



THE NEW ELLIS GROUP

Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

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Which Relationships Matter?

It is the last quarter of the year – a time for year-end self-evaluations and reviews that impact compensation, bonuses, and promotions. It is the season of both self-reflection and external assessment. As you consider what you will be able to report for this year and what you are planning for next year, here are some questions to help decide where to invest your efforts:

- Who are the people who have been the most consistent sources of work? Why do they rely on you? What can you do to foster each of these relationships?
- Who has provided you with support and guidance in your career? Do you have regular access to peers, mentors, friends, law firm staff, or other sources of support? Are you communicating with other people who have challenges which are like yours?
- Have you lost touch with clients or colleagues for whom you did great work and got great results?
- Are you involved in any groups inside or outside your firm which give you an opportunity to build new relationships? Are you involved in ways that showcase your talents?
- Do you have significant relationships you have neglected that need repair? Subordinates, children, spouses, elderly parents, friends?

If you take inventory now, you have time before your self-evaluation is due to initiate plans to address areas that need improvement. By the time you submit your self-evaluation, you will have a stronger narrative to report on your prospects for next year. You will also develop a good list of the people with whom you want to mark the holidays, with celebrations, greetings or gifts.

Example: The lead lawyer on a significant transaction that had to close by year end was concerned about the impact of the matter on other lawyers on his team. He was worried that the transaction would disrupt many of their holiday plans especially if they did not have local families and had planned to travel home for the holidays. After conferring with his spouse, he extended an invitation to lawyers on the team to join his family for Christmas. When one young lawyer who had recently had a baby mentioned that her parents were going to be in town for the holidays, he also extended an invitation to her parents for Christmas dinner. When he mentioned to their client that he was hosting some members of the team at his home for Christmas dinner, the client asked if she could stop by to thank everyone. The client showed up briefly on Christmas with gifts of champagne for each lawyer. The fact that the lead lawyer was attuned to the family needs of the lawyers on his team created an enormous amount of goodwill with lawyers in the firm and the client.

Are you paying close enough attention to the relationships you have with clients, colleagues, and family members? Is this a good time to take inventory as you head for the end of the year?