



# NETWORKING IN A SOCIAL SETTING

**Glen Gould**

Unless you are extraordinarily reclusive, you are and have been networking all the time. You just may not think of the things you do every day as “networking”.

Remember the last time you saw a great movie and told your friends about it? You were networking. Had a great meal at a new restaurant and told your mother-in-law? That’s networking. Let your neighbor know about the new kid doing your lawn, yep, that’s networking too.

Networking is simply sharing information with others that in some way may make their journey a little easier. And we all do that all the time.

But for many, the pressure of networking on purpose with a desired result can be intimidating.

What’s worse, most every person I’ve ever met has a story of networking gone wrong. Meeting the wrong person, being uncomfortable introducing themselves, feeling as if they are in a room full of people and yet all alone. They’ve had a bad experience that has led them to believe that networking is at best a waste of time and at worst a horrible experience.

And yet these same people can tell stories of having one person tell them one thing that improved their lives. They were given a tip in business, a referral to a house of worship, a recommendation to a social group, or even just where to go to get great tacos.

Every person I’ve ever met has a networking success story. They just haven’t ever thought of it as “networking”.

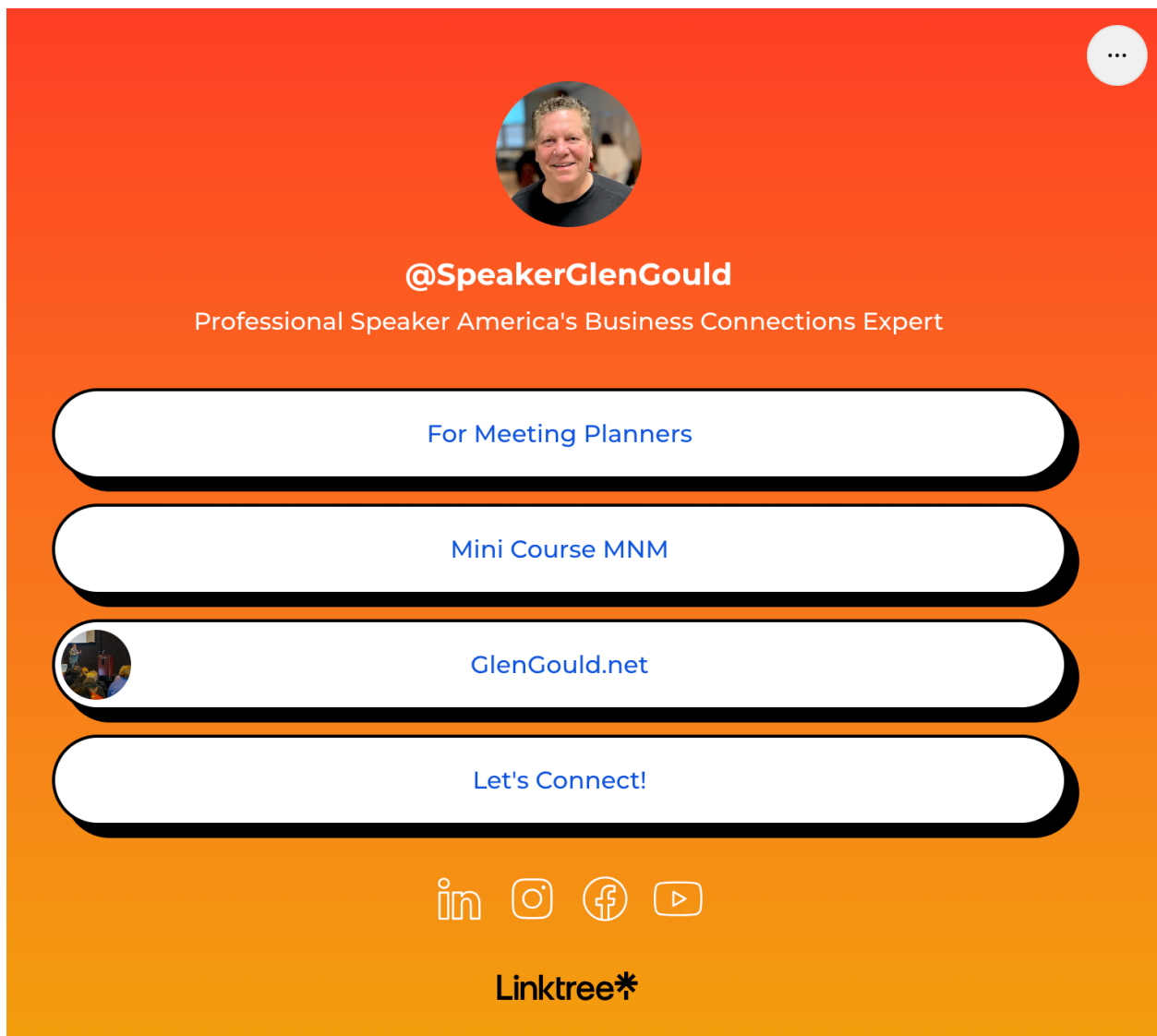
That’s why I’ve spent the last twenty years of my life helping others learn how to connect and benefit from networking.

You see, I’ve seen the powerful results that can happen when we connect with others. People’s lives can be improved quickly and substantially by meeting the right person at the right time.

And yes, you can choose who you wish to meet and begin a strategy of connecting with others that will result in success for you and solutions for the people you wish to meet.


This text is intended to be a brief guide to networking in a social setting. If you're seeking more I'd love to connect with you. Simply go to:

<https://linktr.ee/speakerglengould>



A Linktree profile card for @SpeakerGlenGould. The card has an orange-to-yellow gradient background. At the top right is a white circle with three dots. Below it is a circular profile picture of a woman with blonde hair. Underneath the picture is the text '@SpeakerGlenGould' in white, followed by 'Professional Speaker America's Business Connections Expert' in a smaller white font. Below this are four white rounded rectangular buttons with black borders and shadows, each containing a link in blue text: 'For Meeting Planners', 'Mini Course MNM', 'GlenGould.net' (with a small circular icon to its left), and 'Let's Connect!'. At the bottom of the card are four social media icons (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube) and the Linktree logo.


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While there are many additional tips and techniques you can learn to be a more effective networker, these ten tips are some of the most important for networking in a social setting. Each can be applied to business or personal networking.



1. **Be yourself.** I've worked with 10's of thousands of people across the nation in networking settings. Most of the people I've met have been delightful, engaging, and very interesting.

There have been a few to be sure that are just, well, not so nice. But the funny thing is, even they have people that are attracted to their personality. There's someone for everyone.

So, remember, be yourself. After all, it will be difficult to remember who you were trying to be if you aren't trying to be yourself.

2. On the heels of "Be Yourself", you must remember that **"It's Showtime!"** Very often I work with people who pull back just a bit in a public setting. Some say they become a bit more reserved.

Being a bit reserved can be misinterpreted as being stand-offish. You just might accidentally repel the very person you need to meet if you seem to be unapproachable.

People are attracted to people who have a warm smile, attentive gaze, and a good web-to-web handshake. You won't likely have these attributes if you aren't focused and remembering that "It's Showtime!"





3. **Remember, this isn't the time for selling.** Of course, if someone wants to buy something, let them. But don't approach networking in a social setting as a potential sales opportunity.

This is true regardless of the networking situation. Even in the purest networking meetings, selling is rarely the goal. Too often we see people who come to networking meetings or events with the intention of selling to those who are there. That misses the point!

Networking is the process of meeting people, learning about them and their needs, and accessing your network to help solve those problems. The same should be for you. The people you meet will access their network to solve your problems too.

Your goal is to meet and have a meaningful conversation with three to five people, likely all of which will not be prospects for your product or service. They will be potential networking partners and often people you can do business with.

The rule is to give the first referral. If that's you, so be it. But don't do business with someone expecting they'll do business with you. Do business with someone if they are a good fit for your need.



It's best to meet three to five people and have an exploratory meeting (perhaps a cup of coffee) to learn more and really discover if there is a match.

This is not the time to sell.

4. **Know who you need to meet** and how to describe them to others. So often overlooked, knowing who you need to meet and how to describe them to others is perhaps the most important thing you can do.



If you haven't thought of it before, now is the time to determine who you need to meet. If someone could introduce you to just the right person to accelerate your business, who would that person be?

One way is to think of the title of the person you wish to meet. Vice President of Sales, Business Owner, Secretary, Board Member, Founder, and even salesperson is just some of the titles the person you need to meet might hold.

Another is to think of the association of the person you need to meet. Where will the people you meet today find the people you need to meet to refer them to you?

It's easier to narrow down a mental search of a lead or referral if you give people somewhere they might associate with them. Volunteer or civic organizations, clubs where they play golf, tennis, or pickleball, and houses of worship are all great areas of association.

Finally, you can name specific names or companies. I need to meet people in management at XYZ Incorporated. I need to meet Mary Jones of PDQ Logistics. One time several years ago when I was teaching this, a woman challenged me and demanded, "Ok then, I need to meet Tyler Perry!" Unbelievably, there was a man in the group who was doing some renovations on his home. You never know who knows whom if don't ask!

5. ***Have a simple self-introduction.*** There's just no way around this. You must be able to share with people what you do, who you do it for, and how it matters. But, in a social setting you want to keep the conversation going. That's why you want a simple self-introduction.



With a simple introduction you can prompt additional questions from those who are interested in what you do while avoiding the appearance of being salesy to those who aren't interested in what you do.

A simple way to do this is the "have you ever" technique. "Have you ever come home to a hot house? I help people avoid that." She's in Heating and Air. "Have you ever forgotten to pick up your dry cleaning? I make sure that never happens again." He's a concierge service.

Have you ever explains what you do and prompts the question, "How do you do that?" It's a great way to introduce yourself without dominating the conversation. Just be sure to only use it when asked, "what do you do?" It doesn't work as a conversation beginner.



6. **Ask questions.** The most important thing when networking in a social setting is to engage in conversations that are interesting while learning more about the people you meet.



Asking questions is the best way to accomplish this. Here are a few you can use:

Are you from around here?

How long have you been here?

Do you have family in the area?

What do you do?

How long have you been doing that?

I'm looking for a new restaurant in town, what's your favorite around here?

(Hint: Avoid "Are you married" or "Do you have kids". While perfectly appropriate questions they can sometimes lead to personal information people would rather keep personal.)

And the Million Dollar Question: As I go through my day I meet a lot of people, tell me, how would I know I met a perfect referral for you when I do?



7. **Listen carefully.** When you ask a question, you need to be listening to the answer. Once they've answered your question, they'll likely expect you to respond to what they've said.



Sometimes people will immediately ask you a question following their answer. You must be listening to hear and answer appropriately. If you aren't listening, you can't continue the conversation. What's more, it's just rude.

What you are hoping to accomplish by questioning and listening is to discover common areas of interest. Perhaps you'll find a new fishing friend, or book club partner.

What's more, often you'll find that your best source of referrals comes from one of these simple conversations. You'll be likeable and therefore they'll want to help you.

I can't tell you how many times I've done nothing but ask questions and listen in a conversation, only to part with my conversation partner mentioning how interesting I am. I was interesting because I was interested in what they had to say.

Listen up! You'll like networking more, and people will like you more too!

8. **Introduce new people.** You've just met someone who is new to the group. Perhaps a new chamber member or someone who has been invited to the party at your friend's house by someone who hasn't arrived. You can make them feel welcome.

After you've asked some questions, you'll likely know a thing or two about them. Find a good match from the attendees you know. In this way the new person won't be meeting people who aren't a good match.



We've all been the new kid on the block at one time or another. When you introduce yourself to new people it makes them feel welcome. When you then introduce the new person to people you know, they'll feel like they are a part of the in crowd.

When you do this, they'll never forget it. Still to this day I remember the first chamber meeting I went to and how Kathy Lehner introduced me to the people I needed to meet.

9. **Don't overindulge.** Most networking in social settings events will have food and drink. It's easy to get carried away and overindulge in both. Just don't.



One way to ensure you don't overeat it to eat before you go. I know it sounds silly to eat before you attend an event with food, but too often I've coached people who are high achievers and they forget to eat, only to show up and over do it at the buffet table. I've done it myself and you likely have too.

Worse still is having one too many adult beverages. We've all seen the embarrassing moments caused by alcohol. One way to reduce the risk is to drink one water or soda for every one alcoholic beverage. This often results in trips to the restroom!

The best way is to avoid alcohol altogether. The last thing you want to do is to be off your game when the perfect prospect appears. Just don't do it.

10. **Know when to leave.** It happens, you introduce yourself to someone and you know right away that there isn't a match here. You run out of time and need to leave just when someone introduces you to someone else. What should you do?

Too often we feel the need to try for the other person. Oddly, they likely feel there isn't a match either. Then we fumble around, and worse still, look around. It makes us look uninterested and rude.

One thing you can do is to introduce the person you aren't a match with to someone else. Simply say, "Hey Bob, have you met Mary?" As they get to conversing, simply say, "Excuse me a moment" and leave.



There's a simple phrase you can use that always works. It's polite, respectful, and most importantly, it is final. With your hand extended for a handshake, simply say, "It was nice meeting you".

Finally, don't say something you don't mean. Things like, "Maybe we can get together sometime" fall out of our mouths when trying to be polite but are heard as genuine interest by the other party. Soon they have their calendar out creating a meeting that don't know how to avoid. Be polite but clear.

Ready to take your networking and sales to the next level? These additional resources may be just what you're looking for.

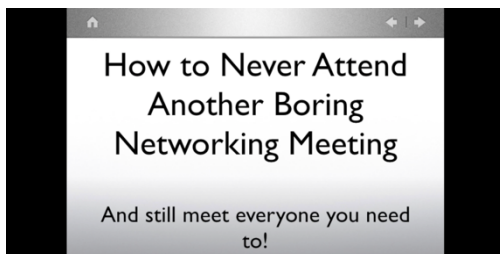
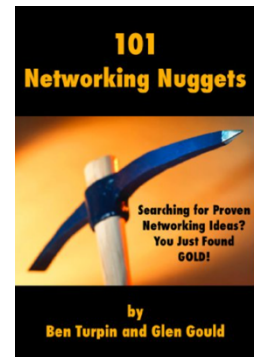


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## About Glen Gould

Glen Gould is a dynamic and engaging professional speaker and nationally recognized leadership connection expert. He's earned his place as one of the most inspiring and thought-provoking platform presenters through his 40+ years of working for and with business and association leaders.

He is the author of four books on leading and connecting for success including, *Meet Me At Starbucks*, *Million Dollar Meetings*, *Is Your Networking Working?* and *101 Networking Nuggets*. He is a student of success who is engaged in the business community daily and works with local and national organizations and association boards.

Glen began his career at the age of 11 working for a catering company more than 50 years ago. This gave him instant exposure to business and local leaders and piqued his interest in what made them the way they are.

Using what he learned about how successful people connect, Glen became the president of the Punta Gorda (FL) Chamber of Commerce where he led revitalization efforts in the wake of Hurricane Charley recovery and clean up.

He was recruited as Director of Small to Mid-sized Business at the Metro Atlanta Chamber and concluded his chamber career at the Newnan-Coweta Chamber (2015 National Chamber of the Year). He's started over a million-dollar enterprises from the ground up and has connected with and coached hundreds of small to mid-sized business leaders to do the same.

Glen has earned a reputation of distilling complex ideas and issues into actionable steps that are easy to immediately understand and implement. He believes in the power of connections and has built his career using what he teaches and believes.

Successful organizations and companies including Allstate Insurance, Habitat for Humanity, American Chamber of Commerce Executives, National Rural Economic Developers Association and over 100 chambers of commerce each year invest in his teachings, booking him again and again. Glen is a sought-after guest on business podcasts including the Beer and Business Podcast (#3 in business) and *The Courage to Lead*.

He has written for numerous trade and association magazines including *CareerBuilder* and has appeared on numerous local and regional television and radio programs.



# Glen Gould

*America's Business Connections Expert*

CONNECTING LEADERS TO GREATER SUCCESS

I'd love to hear from you!

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