

## 17. You Expect Me to do WHAT? TALK to People?

**JUST THE FACTS:** Traditional networking (talking to people) can be a pretty frightening activity. In fact, it can be so overwhelming for some that they may never attempt it! This activity will allow participants to initiate the three Ps (prepare, practice, and pull yourself together!) to overcome any fear of networking.



### Time

20 minutes



### Materials

- Optional: One copy of Activity 17 for each participant



### Directions

Traditional networking involves talking to people. For some this may be an easy activity, while for others it may be scary and uncomfortable.

According to Lara Zielin, the author of *Make Things Happen: The Key to Networking for Teens*, to avoid feeling nervous or scared when networking, try THE THREE Ps: prepare, practice, and pull yourself together! She says, “By doing your best to accomplish each of the Ps, you’ll have a good chance of overcoming [any] obstacles and eliminating fear when you network.”

Review and briefly discuss the Three Ps in further detail (the information provided on page 83 is for facilitator reference, and is not intended to be read verbatim to the group).

Have participants explore (either independently or as a group) the scenario in Activity 17 and complete Part 1 (What did Pradeep do?).



### Conclusion

Conclude the discussion by having participants discuss or complete Part 2 of the chart on Activity 17 (What are some strategies you could use?).

End with the importance of a thank you note focusing on the value of the person’s time and expertise. A thank you note goes a long way to having people remember you.



### Journaling Activity

Think about Pradeep's story. Think about your wildest career dream. What is it? Now, pretend you know someone who knows someone who does that type of work. Which of the Three Ps would be the most difficult for you - and why? Which of the Three Ps would you feel most comfortable with - and why?



### Extension Activity

Conduct a few role plays with participants on the value of networking. You may even choose to bring a few employers in to participate. If you bring in employers, try to coordinate the types of employers with some of the interests of the participants in your group. Have participants create a Three P "cheat" sheet to help each other prepare for the opportunity.

Have participants either hand-write or email a thank you to the person with whom they met. They should thank the person for their time and for the information that was provided. Some specifics from the meeting would be great to add, such as, "I really appreciated learning about...." Or "Thank you for offering me suggestions on how to improve my resume." Specifics will let the receiver know that the meeting was really worthwhile.

## The Three Ps

ADAPTED FROM: *Make Things Happen: The Key to Networking for Teens (Used with Permission)*

**PREPARE:** Do what you need to do to get ready. For example:

- To prepare for a telephone call, write a script and practice it. Know why you are calling (have notes). Prepare yourself on how to leave a message if the person doesn't pick up or isn't available.
- To prepare for a face-to-face meeting, do a lot of the same as you would for a phone call. If you're meeting with someone to get information about the work they do or a particular company, visit the company's website (if they have one) to learn more about it ahead of time.

**PRACTICE:** Practice what you want to say over and over and over. The more you hear yourself say what you want to say, the easier it will be - and the more confident you will feel.

- Ever think about smiling when you're on the telephone? Believe it or not, people can hear that confidence in your voice. People can determine friendliness from the tone of your voice. Along the same lines, fear can be heard over the phone, too. Concentrate on speaking clearly, be calm, and breathe!
- Prepare for one-to-one meetings by practicing with a friend, parent, or someone you know and trust. Ask them to role play with you - they could pretend to be the person you are going to meet with and you could practice asking the questions you have prepared.

**PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER:** Part of feeling confident at a networking meeting is feeling good about yourself. If you feel good about your appearance, you tend to give your confidence a big boost!

- Good grooming isn't just for dogs. Don't forget about those day-to-day essentials like showering, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, and using deodorant (this sounds silly, but many adults need to be reminded of this, too!) Don't wear too much perfume or cologne as sometimes people are allergic - and wearing too much will make them remember you because of your smell, not for your skills or your ideas.
- Dress the way you think the other person will be dressing. If you were networking with your uncle at a family BBQ, shorts and flip-flops might be just fine. But if you're meeting with someone in a professional setting, try to find out what the dress code is and see if you can come close to dressing the same (or even one step above). For example, if you're meeting someone in an office, and people usually wear ties, then you should wear a tie, too. If you're going to meet the head of a landscaping company and people usually wear jeans and t-shirts, go one step above and wear khakis and a button down shirt, if you have them.
- Don't forget other important things like a pen and a pad of paper. Your contact might say something really great and you'll want to write it down. It's always a good idea to take a resume with you, even if you're not meeting with someone for a job. It's a good way to leave someone with a reminder of your skills, talents, and experiences. After all, who knows what might happen? Also, ask the person to suggest additional people you could contact to learn more.

## Activity 17. You Expect me to do WHAT? TALK to People?

### SCENARIO:

Pradeep had a friend (Bob) who had a friend (Ray) who started his own company when he was 20 years old. Pradeep is a young entrepreneur who also wants to start his own business one day and wanted to talk to Ray to learn all he could (what to do and what not to do). Pradeep was reluctant to reach out to Ray because he thought Ray was too busy or would think his questions were stupid. Plus, he was worried that Ray might tell Bob that his questions were dumb - and Pradeep didn't want his friend to laugh at him.

Eventually, Pradeep decided that the benefits of networking outweighed the potential harm. After all, he knew Ray had built a very successful business from scratch - and Pradeep figured he really had nothing to lose. Pradeep also figured that if he really wanted to start his own company, he would have to learn how to network in the traditional sense, e.g. with people (and overcome his fear of talking to people he didn't know well). He thought, "Better to do it now (and learn) than to try it later and possibly ruin opportunities for my business."

So Pradeep called Ray, who agreed to a meeting. Before the meeting, Pradeep did some basic research to get a better idea of what it takes to start a new business (he looked up average start up costs, how to secure a loan, etc.). He also wanted to know about marketing, web design, and product development, so he researched Ray's company to get a better idea of Ray's business strategy. He had his notes written down to be sure to stick to specific issues. Ray was really receptive - especially because Pradeep was prepared and didn't waste his time. In fact, Ray was flattered that Pradeep contacted him.

Part of overcoming his networking fear was just getting the courage to call Ray. The other part of overcoming his fear was doing his homework and being prepared.

## The Three Ps

Part 1: What did Pradeep do?

Prepare: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pull Yourself Together!: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Part 2: What are some strategies you could use?

Prepare: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pull Yourself Together!: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_