

Obituary Networking
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All together now, finish this sentence: "It isn't what your know, it's..."

Who has not been to a funeral service in which a priest is called upon to eulogize a man or woman he or she has never known, the effect of which can be relied upon to come off as successful as a fat guy trying to break a sweat at the DAC...who is no longer a member!

A few years ago I attended a memorial service for an acquaintance that had badly flubbed his life. Alcoholism, way too much golf and a proclivity towards the opposite sex brought him too many sad indignities and a fatal heart attack at fifty on the 17th hole. I thought the priest who conducted the service was wise in scarcely speaking of the man, whom he didn't know-the service was held at the request of the man's mother, who was a member of the church-and instead emphasized the mercifulness of death.

At another memorial service, this one for a man I knew rather better, three speakers arose to quote various great authors on the dead man's behalf, and all three praised him for his sense of humor. However, you needed to be an archaeologist and really dig to get at the jokes they shared, which, when one did get it, turned out to be not very good. The service-and our memory of the dead man-was only saved when a fourth speaker, one of the man's sons, arose to talk about what a good father he was.

Recently, the CEO of a large private company died and the memorial service was packed, standing room only. What was even more interesting was the long line of employees walking by the open casket. I had expected to see a lot of Kleenex and much mourning. To my utter surprise, there was not a moist eye in the room. They weren't there to mourn or pay their respects, but to be assured... to the last person, that the CEO was stone cold dead!!! One woman even removed a compact mirror from her purse and held it under the corpses nose...it seemed for at least 3 minutes! She only moved on...only...when absolutely assured there was not a trace of fog.

Skill at the obituarist's art...also known as networking is rare anywhere, but seems at an especially low ebb in Denver, Colorado. I cannot remember having read a single obituary in the Rocky Mountain News that I consider close to dying for.

Now I don't want to frighten anyone unduly, but it seems rather clear to me that the last hour is the key hour...when it comes to networking! That is the hour that judges all of the other hours. No one can tell whether or not his or her life has been successful until their last hour. As Sophocles said, "We must wait till evening to know how pleasant the day has been." Thus, it seems to me, to be a very helpful procedure to spend a little time pre living our funeral. That is, what kind of person would you like to be when the last hour of your life arrives? What do you want your children, spouse, friends and associates to share at your funeral? What inscription would you have written on your tombstone--- "Gone to

another meeting"; "Why me; why now"; "I told you I was sick"; "You know what I said about seeing a light when you die? That ain't true. I can't see a thing"; or my least favorite... the last words of Faust before he died: "Faustus is gone to hell!" Now if Faust had lived his last hour first, he never would have permitted himself to come to this unprofitable place. My very favorite, "Safely home, at last!"

So, It is a serious mistake to forget for a moment, as they say in Vegas, "you can't hope to beat the House!" It really is quite humorous to really think that the current diet fads, flossing, trainers, cosmetic surgeons can do a lot to really change things, to somehow cheat the Dealer. No matter the King's trainer 's nor the King's cosmetic surgeons can put any of us back together again...for very long!

All things considered, and speaking as a true property manager, even though my body is long out of warranty, with a lot of mileage on it, replacement parts, almost impossible to obtain, and trade-ins currently not available...I have come to terms that no matter what one's station in life, or what one's wealth or natural endowments, or whom one knows, the Lifeguard's whistle will blow and it's everybody out of the pool, and that includes you and me!

And so...Obituary Networking, what seems a small or mildly amusing subject, when opened up and looked at from a last hour perspective, may be larger and more intricate than anyone had expected.

As for me, I have now focused and narrowed my networking activities on successfully and truly making a difference in the lives of those who matter most to me...and answering the following questions...that I have a real hunch may be asked of me as I exit the pool: (1) Were you honest in all your dealings? (2) How was your relationship with Debbie? Did you love her with all your heart and mind? (3) How is your relationship with your children...and now grandchildren...individually? Did you try and make them happy? (4) Did you magnify your talents and abilities to the betterment of mankind? And finally, (5) did you provide meaningful service to others?

What a thrilling experience that we may truly network and live well, enabling us to die well!