

How healthy is your ecosystem?

By Grace Daly



Grace Daly is the founding host of ShopTalk360.com, the industry podcast show. With more than 20 years directing design, construction and facilities for national retail brands, Daly's current role as interviewer, author and business coach celebrates the leaders in our industry she fondly refers to as her family. Please feel free to reach out to her at Grace@GraceDaly.com

SHOPTALK 

As an avid interviewer, writer and executive coach, I find myself chatting with so many people from all aspects of our industry. I've had the privilege of meeting some very incredible entrepreneurs, business owners and industry leaders, as well as witness and celebrate the continued career growth and successes of many of my colleagues throughout the years.

If there is one common theme among all these incredible people, it's the simple and basic golden rule in business and life: They all value their relationships and understand that fostering these healthy relationships ultimately defines fulfillment and success. Yet, there still are many people who are unaware of this critical key.

I hear of these scenarios quite often. People get emails out of the blue from someone who has not been in touch with them for years or sometimes even decades, only to reach out for urgent help to find a job or be a reference for a job application.

As a coach, my No. 1 piece of advice to my clients is to stay connected and engaged to their networks, help each other grow, celebrate successes and ask for help in times of need.

Or, someone who won't give the common courtesy of returning an email or phone call only reaches out in an emergency when he needs a contractor in a specific trade or region.

And then there is the flip side. Those people on LinkedIn who make new connections, only to immediately send a sales pitch as their very first email.

Don't get me wrong, it's a noble trait to be honest in your intentions to ask for help or to build your business, but it just cannot be effectively done

on the turn of a dime. It just doesn't work that way because we're human beings, and human nature dictates certain unwritten rules.

Relationships are based on common values, trust and care; nurtured one person at a time. As a coach, my No. 1 piece of advice to my clients is to stay connected and engaged to their networks, help each other grow, celebrate successes and ask for help in times of need. Too many folks out there just reach out in times of need.

They may feel they are too busy to stay in touch or wish to remain within a certain degree of privacy – keeping business and personal separate, especially when it comes to today's social media. The truth of the matter is people won't want to support your endeavors unless they trust you and, they won't trust you unless they know who you are.

Knowing who you are is achieved only through building valued relationships.

By definition, an ecosystem is a *group of interconnected elements, formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment*. I view my networks and my worlds as various ecosystems; self contained operating worlds where everyone knows one another and relies on one another in order to keep the energy circulating. It's not uncommon that my entrepreneurial world will cross with my construction and facilities world, or that my writing world will mesh with my entrepreneurial world, as I make the connections for folks

that can help each other.

Because at the end of the day, we all have the same desires. We all want to achieve the same goals: to care and provide for our loved ones, to get a job well done and, of course, to have some fun, celebration and recognition along the way.

So how is your ecosystem? Are you making the time to foster healthy relationships? Keep up this energetic flow, cognizant of the give and take to keep your ecosystem sustained and healthy. **CCR**