



## CONNECTIONS

As women we instinctively want to connect. It's who we are. As women, we want to connect with other people ... men, women, older and younger, elderly parents and newborn infants. It's our natural desire to connect. In a larger sense we also have a desire to connect with nature, animals and with our own environments. More importantly, we want to connect with our own true self, who we are spiritually, emotionally and mentally. These connections give us the foundation to go out in the world and give of ourselves. To ignore these basic instincts is a sad mistake. To *celebrate and use* these instincts empowers us not only personally, but in business every day!

It is often said that a real estate agent is expected to be a psychologist, a financial planner, a babysitter, a marriage counselor, an interior designer, and spiritual guide while also wearing many

other hats! Actually, that is part of the fun ... you never get bored with your career!

But what does it take to fulfill all those roles with your clients?

It takes your natural ability to connect ... on many different levels with yourself and others. We must first connect with our own decision making abilities, our lightning speed insight and mental creativity, because when you're in an "Influential Moment" (IM), what you say to your clients can make or break a sale or listing. Being able to quickly get to the heart of an issue, calculate the consequences and openly articulate that to clients is paramount in real estate.

Networking is an overused word for simply organizing our connections. All throughout human history there is an overriding tendency to form ever larger and more complex structures of interconnectedness. The reason is simple. Despite occasional setbacks, complex structures tend to prevail over smaller, more isolated ones because they foster greater wealth and innovation.

Connecting means that you know people and people know you. It means somehow you have interacted with PEOPLE: in business, through a school or church - perhaps volunteering, socializing, or at the gym and the list goes on and on. Networking is again, simply organizing your existing connections. A higher level of networking is to intentionally create connections with segments of our society that you think would be helpful in creating new business.

In real estate it's evident that the more connections you have, the more opportunities for new business and referrals you'll have. Notice, I didn't say success. But you will have opportunities. What you do with those opportunities is up to you. More connections mean a greater variety of people and circumstances. That requires you to become more innovative as every real estate transaction has its own personality. Ultimately, because of innovation on your part, you will step out of the box and create unique solutions to real estate challenges.

Connecting is the most valuable instinctive resource a woman in real estate can cultivate.

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## HOW DO SHAUNA PERKINS AND CASEY ABERNATHY USE THEIR CONNECTIONS TO HELP THEIR CLIENTS?



When Shauna started in real estate, she kept meticulous records of every contact with loan officers, escrow, title and mortgage companies and their key employees. She needed the information to be on top of everything and help manage all the small “stuff” that makes up real estate transactions.

Now that she’s been in business a few years, she knows everyone by their first name, and relies on the same trusted people to help get her job done.

From time to time, Shauna’s co-workers at Decade 22 Real Estate ask her help to push through a sale or listing by using her influence with one of her network of real estate professionals. More than likely Shauna responds, “I’m too busy right now.” What she really means is that she’s worked too long and too hard developing her own personal relationships to let someone else benefit. Sometimes, when there’s a crisis, Shauna gives in, but not before she’s guaranteed a referral fee. She watched other successful agents in her office do the same (even to her). Now it was her opportunity to turn the tables and make a few dollars.

Clients could even be worse. You’d think she was a 411 operator with all the questions they asked. If Shauna liked them, she might write down a recommendation for something they were interested in or she’d refer them to the Internet or yellow pages. Since it was always all business with Shauna, she didn’t see anything wrong with her approach.

### *Outcome*

*At her last closing, Shauna became annoyed at how inflexible the buyer, seller and other agent had become. And they kept looking to her to solve their problems. She couldn’t understand how they could have gotten this far, on this deal, without noticing these issues. Reluctantly, Shauna used her contacts to solve the problems and made sure everyone knew she was driving the sale, but also resented having to cover for the other agent.*



Only once did Casey ever refuse a request from a client for information and that was because she was in the middle of an emergency with one of her children. However, she made it up to her client the very next day. Her client had just listed her property with Casey and she wanted to find a reliable handyman to help tidy up some unfinished projects and make her home show better. Not only did Casey refer a handyman but she also accompanied him to her client's home.

The first thing Casey's new boss/mentor at Excalibur Properties suggested was for Casey to always have a notebook on hand and to jot down reliable local contacts and then put them into three distinct categories: 1) real-estate professionals like title, escrow, mortgage; 2) personal services like hair stylist, nails, cleaners, fitness club, doctor, dentist; and, 3) home-related services like inspector, carpenter, electrician, plumber, locksmith, gardener and contractor.

Because her customers always seemed to ask, Casey kept her referral book handy and freely gave out her recommendations, often writing them on the back of her business card and always calling her contacts to let them know one of her clients would be calling them. For out-of-towners buying property, Casey rapidly became the go-to-gal for all types of referrals and even picked up additional clients just because of her expert advice.

## *Outcome*

*Rather than keep writing down recommendations and countless references, Casey put together "Casey's Contacts" in a simple brochure, listing three strong professional references for her clients to choose from, a list of her favorite personal referrals and her list of proven home-related services – each with a little extra insight as to what makes them special. Business couldn't get much better for Casey, and the companies and services she refers reciprocate with leads for her. Casey's created a win-win-win situation all because she dared to connect!*

# *Working on your connections...*

## ∞ DECIDE

Have you put together your A-Team of resources? It can lead to life-long clients.

*Answer these simple questions* *(circle one)*

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Do you provide the right resources for your clients' real estate and personal needs?	Yes	No
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Do you make it easy to recommend and refer with simple handouts or web listings?	Yes	No
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Do your network "members" reciprocate and give you strong praise, references or referrals?	Yes	No
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*If you answered, "No" to any of these questions, then you need to Connect. Now, use the second step in the DARE Process and Analyze where your connections are today.*



## ∞ ANALYZE

How helpful are your connections for your clients?

*Answer the following questions to tell how healthy and powerful your network is today.*

**CONNECTIONS** ... Do your clients rely on you to find local products and services to help them with their home buying and selling?

**HAND-OUTS** ... Have you created an easy hand-out or reference (flyer, web listing, back of business card, rolodex-type) to give to your clients needing help and do you track any referrals?

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** ... Do you have at least three qualified references for mortgage, lending, title, escrow, legal, and financial/CPA?

**PERSONAL SERVICES ...** Do you have personal references you can provide your clients in the areas of doctor/pediatrician, dentist, day care, salon/spa, fitness club, recreation facilities and more? This is especially valuable for clients new to the area.

**HOME-RELATED ...** Do you have a list of qualified resources for everything your clients may need for their home? Can they depend on this help before, during and after their move (inspection, general contractor, Mr. Fix-it, decorator, plumber, electrician, painter, pool, gardener, moving/storage, flooring, locksmith, etc.)?

**LETTING THEM KNOW ...** How do you notify your referral connections that you're in business and appreciate their leads?

**CLIENT SURVEY ...**

- ∞ After the close of each sale, do you ask your clients about the usefulness of your referrals?
- ∞ When was the last time you updated your connections and made them available to your clients?
- ∞ Which of your referrals provides you with the MOST and LEAST leads?



∞ **REALIZE**

Now that you know where you stand with your connections, work towards improving their benefits to your clients.

*Create a worksheet or update your connections and place it on your web site, create a flyer or develop handouts.*

<b>Professional Network</b>	Company #1	Company #2	Company #3
Mortgage/Lender			
Title			
Escrow			
Legal			
Finance/CPA			

<b>Personal Network</b>	Company or Name	Do they give you leads	# of referrals in last 6 mos.
Doctor/Pediatrician			
Dentist			
Day Care			
Salon/Spa			
Fitness Club			
Recreation			
Church/Synagogue			
Other _____			

<b>Home-Related Network</b>	Company or Name	Do they give you leads	# of referrals in last 6 mos.
Inspector			
Decorator			
Gardener			
Moving/Storage			
General Contractor			
Pool Care			
Other _____			



## EVALUATE

Discover how helpful your connections are for your clients. Use their feedback to make changes. All you have to do is ask!

After each close, have your customers complete the following survey. (Why not discuss it with them over a cup of coffee?)

*Please help me improve my network of services by rating the following connections:*

<b>I recommended...</b>	Did you use this company?	RATE 1-5 5 being best	Comments
Inspector			
Decorator			
Gardener			
Moving/Storage			
General Contractor			
Pool Care			
Other _____			

*Evaluate your Network's strength every few months.*



## DARE TO MAKE CONNECTIONS

- Use your innate instincts to create connections in every aspect of your life.
- Even though you're in business, make sure your connections are "real" and genuine.
- Create a simple way to provide your clients with your recommendations.





Life is either a daring adventure,  
or nothing. *Helen Keller*

