



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*

Volume 17, Issue 10

May 22, 2023

Summer of 2023: Meet the Neighbors

Memorial Day 2023 marks the beginning of summer, and it will be the most social summer we have enjoyed since the pandemic. If you are out of practice in taking advantage of social occasions to advance your business goals, I am publishing the updated, 2023 version of an article I wrote in 2007, the year I launched these newsletters.

For lawyers whose lives revolve around their families, Memorial Day launches the season of “relaxed” entertaining and the challenge of blending family social activities and business networking. You don’t want to violate the social norms by inappropriately interjecting business, but you also want to take advantage of meeting or catching up with interesting neighbors and friends, especially given the recent pandemic restrictions and the ongoing struggle to achieve work/life balance. Here are some tips on getting ready for a fun, healthy and productive summer of entertaining:

- Ask your spouse or partner to educate you on the guest list beforehand with a focus on any newcomers. Learn how your families know one another and what interests, friends, and community activities you share.
- Google your guests so you know what they do for a living and can prepare to talk intelligently [but casually] about their industry or company.
- Get the names and ages of your guests’ children straight, and which ones are friends with your own children.
- Get all your ducks in a row on the entertaining front in advance so you are not too distracted by your cooking responsibilities to engage people of interest.
- But do not fixate on guests of special interest. Ignoring the spouses, partners and children of people who interest you could be a fatal mistake.

Example: You are hosting a barbecue to mark the end of the school year or a youth sports team’s victory. Your spouse alerts you that the father of one child is the CFO of a local biotech company. You don’t do any work in biotech, but you check out the company with one of your partners and look at some recent news about the company. You also identify biotech companies your firm represents. You are ready to have a conversation if the occasion arises. If your interesting neighbor volunteers to help you, take him up on it and put him next to you at the grill, assembling hamburgers and hot dogs or making drinks. How do you transition from a purely social situation to business? Ask lots of questions, about his family, their vacation plans, and, of course, his business. Your questions should reflect your interest, curiosity, and business awareness. He is likely to give you a chance to explain what you do, too, and you can mention that your firm represents many biotech companies whose names you happen to have at your fingertips! When everyone is packing up their kids to go home, you have set the stage to propose continuing the conversation in a more peaceful setting, sometime over lunch or a drink, with your biotech partner.

Are you ready to spice up your next barbecue with tasteful business networking?

Happy Memorial Day 2023!