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Networking for People Who Hate Networking: A Field Guide for Introverts, the Overwhelmed, and the Underconnected

Devora Zack
Berrett-Koehler Publishers
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Networking for People Who Hate Networking is as inviting and non-threatening as its title and subtitle suggest. Devora Zack departs from the traditional networking books—those that offer all sorts of winning strategies for people who are good at networking to begin with—and instead speaks to the other half of the crowd: people who need to network but hate doing it.

Typically, says Zack, those people are introverts, so the author begins with a "temperament assessment" checklist for the reader to determine whether he or she is an extrovert or an introvert. Zack then proceeds to break down the common stereotypical but misguided conceptions of each, leading the reader to understand and accept the positive qualities of both personality types.

Once personality type is established (with the assumption being that the reader is an introvert), Zack offers "sparkling new rules" (for introverts) as distinguished from "dusty old rules" (typical advice designed for extroverts) for being successful at networking. She points out, for example, that while extroverts "jump on in" and begin "a friendly stream of patter" almost immediately with anyone at any networking event, introverts are good listeners and planners. Their way of networking, therefore, may be to focus on their "predisposition to watch and gather data" rather than make idle conversation.

In her chapter titled "Networking Event Survival Kit," the author offers many excellent suggestions, discussing everything from what to wear, to strategies for increasing one's comfort level at networking events, to the right things to do after the event is over. She offers equally good advice about how to "place yourself in comfortable environments" to make networking easier, how to effectively use networking for a job search, and how to use business travel as a networking opportunity.

The author ends with some useful advice concerning how to define outcomes and

achieve goals, offering this encouraging counsel: “There is no such thing as failure, only feedback.”

Zack’s book provides a valuable perspective on networking not found elsewhere. In addition, it has much to commend it with regard to acknowledging and accepting what it means to be an introvert. Zack includes numerous examples that prove an introvert can be just as successful as an extrovert at networking, along with ego-boosting exercises that are reassuring. The author’s delightful conversational writing style, which incorporates just the right amount of humor, makes the book a joy to read. *Networking for People Who Hate Networking* is an excellent resource for all business people—especially those who hate networking.

Barry Silverstein