although I think it fits in with where it says, "Money is not everything, but it ranks right up there with Oxygen."

The interesting thing is, he's so right. When we make people aware that by doing business or being associated with us, they will find increase in their life, boom, that's when it really comes.

And all of a sudden, we have all these different types of points of interest that we can do business with.

What I like to teach is the “how to”: How to establish those relationships. You’re an expert at doing it on line. I’m not great when it comes to the online like you are. My thing is a little bit more in person.

Robert: This is what we want to get into a lot in this call. A lot of people listening to this, up to this point, are thinking, “Well, Bob sounds like a really outgoing, gregarious kind of guy. He’s out there. He’s sharing. He’s doing this stuff.” And, maybe you have that kind of personality. But, I found in talking to a lot of people, as you said, they have misconceptions about networking. And, in many cases, they are afraid of networking. They are afraid of being rejected. They are just uncertain about how to do. They doubt the long-term results.

So, I want to have you take these people by the hand and think, “Where does one start?” So if I’m starting my business or have been in business for a while and maybe my first business came from a former employee, friends, or associates. But now, things are slowing down. I’m not networking a lot because I really don’t know what to do and where to do it, etcetera. Maybe I’ve joined the Chamber of Commerce and I go to a couple of meetings. And, I just don’t feel I have access to these skills to make the kinds of things happen that you’re talking about. Where do I start with all of this and make it a little easier for me, even if I’m not a super outgoing person?

Bob: That’s a great question. The super outgoing person thought brings back something. Personally, although I’m a friendly person, when I’m on stage I’m the type that looks like the person who just loves being around people, I’m actually an introvert. I have been called by people who know me the most extroverted introvert they’ve even met.

Robert: Yeah. I’m a bit the same.

Bob: So, really the reason I developed, if I can use the word “developed”, this system, because it’s really a conglomerate of everybody else’s, is because I found it very difficult to prospect. Why? Because I don’t like rejection anymore than anybody else does. I don’t want to be disliked anymore than anybody else does.

When I first got into sales and I knew nothing about sales, I started reading all the books. I got Tom Hopkins’, “How to Master the Art of Selling”, and Zig Ziegler’s books. I listened to their tapes. This was twenty years ago. And I just went crazy on them. I found it really helped a lot. The only talent I had was with the prospecting aspect and I knew, with me, I had to do something that was going to make me more comfortable. I realized the prospecting process had to be fun.

Robert: “Fun” and “prospecting” usually don’t fit in the same sentence.

Bob: Right. It’s not something you usually hear in the same sentence. So, basically, what I want to do is take the person and these principles, techniques, if you will. They are really designed for the person who doesn’t feel as though they are an outgoing type of person, who is comfortable in the networking process.

The first thing to do is realize that there is no pressure on you. Let’s take this as an example” a chamber of commerce function. You join the Chamber. You go to one of these Chamber after-hour functions. They go from 5:00 to 6:30 at a local restaurant. You go there and what do you see? You see people in clusters. People who have known each other for years.

People who, when they meet someone, immediately take their business card out of their pocket and shove it in the person’s face and say, “This is what I do.” Nobody cares. So, you do the same thing and you realize, “Nothing happened today!” This doesn’t work.

Well, it only doesn’t work if we don’t know how to do it. Here’s the other thing. Just because nobody else there knows how to

do it so that it works, doesn't mean it won't work for you. I've taken many people who've either come to my live programs, gotten my tapes, my books, and have given me the testimonial letters. You and I are both huge believers of testimonial letters. These people have shown me where they have taken these. If you remember the book by Dr. Conwell, "Acres of Diamonds", it talks about having acres of diamonds. You go to these chambers of commerce functions and you will find diamonds within your acres as long as you understand how to do it.

The first thing we are going to do is we are going to take all the pressure off of ourselves by realizing that at this function, we are not going to talk about our business. We are not going to go there to talk about our business. We are going to go there and meet some nice people. We're going to meet some good centers of influence. And, we are going to focus on them and their business. So, not only is there going to be no pressure on us. There is going to be no pressure on the other person, and they are going to enjoy the conversation even more than you are going to enjoy the conversation.

Robert: Let me interrupt you here, because a lot of people think just the opposite. I teach these people, the concept of the Audio Logo, what to answer when people say, "What do you do?" I think that's important. But the thing that people don't get is they think, "I've got to then talk about what I do so the other person goes, 'Oh my God, that's the most wonderful thing in the world. I have a \$50,000 budget. Is that enough?' That doesn't happen very often.

Bob: I love your Audio Logo idea and I have something similar where I just call it a benefit statement. There are the elevator speeches. Now, there is a time and place for everything absolutely. And, at the time for you to do your, whether you call it your "elevator speech", your audio logo or anything, that's great. But, don't expect that is going to sell the person on the idea of the business.

In fact, I take it to another step. When somebody is really just starting out brand new, I would use the Audio Logo absolutely or use the benefit statement. But, we don't even want to go to the place where the person says, "Oh, how do you do that?" or "Tell me more about it." Because we want to, right now, focus on that other person by way of what I call, "feel good questions", which are totally non-prospect oriented. They are not intrusive. They are not invasive. It's going to totally relax this person and make them feel comfortable with you.

Robert: Great. Give us some examples of those questions.

Bob: Let's say you've met that person. You walk into one of these places and you don't even know anybody at this Chamber of Commerce. How do you know who to find? Well, Rick Hill, one of my prospecting mentors, gave me a great piece of advice, Robert. He said, "When you walk into one of these places and notice people broken up into small groups, sitting or standing around with each other, just notice there is typically one ringleader within the group. He is that dominant person. You could call it ringleader, group leader. It's that man or woman who's not necessarily talking the most. But, if the conversation seems to revolve around them, often that's a good center of influence. That's a person who already has a very large, powerful, prestigious sphere of influence. These are the people who make wonderful connectors.

Remember, we're not looking at these people as just single prospects for our business. We're looking at them as a potential 250 prospects for our business.

So, let's say you see one of these people and think, "I want to meet that person." There is no pressure on you. Again, you have your bottled water. You're walking around, Robert. And you're just looking at three, four or five of these people. You say, "Okay, I'd like to meet these people." You're friendly to everybody. If somebody smiles at you, you smile at them. If somebody wants to speak with you, you speak with them. But,

you're looking at one of these five people as somebody you would like to meet.

Now, you see one of them who leaves and heads to the hors d'oeuvres table. You go over there and think, "Well, how do I meet this person? I'm not good at just meeting." You don't have to be. Just make eye contact with the person. People can tell when you're looking at them. Don't stare. We're not stalking the poor fellow, but look with a pleasant look on your face. Maybe he will look toward you eventually and smile. You put out your hand. You say your name. They say their name. Remember, they are at a networking function. They are there to meet people. They are receptive to this. And, if by any chance they are not, it might be because they are supposed to meet with somebody else or they've got something else on their mind. You always want to judge favorably. 99.99% ad infinitum of the time, they want to meet you. You're a friendly or nice, welcoming and receptive person.

So, you exchange names and ask them what they do. That's a perfectly legitimate question. They're going to ask you what you do. Now, you can come up with your benefits statement. You could come up with your Audio Logo. But, I'd make it very low key the first time. And then, what you are going to do is you are going to ask this person questions about themselves and their business. Because that's what the person is interested in. Right now, they are not interested in what you do or what I do. They are interested in what they do. So, let's talk to them about that.

What we do though, is we do it in a way, again, I call "feel good questions", which are simply questions which, by their very nature, are designed to make this person feel good about themselves, good about the conversation and good about you. Let's try a couple of these. I have ten in my arsenal, but you'll never have time to ask all ten and you don't need to. You never need to ask any more than two or three.

The first question I usually just simply say is, "How did you get started in the widget business? or insurance business?"

Robert: That's a great question because everyone has a story and they like to tell that story.

Bob: I call it the "movie of the week" question. Everybody wants to be the "movie of the week" in somebody else's mind. And you know, Robert, these days, maybe there were never any other days, nobody really cares to hear anybody's story. Everybody is so wrapped up in themselves. So, when you, who they just met, are asking them to share their story, wow, you right away take on some new importance in their life. They're going to spend a couple of minutes telling you about it.

The next question I like to ask is another "feel good" question. That is, "What do you enjoy most about what you do?" Now, why is this question so key? The reason is because it is strictly "feel good". It's a positive question. It can only give them good feelings and elicit a positive response.

Robert: They'll also feel good about you asking this question.

Bob: They're going to feel good about you. Exactly. There's this thing in sales, which says, "Oh, immediately find their pain so that you can cure that pain with your terrific products or services." Well, first of all, the relationship is not established yet. So, why should we think they are going to trust us by telling us where they failed in life.

Robert: It's a little premature for that.

Bob: Secondly, they may never even be a prospect for the business depending upon what it is they sell. But they may know a lot of others who are. So, again, it's not important that we try to find their pain. Instead, let's find their joy. Everybody walks around with an invisible sign around their neck that says, "Make me feel good about myself". I think Mary Kay said people walk around with a sign that says, "Make me feel important." I agree. Let's say, "Make me feel good about myself as well."

Imagine going the opposite route saying, “What do you hate most about what you do?” You might as well follow that up with, “And, while we’re at it, how about this wretched excuse for a life you live?” It really makes them feel badly.

Instead, let’s make them feel good about themselves and what they do. And, as you said, they are going to feel good about you and associate you with that good feeling.

It’s the same way when we see an advertiser having a celebrity with a product. It’s not that the advertiser thinks we actually believe that celebrity is in love with that product. It’s that if we feel good about that celebrity, we’re going to associate that good feeling we have with the celebrity, with the product. So, that’s the whole thing. All we are doing is building rapport, making this person feel good about themselves and us.

So, we’ve asked a couple of these questions, we’ve established a little rapport, and the person is enjoying the conversation. Now, it’s time to ask what I call the “one key question” that will separate you from just about everyone else that person knows, and definitely from everyone else this person has ever met for the first time. That question is simply this: “How can I know if somebody I’m talking to would be a good prospect for you? I don’t know much about what you do. It sounds fascinating. Tell me, how can I know if somebody I’m talking to would be a good prospect for you?”

What have we done when asking that question? I see two things. The first is we have then shown them that unlike everyone else who just wants to know, “How can you help me?”, they don’t come right out and say that but they imply it when they hand the person ten business cards and say, “Keep one for yourself. Give nine to your closest friends.” Opposite of that, what we are doing is saying, “I want to invest in you. I want to find out about you. I want to know about you and how I can help you.” So, that’s the first thing.

Secondly though, Robert, is we're asking this person for guidance and direction in how to find them new business. So, let's say we're talking to Gary and Gary sells copy machines. I think we used this example in the book. He sells these big, old copy machines that go into businesses. We say, "Gary, I don't know much about this particular brand. I'm sure it's excellent. How can I know if somebody I'm talking to would be the prospect for you?" Well, he has to think about it for a moment because he's probably never been asked this question before. People who love him have never asked him this question before, never mind someone he just met.

He thinks about it for a moment and says, "Well, if you're in an office and you notice a copy machine, and next to that copy machine is a waste paper basket which is just filled to the rim and overflowing with crumpled up pieces of paper, that's a really good sign that copy machine has not been working well lately. And, that would be an excellent prospect for me." So, Gary has just shown you and told you how to find business for him.

Can you see now how you immediately take on more meaning in Gary's life than every other person he meets at this event who just wants to know how they can sell their widget to Gary?

Robert: Exactly.

Bob: So, now, the conversation is coming to an end because you're going to meet some other people. Gary is going to meet some other people. Get Gary's business card. Simply ask him for his card. He will give it to you like you would to anybody. And that is where I say, if he asks for your card, give it to him. But realize that your card will most likely be thrown out at his earliest convenience. It will either be thrown out directly or it will travel through a never-ending dimension of time and space, known as the Rolodex Zone. It's history.

Robert: Bottom the drawer zone!

Bob: Because the fact is, while he likes you, he still doesn't care that much. He just thinks you're a great guy who will hopefully throw his business his way, and that's fine.

Now, if we're at one of these Chamber type functions, we can take additional steps along the way. One thing we can do is, we're going to meet other people, of course, and we're going to go through this same exact process. Then, let's say, fifteen or twenty minutes later, we see Gary again at the hors d'oeuvres table and we pop by. "Hey, Gary. Nice to see you again." Gary is going to be amazed that you remembered his name.

But, here is why you're going to be able to remember his name. One reason is because it's not you've met a hundred or a thousand people there. You're focusing on these few people you're meeting.

Robert: Even four, five or six at this event, and that's it.

Bob: Exactly. If you don't think you're good at remembering names, get a book called, "The Memory Book" by Harry Lorraine and Jerry Lucas. It's a great book. It's on how to remember, facts, figures, what you read, everything. But, there's one chapter in there on how to remember names and faces. If you get that and study it and use it for a few weeks, you'll get really good at remembering people's names. I was the world's worst. I got tapes and books. I ended up actually teaching on that topic for a bit. But, if I can remember people's names, anyone can.

Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm just not good at it." I love what Jim Rhon says about this. They guy is a wonderful, wisdom-filled gentleman. He says, "If there's something about yourself you don't like or are not satisfied with, change. You're not a tree." The neat thing is, we can change. We can find the information. So, seek out the information. Get "The Memory Book" by Harry Lorraine and Jerry Lucas. Learn how to remember names.

When you come back to him and remember his name, first he is going to be amazed you remembered because by this time, what has he done? He has already forgotten your name. So, what you want to make sure to do at this point...

Robert: Unless he's got a nametag on.

Bob: Right. Regardless, when you first see him and you say his name, make sure you reintroduce yourself to him. I would go up to him and say, "Hey, Gary. Nice to see you. Bob Burg" and I would put my hand out. "We met twenty minutes ago." Then, he's going to say, "Oh sure, Bob. Of course. I remember your name. You didn't have to tell me." The fact is, maybe I know that he didn't remember my name, and maybe he knows he didn't remember my name. And, maybe he knows I know that he didn't remember my name. But, I gave him an out. I made it easier for him. In fact, I made it easy for him to feel good about himself. We don't ever want to come off show-offy, as if we are superior. We're trying to win people over, not lose them.

Key next step: Introduce Gary to one of the other people you've met. Let's say Ann is walking by and you met her earlier. She just moved to the area six months ago. She's not quite a center of influence. But, she's a real up and comer, very sharp. She sells telephone equipment to young, upstart businesses. So, you see Ann and say, "Ann, come on over for a second. I want you to say hi to somebody." When she walks over you say, "Gary Miller, this is Ann Jones. Ann, this is Gary."

The next step is let them know what each other does. "Ann, Gary sells copy machines to businesses. Gary, Ann sells telephone equipment to young, upstart businesses who need to modernize their telecommunications equipment."

Now, we are going to do the ultimate in edification, which is nothing more than building people to each other. We are going to do this by letting each of them know how it would be a good prospect for the other and how they can get together for each other's mutual benefit. So, I might say, "You know, Ann, Gary

was telling me earlier, if you're ever in an office and you notice a copy machine and next to it is a wastepaper basket filled to the rim with crumpled up pieces of paper, that would be a great prospect for him. And, Gary, Ann said something to me earlier that really I did not know. And that is if you're ever in an office and you notice two people talking to each other interoffice through Dixie cups with a long string attached, that's a good sign that company needs to modernize or update their telecommunications equipment. I know both of you two go into offices a lot. Why don't you two exchange some business cards with each other and maybe do some cross promoting and cross networking with each other?"

Boom! Look at what you've done in their lives so far. You've met them. You asked them great "feel good" questions about themselves. You've shown interest in helping them find business. You even went out of your way to introduce them to someone to show each other how they can help each other in business. And, the only thing you haven't talked about is yourself. Meanwhile, you are becoming the most memorable person these two people have ever met. And they still have no clue, really, as to what you do.

We cover that in the follow-up part, but right now, remember, they really don't care. Now, don't be surprised if they really start asking you at this point. I've been with people, showing them in person how to do this. And, by the time we're through with this, these people are begging them for information. It's great.

But, again, for right now, all we're doing is we're giving, giving, giving. We're being concerned with them. We're helping them. We're giving them increase in their lives.

Now, why do I say, as I said earlier, that this is for the person who doesn't feel comfortable with being in a so-called "stereotypical networking scenario?" Because, if you notice, the pressure, Robert, was never on our networker here to have to talk about themselves, to have to be a sales person. Do you know what I'm saying?

Robert: Yes. The focus is not inward. It's outward.

Bob: Exactly.

Robert: That's a lot easier once you get the hang of it and you get the concept. Unfortunately, a lot of our focus is on ourselves a lot of the time and we are worried, "What are people thinking of us?" "Can I say the right thing?" That just drives you crazy.

This is good stuff. Brilliant.

Bob: Thank you. So, now, at this point, you can even walk away from a conversation with these two. Excuse yourself, politely, and walk away. Leave the two of them talking to each other and the chances are good they will be talking about the one common element in their life so far, and that is you and how impressed they are with you.

Let's say the function has ended. You've got five or six business cards of people who you want to follow up with, who you want to make a part of your life, who you want to make a part of your network and their 250 person sphere of influence potentially. Now, some of these people might be prospects. Some of them might not be actual direct prospects, but they are going to be wonderful centers of influence and referral sources. Of course, the ones who are prospects for your business are also going to be great referral sources.

But, what do we do next? We have their business cards. One of the things I like to do, and I believe this is imperative, is to follow up with a handwritten note of thanks, just for having met them. Now, I don't just send a note on regular paper. But, I actually have a note card, it's not a postcard, but just a note card. It's what I call a personalized note card. It's 8 1/2" X 3". It can fit right inside a regular, standard, number 10 envelope. I have on it, the company information in one corner. And the key element in this, though, is just a headshot, black and white professional photo.

Robert: Since they met you once in person, then they will see it and say, “Oh, that’s the guy.” Right?

Bob: Exactly. And lots of room to write, lots of white space. Because, remember, this is absolutely not a direct mail piece. It is not a direct response piece. So, you want plenty of room just to write the note.

And, the note is simply this. I suggest writing it in blue ink because blue ink has been proven to be more effective than black ink. I would simply write, “Hi Gary” or “Dear Gary” or “Dear Mary” or “Dear Mr. Jones”, however the relationship has been established. Then I would write, “Thank you. It was a pleasure meeting you. If I can ever refer business your way, I certainly will.” And then just sign your name.

Robert: As opposed to: “It was nice meeting you. Here is my card so if you can ever refer business my way, please do so.”

Bob: What a difference!

Robert: You’re flipping it around.

Bob: Exactly. And, on the bottom of this note card, is going to be your Audio Logo, what I call a benefit statement. If you’re in financial services, it’s going to be, “Helping people create and manage wealth” or what have you.

Now, the next thing is right along the lines of what you were saying. Put it in a number 10 envelope. Don’t even put your business card in there. They know why you’re writing. They’re going to remember you from this thing. Hand address the envelope in blue ink, not typed and definitely not a mailing label. Just hand address it in blue ink and then hand stamp the envelope with a regular 37 cent stamp, or one of those large commemorative stamps, because you know that chances are, if it looks like junk mail, it’s going to be thrown out. I don’t even like the word “junk mail” because there is no junk mail. It’s

advertising. But it is perceived by people as junk mail. We don't want ours to be perceived in this way at all. We want this to be a letter from a friend, which it is.

They are going to open it. And, by the way, I would send it out that very night, the next morning at the latest, so it gets on their desk the next day. Why? Well, for two reasons. One is out of sight, out of mind. The second thing is, if we don't do it now, there is a really good chance, we're not going to do it later. I don't know about you or anybody listening to this, but I know with myself, I am one to fall victim to what I call the "law of diminishing intent".

The "law of diminishing intent" simply says the longer the time we wait to do something from when we should do it, the greater the chances are it will never get done.

Robert: Ah, yes. I know that one.

Bob: Me too. And, that's why I am strictest with myself. But, when we do it right away, Robert, it gets on their desk the next day. Now, what happens? They see this note. They see this envelope. It's handwritten in blue ink. It's hand stamped. So, obviously, it's not a bill. It's not junk mail. They open it up. They pull out this note card which is on, by the way it's like 70 pound bond, it's not quite postcard thickness but it's got some body to it. Immediately they see your picture and the warm fuzzy feelings come back. They're not thinking this consciously, but unconsciously, "This is the person who was so nice. Asked me those nice questions. All he or she wanted to know was how they could help me find new business. Heck, he or she even introduced me to somebody and suggested ways we could find business for each other."

But now, here's the note. Here's the "What's in it for me?" thing. The note simply says, "Thank you. If I can ever refer business your way, I certainly will." Wow! You are just continuing to position yourself as someone different from the rest.

Somebody might say, “Well, Bob, why send this? Why not just email him or her a thank you note?” By the way, I love email. I use email all the time. But, I’m going to tell you something. That very first contact, that very first thank you, after you meet this person, the difference between an email and this personalized note is night and day. In fact, even before email so very few people ever sent this type of note. Now that email is so prevalent, sending this type of handwritten, personalized note with your picture on it, Robert, is just an unbelievable way of establishing or positioning yourself in this person’s mind.

Robert: If truth be told, it really doesn’t take a lot more time to write a simple note like this than it does to send an email. It takes about ten seconds to write. You stick it in the envelope. Put on the stamp. The whole thing probably takes about ninety seconds.

Bob: And here’s the thing too. If you want to get really creative about this, during some downtime or if your child has nice handwriting, take twenty of the note cards. Leave room for the salutation and just write, “Thank you. It was a pleasure meeting you. If I can ever refer business your way, I certainly will.” Take about twenty of those just like that. Put them in an elastic band in a shoebox neatly inside your car. Meanwhile, take twenty envelopes. Hand stamp them. Put those in an elastic band in that same shoebox. Now, as soon as you meet somebody, you can actually go right to the car, take the thing out. With blue ink, just write “Hi So and So”. Write their address on the envelope and plunk it into the nearest mailbox if you really want to get creative. It takes very little time. It’s very worth the results.

That is just the first step. Because, again, it’s not like the person is going to get that card and call you and say, “Wow. You’re great. Let’s do business together.” But, that’s the first step. And, by the way, I have had people write me back and say that. I keep these as testimonials because I read them from the platform, where people have said after I sent that note, the person actually called me and did decide that they wanted to do

business with me. So, while that's not what it's designed for, yes, it does happen. Because it is so very powerful.

Robert: So, what happens next? Now they've got a letter from you and they feel good about you. Now what?

Bob: Next, we can find other ways to keep in touch in a way that's very polite, but non pushy, that keeps establishing ourselves. We've all learned, if you see the person's name in the newspaper, cut it out and send it to them. But, how often does that really happen? But, what we can do is we scour the newspaper or any kind of magazine or even the Internet, and if we see something that we know would be of interest to this person... Let's say, for instance, Ann collects antiques and we see a story in the local newspaper about an antique shop opening. Let's cut that out of the paper. Let's clip it to that little note card and say, "Ann, I remember you love antiques. Thought you might find this interesting." Put it in an envelope. Handwrite it in blue ink. Hand stamp it. Send it to her. Do you think she's going to appreciate getting that?

Robert: Sure.

Bob: Let's say you come across a building that goes up that you know is going to have a bunch of office spaces, and that might be a great lead for Gary. Do some due diligence and find out who owns that building. And then, maybe you'll write a note to Gary. Or you could email it to him and just say, "Gary, new office building going up on Highway 1. Looks like they'd be perfect prospects for you. Found out the landlady's name is Ms. Garrett. Her number is 555-1212. Best of success. Hope it works out for you."

Boom. Do you think they are going to take you seriously?

Robert: Bob, I have a question. Say, you're a big networker. You meet a lot of people. You connect with several people like this. How many people like this can you really handle sending notes like this? It seems it would be overwhelming after a while.

Bob: Well, here's the thing. It really is not that overwhelming. It's just an investment of time. But, you also don't have to do that constantly either. This is in the initial phase of, if you see a funnel and you see people at the beginning of the funnel, the middle of the funnel and then coming out of the funnel into sales and referrals. Really, the biggest investment is at the beginning. It's positioning yourself in that person's mind.

And anybody can also have a weekly ezine that goes out that doesn't have to sell their business, but can, in some way, be a nice way to contact people. For instance, I know people who will send an electronic message out to people where he will just recommend a book each week that they have read. Or, sometimes, they will take things off my ezine, they probably do it with yours too, and just send a link to it. Because they want to add some value. This is where electronically, it's made it a lot easier to keep adding value to people's lives.

People like you to contact them when there is something that adds increase to their life. But, the biggest thing also, is keeping track of how people can benefit in business through your help. So, when you come across somebody who, let's say, talks about the fact that their accountant just retired, and you've just met somebody or you have somebody in your network who is an accountant, what you want to do is set up this person being receptive to either calling your accountant or hearing from your accountant.

In other words, keep adding increase to their life. It's actually very simple to do. It takes very, very little time. But, what about the point where the rubber meets the road? How do you actually now turn this from a great, friendly, giving relationship into where you can talk about business or even referrals?

It's actually, again, very simple. The reason is that because of the key concepts of 'do they know you, like you and trust you.' As soon as that person feels so good about you that they know you, like you, trust you, want to see you succeed, want to help you

find new business. Once that happens, you are always able to call that person, contact that person to sit down with them.

For instance, say it's somebody who is not a candidate for your widget thing you sell. But, you know they would be great as far as referrals. You could call them on the phone and invite them for a cup of coffee. And you can let them know, "Dave, I'm in the process right now of really expanding my referral base business. And, I find, to do that that it's very helpful for me to partner with my clients and with my friends such as yourself. Could we get a quick cup of coffee and maybe sit down and go over the names of a few people I might be able to help?"

Now, remember, this person loves you. You've done so much for this person. You've added so much increase to their life. They're only too happy to do something like this.

Robert: So, people underestimate the power of this long-term relationship for getting you in. For instance, I can call just about anybody on my ezine list and they would take my call. And they would help me because I've been giving them so much stuff for so long.

Bob: I was delighted to hear from you when you asked me to be on this interview. I told you I felt honored because I've had so much increase in my life from your methods. My feeling was, gosh, if I can give something back to him... And that's how it is. I think most people don't realize, like you said, that other people want to help. If you've earned the right by adding increase to their life, it doesn't mean it's tit for tat or quid pro quo or anything like that. No. You give because you want to give and because it's the right thing to do, not because it's going to come back to you.

But, if you do it in the correct way with that attitude, the chances are greater that it's going to come back to you many times over.

So now, let's say we're talking to this person who you just called because you want to talk about referrals. Now is where a lot of people get really stuck because they want to ask for referrals and want to ask in such a way that they will get referrals. But, here's typically the conversation. And, by the way, we can say this has happened. I've been brought in to work with companies who have wonderful lead generation systems, but they can never get their people to successfully ask for referrals.

I want to talk about this for the next couple of minutes because it's the difference between a couple of referrals every now and then, and an absolutely over-flooding of referrals that you can get, from which you can pick and choose in your business. It's simply the way we ask.

Most people will say, "Dave, do you know anybody who might be a good candidate for..." or "Do you know anybody who I could help?" The words "do you know anybody" is a killer and I will tell you why. It's a killer in a bad way as it is going to kill your referral base business.

Here is why. We talked about the fact we all know 250 people. So, when you say to somebody, "Do you know anybody who...", they are having to go into their entire inventory of people they know without a filing system, without a way to know who they are looking for.

Robert: It's sort of when you say to someone, "Hey, do you know any good jokes?"

Bob: And, if you're like I am, you probably know a thousand jokes. But, can you ever think of one at the time? You might be able to. I never can. But, if somebody, instead, said, "Can you tell me a joke about an elephant riding a tricycle?" Well, okay, now you can think of the joke about, "Why can't an elephant ride a tricycle? Because he doesn't have a little pinkie to ring the bell." It's sort of the same thing.

So, what we want to do, and I learned this from the outstanding book, “How to Master the Art of Selling” by the great Tom Hopkins. What Tom suggests, this just works incredibly well, is instead of just asking somebody “Who do you know?” or “Do you know anyone who...”, help the person who is going to provide you with these referrals to isolate people in their mind’s eye.

This is very key, and it’s actually quite easy to do. Let’s take an example. Let’s say you’re talking to Gary and he is a great guy. He knows you, likes you trusts you. He’d love to see you succeed and help to find you business. So, you know that Gary really wants to help you. You know Gary is a golfer because you’ve gotten to know that about him. You might say, “Gary, I know you golf quite a bit.” And he says, “Yeah, I golf every weekend.” Then you say, “Well, do you golf with different people or do you pretty much golf with the same people all the time?” He says, “Oh no, it’s the same foursome. We’ve been golfing together for years, every Sunday; Joe Stevens, Dave Cottrell, Nancy Goldblatt, the four of us.”

He has just now mentioned three people. He is now able to identify in his own mind three people. Now, you might say, “Well, would any of these people be good candidates for..., or do you think any of them would be receptive to...” Maybe yes, maybe no. Okay, let’s go on to another scenario where we can help him isolate.

We know Gary is a Rotarian and he probably says he hasn’t missed a meeting in fifteen years. We don’t want to ask, “Is there anyone in Rotary?” because it might be a very big Rotary. But, instead, let’s ask Gary, “Is there anybody within your Rotary organization, your Rotary club that you sit next to every week, or that you’re particular close to, you discuss the news since last week and catch up on it.” Maybe there are four or five people and he can come up with names of these people. You might say, “Would any of these people be good candidates or be receptive to...” Maybe one or two of them would be.

But, let's say no. Let's go to another scenario. Remember, because of the relationship you now have with Gary, he's fine as far as doing this with you. He wants to help you. So, you know he's on the board of directors of his local office products association. And he says, "Well, actually, I'm a Chairman of the Board. You say, "Well, how many people serve with you?" He says, "Well, aside from me, there are five other board members." Now five is a good number. So, you say, "Gary, thinking of those people individually, would any of them appear to be people that, perhaps, I could help?"

Boom. Now, again, let's just say no. But, here's the thing. You can always go on now, if you want, to other areas of specification, such as people in his neighborhood, people who he belongs to other organization with. You could also run, what I call the "yellow pages" alphabet. What about his accountant? Or banker? Or Chiropractor? Or Dentist? Or Electrician. If that is appropriate for what you do. It depends on your line of work.

But, the big thing is this. The most difficult name for him to come up with will be that first name. Once he comes up with that name, then it's just great. Let me make an analogy to that if I may, Robert.

Have you ever given a presentation or attended a presentation where after the presentation ended, the speaker said, "Okay, I'll take questions now." or "Does anybody have any questions?" Then, all of a sudden, dead silence.

Robert: Yeah. Absolutely nothing. And you think you've bombed.

Bob: Exactly.

Robert: You haven't. They're just taking a minute to think.

Bob: Sure. And it took them by surprise. They didn't have any frame of reference. Now, they can't think. You can tell that people are trying to think of a question just to save the day. Nobody can think of it. There is this ten, fifteen seconds of embarrassing

silence. And then, all of a sudden, one person asks a question. Tell me, what happens after that?

Robert: Then, all of a sudden, questions start to come fast and furious.

Bob: And they don't stop. For a while, you are hoping they will stop! That's the thing. What happens is, when we inflict pressure on ourselves, it hurts the memory. But, when we feel good and things are flowing, then it's okay.

Now, let's go back to the first name he gives you, then the second. And now, the names start to trickle out, and then they stream out. And then, they gush out. And now, you're sitting there and you are literally taking names.

My suggestion is, at this point, do just that. Take names. Don't interrupt by asking for contact information or qualifying information. Just take names until he has absolutely exhausted his names list. Now, at this point, go back and get the appropriate contact information. Now, you ask questions. "Why do you feel this person would qualify?" or "Why do you feel this person would be interested?" or "What is about this person that makes you feel that..." Now, decide, if it's appropriate, on the ones that he can introduce you to, or instead, for you to just call or what have you. Now, you are in a position of strength. You can now even go into, "Are these people A list, B list or C list?"

A list in my mind are the people who cross what I call the "marketing bridge" of do they need it, do they want it and can they afford it. Those are the greatest ones to have, of course. Or, are they B list people, people who are good people, qualified people, maybe you're still going to have to work at it. And then, there are the C list people, not necessary able to qualify financially or really have the interest or be receptive to talking. This person can help you out with that.

What you want to do is, you want to focus on the A's and B's, and not the C's. So, you start with the Pareto Principle. You'll probably get 80% B's and 20% A's. Your goal is to now work

them to the point that you're working as many A's. You're expanding on you're A list referrals because they will refer to other A list referrals. What you want to do is get to the point where you are now working a network of A list referrals. Pretty soon, the only prospecting you are doing is within that network of A list referrals.

And then what happens is, you get to a point where your business becomes fun. It becomes profitable. As my good friend and one of my prospecting mentors, Rick Hill, says, "You'll still have problems in your life. But time and money will not be two of them."

Robert: Wow. You've given us a lot of information here. Is there anything you'd want to share to kind of cap this off, any other particular important final techniques that people should know about? People are going to be amazed at what you've shared here. I'm just seeing endless possibilities for using this.

Bob: Well, you know, Robert, I think what it is, is it's not depending on any one-way of doing something to the exclusion necessarily of other things. I think networking, in itself, is very holistic.

I love what you do because I love attraction marketing. I also think there's a time where you go after the marketplace like I do and you bring them towards you. And, I think it's a matter of learning from different sources, eventually deciding upon a system that you want to use. And then, simply using that system on your own basis in order to obtain success.

And capping everything off, it's still asking yourself the question, "What can I do to add to this person's life?" And, the more you focus on how you can add increase to the life of others, the more that natural increase is going to come back to you.

Robert: That's a great way to top it off. Thank you so much for taking this hour to share these ideas. You can be sure that several hundred people are going to get value from this.

I also want to put in a little plug for your book. I have a link to Bob's site and his book. Check out his site. It's just www.Burg.com. It's very simple and it lists his books and services and his speaking topics, etcetera. Check him out. Sign up for his newsletter, "Winning without intimidation". It's great.

Bob: Thank you, Robert.

Robert: So, again, thank you very much and we will catch up with you again in the future.