HOW A POSTDOC NETWORKS
TO ACHIEVE THE PERFECT JOB

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Once upon a time...

in a Land, not far away.
There lived a young Postdoc named Josh who had Visions of Bettering his Position in Life. Alas, totally clueless he was outside the Comfort of his Laboratory, although well-intentioned and diligent.
Seeking a Job outside of Academia, he sought Advice from his benevolent, though cranky P.I. She said, pointedly and surprisingly poetically: “Stay in Academia: Be a Researcher like me For only Fools Go into Industry!”
Despite all Appearances, no Fool he, he watched her travailing in the Laboratory through long Hours, yet achieving a Grant Funding Rate of a paltry 5%.

“This is no Life for me,” thought he.
Asleep deep in the Forest, in a Dream

magically came to him this strange Word:

NETWORKING

a Concept foreign to his innocent State of Being
Knowing, as he did, next to Nothing about interacting with normal People outside of the Laboratory, let alone establishing meaningful Relationships, he set his innocent Mind to thinking...

The net Result of this arduous and somewhat painful Process of Thinking was... an Invocation to the Fairy Godmother...
Me!

NETWORKING 101

NATIONAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION
BUILDING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

• Resume
• Job Interview
• Networking
  – Elevator pitch
  – Introductions via contacts
  – Professional social media
• Attitude
  – Humility
  – Expectations

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

How You Look          How You Sound

5/21/18
WHAT PEOPLE REMEMBER ABOUT YOU

- The impressions you leave on other people are determined by:
  - How you look (body language) – 25% 55% 75%
  - What you say – 7% 20% 30%
  - How you say it – 14% 38% 63%

BODY LANGUAGE

Greeting:
- Walk in with confident, respectful air
- Make eye contact
- Smile
- Extend your hand
- Shake, web space to web space
THE PROS WARM UP... SHOULDN’T YOU?

Remember, how you **Sound** is 38% of what people remember about you

- Articulation
- Pitch
- Volume
- Energy
- Inflection
- Pace
VOCAL WARM-UP

Stand up...

- Arm raise with breath inhale/exhale
- Shoulder shrug and hold for 3 seconds
- Mouth... ba ba ba, ba ba ba
- Lips... Brrrrrrr brrrrrr
- Tongue... exaggerated la la la, la la la
- Siren...
  - Starts with “we” and goes to “aw”
  - “We” is high and the “aw” is low
ONE SPORT JACKET, FOUR WAYS

ONE DRESS, FOUR WAYS
ELEVATOR PITCH BASICS

When to use it?
- “Tell me about yourself…” (but not in an interview setting)
- Informal gatherings where opportunity presents itself

What it contains...
- Personal roots/authentic you
- Educational background
- Professional highlights
- Why you do what you do, and who it benefits
- What’s next

What does it entail...
- < 1 minute, 30-45 seconds ideally
- Introduction
- Highlight key and relevant experience(s) and distinctions
- Provide evidence of your technical and transferable skills
- Prove you are more than a lab-based scientist
Hi! My name is Josh Henkin and I am a 3rd year postdoc at the University of Vermont. I research how food impacts athletic performance.
Hi! My name is Josh Henkin and I am a 3rd year postdoc at the University of Vermont. I research how food impacts athletic performance. When I was in college I got interested in nutrition research and I learned how important proper eating is to increase sports endurance. That motivated me to get my MS in Sports Nutrition and my PhD in muscle physiology. I volunteer with youth sports teams to teach good exercise and nutrition habits to youngsters. While earning my advanced degrees, I owned a bar and was fortunate enough to play rugby at the national and international levels. I even won gold and silver medals in international competitions playing for a USA rugby team.

**Professional highlight and a noteworthy accomplishment**

**it ain’t braggin’ if you can back it up**
SAMPLE ELEVATOR PITCH

Hi! My name is Josh Henkin and I am a 3rd year postdoc at the University of Vermont. I research how food impacts athletic performance. When I was in college I got interested in nutrition research and I learned how important proper eating is to increase sports endurance. I earned my BS in finance, but the courses I loved most were on nutrition and exercise physiology. That motivated me to get my MS in Sports Nutrition and my PhD in muscle physiology. I teach good exercise and nutrition habits to youth sports teams. While earning my advanced degrees, I owned a bar and was fortunate enough to play rugby at the national and international levels. I even won gold and silver medals in international competitions playing for a USA rugby team. I've been following Crypto-Protein since NBC News reported that there was insufficient evidence to implicate them in any Olympic blood doping scandals. I'd like to learn more about the company culture of innovation that I've read so much about and why you like working there. Could you tell me more about what you do and how long you have worked there?
ELEVATOR PITCH 2.0

What do I do now that I’m in a conversation?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

• What inspired you to go into that career?
• How did you end up working for _____?
• What do you like about what you do?
• What was it like when you started doing _____?
MAXIMIZING ENCOUNTERS

Ask…

• What setting am I in?
• Who is my audience?
• What do they want from me?
• What do I want from them?
MAXIMIZING ENCOUNTERS cont.

Customize your conversation…
  • Understand with whom you are talking
  • Start with getting to know them
  • Tell stories that connect both of you
  • Make them want to know more about you

Showcase…
  • Your features and benefits
  • You are a solution to their workforce problem
BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

• Observe your posture
• Do you look like you are listening?
• Ask appropriate, open-ended questions
• Listen to them, then share your stories

WHY STORYTELLING?

• Stories are up to 22 times more memorable than facts alone
• Our brains are more active when listening to a story
• A good story can synchronize the listener’s brain with yours
• Storytelling combined with statistics have a retention rate of 65–70% (Stanford University)
PERFECTING STORYTELLING

• Storytelling is part art and part science
• Communicating your humanity is the art
• Don’t teach or preach
• Engage the attention of others
• Voice tonality, body language, facial gestures, hand movement, pacing, adapting to the non-verbal cues from your audience, and the choice of what details to include.
STORYTELLING: TECHNIQUE 1

Situation: company, organization
Tasks: role/responsibilities that address this requirement
Activities: what actions did you take in this role to address situation
Result: what was the improvement/outcome/result of your work
Relate: describe how you can do the same for this organization

STORYTELLING: TECHNIQUE 1 cont.

(Situation) At my last company, I was initially a software developer on a team of 6 developing a new algorithm for a device that monitors environmental contamination in air and soil samples.

(Task) The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of sales and marketing investment riding on the product being ready. However, the project was behind schedule and our team leader unfortunately took a new position at a different company.

(Action) I was dedicated to this project and my company and I love the challenge and responsibility of leadership. So I volunteered to stand in and lead the team. Luckily, I used my technical analysis skills and spotted a few small mistakes made in the initial coding that were causing some sporadic errors that slowed us down. I then negotiated with our product director a small bonus incentive for the team, and budget for two pizza evenings, so we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the coding and catch up with the critical project milestones.

(Result) Though this took us 1.5% over budget, the software was delivered on time with a fault tolerance that exceeded the objective threshold. The additional project cost was minimal compared to the costs of delaying the launch and the negative affect on our product branding. The team was delighted with the extra bonus and I was promoted to team leader as a result.

(Relate) The project was seen as a great success to the organization. When I feel supported by my company and my team, there isn't anything I won't do to meet deadlines and make the company that I'm working for a leader in their industry. It's just the way I'm naturally wired.
STORYTELLING: TECHNIQUE 2

**You** – Introduce the character
- **Need** – give character a desire
- **Go** – send them on a journey outside their comfort zone
- **Search** – character adapts to journey
- **Find** – character gets what they want, or they don’t get what they want
- **Take** – pay a heavy price for that
- **Return** – go back to comfort zone, or make a new one
- **Change** – not the same person you were at the start of the story

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STORYTELLING: TECHNIQUE 3

- **Setting** (where your story takes place)
- **Character** (the hero/heroine/protagonist who has adventures)
- **Plot** (the events that unfold — the arc of what happens)
- **Conflict** (the obstacles the characters encounter)
- **Theme** (the resolution of the conflict — what’s been learned along the way)
Some years ago, as I began my fourth year in medical school at Columbia University, I was pretty sure that I wanted to become a surgeon. In looking to declare my choices for a whole year of electives, I thought my time would be best spent traveling to different parts of the country and immersing myself in different surgical subspecialties.

I did an externship in Dallas at Parkland Hospital, one of the nation’s busiest trauma centers. I got what I was looking for, and in fact, more than enough to convince me that I would not want to become a trauma surgeon. I returned to complete my other electives in other areas in surgery and began my surgical residency in a high-powered program at Columbia’s affiliate, Presbyterian Hospital.

At the end of my first year, a drastic cut from 6 to 2 residents was announced. And, I was one of the 4 who were cut. During that time, a large number of the mentors with whom I worked at Parkland, had moved on to the University of Washington in Seattle. Because of the connection I had established on that elective, I was able to complete my surgical residency at University of Washington without ever having to fly to Seattle for an interview.

What was especially curious about the way this turned out was that I had, since sixth grade, nourished a secret desire to visit Seattle some day. Little did I know how events would conspire to fulfill that wish!

DON’T FORGET…

- Tell the punch line early to keep the listener engaged
- You are good at what you do
- Technical and transferable skills
- Brand names sell
- Results – focused
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

• Try to offer something to help your counterpart
• Be willing to give before asking to receive
• Don’t give them work to do

FOLLOW UP, OR FORGET IT!

• Thank the contact
• Reflect on the conversation
• Follow up action on your part
• Follow up action on their part
• Be timely
MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

• Congratulate their accomplishments
• Announce your accomplishments
• Seek advice
• Send links to articles/news/research of interest
• Introduce them to contacts
• Acknowledge holidays/special occasions/events

Thus, with his newly-acquired interpersonal Skills, Josh was able to find a suitable Position outside Academia.

(His now-former P.I. continued to labor on without him.)
And I relinquished my role as Fairy Godmother, returning to my day job, teaching Professionalism … and Zumba.

And everyone lived happily ever after.

The End
QUESTIONS?

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