Networking
“It’s not who you know, but who knows you.”

**Inspiration:**
- Focus on quality of conversation, not quantity of new connections
- Your network will mature and improve over time (do not expect results overnight)
- It takes at least 6 conversations to build a trusting relationship
- Devote yourself to helping make others’ dreams come true
- 80% of jobs are found through networking, so put 80% of your time into networking
- Be professional in all communications & interactions
- Be persistent and genuine - don’t take it personally if things don’t work out
- Your reputation will precede your skill set

**How to approach people:**

**Friends & Family:**
- Find out what they do & how they like it
- Tell them what you’re looking for and find out if they know anyone in a related position
- Ask if they can connect you that person

**Someone you don’t know:**
- Find out as much as you can about them before talking about yourself
- See if you can help them (this paves the way for a return favor)
- Strengthen the relationship so they may become your friend/ally
- Set up informational interviews if there’s someone you’d like to get to know better

**Connect with the well-connected:**

- Hair dresser
- Neighbor
- Roommate
- Former co-worker
- Organization leader
- Journalist
- Clergy
- Politicians
- PR people
- Restauranteurs

**Why would anyone network with you?**
- People are naturally inclined to help
- They’ve been in your shoes - maybe someone helped them and they want to give back
- You have an interesting/impressive/memorable introduction or background
- The relationship could be reciprocal - they help you with something and you help them with something else
- Possibility for collaboration
- Fun to meet new people & expand social circles

**Getting around objections:**

“We’re not hiring.”
- “I’m just interested in your advice.”
- “Perhaps you can think of someone else who might be interested.”

“I’m too busy.”
- “This will only take a moment.”
- “What’s a better time for me to connect?”

“I’m not the right person.” or “Apply online.”
- “Who should I be talking to about this? Do you have any other leads or referrals?”
- “Thanks, I will, but I’m just wondering if you could give me a little inside information or share any advice.”

**Brandishing yourself:**

- Inventory your skills, resources, experience & positive traits
- Assess the values of the company or job you’re applying for
- Craft a distinction that makes you memorable, unique, and well-suited for the opportunity
- Rehearse & practice expressing this in writing and conversation (prepare for the 30 sec elevator pitch, as well as “Tell me more...”)
- Find your target and apply it

**Where to meet people:**

- School • Alumni
- Network • Online • Work
- Socially • Organizations/Clubs/Groups

**Conversation starters:**

- Say hi
- Introduce yourself: I don’t think we’ve met before. My name is ______.
- How did you hear about this event? Why are you here tonight?
- What kind of people are you looking to meet?
- What projects are you working on right now?
- Did you come here with anyone?
- Mention a relevant topic/neutral current event & ask their opinion
- Tell a funny story about something that happened to you
- Where do you live? Where are you from?
- What do you do for fun?
- What are you up to / what have you done so far this weekend?
- Do you travel much? Where would you like to go?
- If entering a group: Mind if I join in?
- If asked a question, ask the same thing back
Techniques for the introverted networker:

• Practice making eye contact, just smiling, & saying “hi”
• Meet people one-on-one or in small groups
• Go out for dinner with friends and ask each person to bring someone new
• Meet people online through groups or forums - you’ll have more time to think through your responses and break the ice before meeting in person
• Observe others: How do they interact? What do they ask?
• Have questions to ask - this will take pressure off you. Be prepared to answer the same question back or chime in when you can elaborate on your own experience
• Be genuinely interested in getting to know the other person
• Being comfortable with yourself will help you be comfortable around others
• Take tips from Self-Promotion for Introverts and other books

More advanced networking questions:

• What do you do? (Then: What does that entail? or Tell me more...)
• How did you end up doing this type of work?
• What do you like most about your work?
• What’s a typical day like for you?
• What do you find most challenging? What’s the biggest issue you’re currently facing?
• What are you looking to accomplish in the next few years?
• What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
• What kind of organizations do you participate in?
• What are future career opportunities in this field?
• What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
• Who would be a good referral for you at this point?
• Do you know anyone it might be useful for me to speak with?

Stay in touch:

• Contact people again after you meet in person to thank them for their time, remind them what you talked about, and re-state your desire to keep in touch
• Make a plan to re-connect with people regularly
• Ask about events and projects that are important to them / offer to help out
• Share updates and accomplishments in your life
• Ask for advice
• Pass along articles of interest
• Connect with them on social media sites (LinkedIn/Twitter) and “like,” “retweet,” “comment,” or send a private message
• Relationships don’t form overnight, they must be nurtured over time

Politely ending a conversation:

Positive Comment: “____, it was great to meet you. You gave me some really interesting ideas.”

Summary/Plan: “I liked your idea about ____ and I’ll let you know if I can think of anyone who could help you with _____. Let’s connect on LinkedIn.”

Excuse: “This is my first time here, I’d like to say hello to a few other people. Can you introduce me to anyone else it might be good to connect with?”

• Exchange business cards
• Offer a handshake
• Move along to another conversation, part of the room, or exit the event

Resources:

• Berklee Community (in general)
• Berklee Career Network (alumni connections)
• Career Development Center

Books:

Make Your Contacts Count by Ann Baber & Lynne Wamon

Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It by Peggy Klaus

Career Management for the Creative Person by Lee Silber

A Foot in the Door: Networking Your Way into the Hidden Job Market by Katharine Hansen

Never Eat Alone by Keith Ferrazzi and Tahl Raz

Good in a Room by Stephanie Palmer

Self-Promotion for Introverts: The Quiet Guide to Getting Ahead by Nancy Ancowitz