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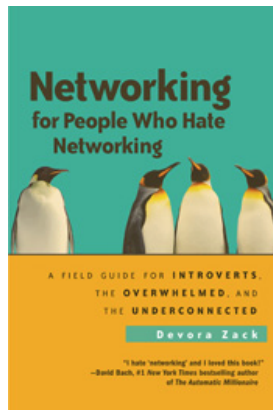
Euna Lee with Lisa Dickey

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Book Review: *Networking for People Who Hate Networking*

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Networking for People Who Hate Networking: A Field Guide for Introverts, the Overwhelmed and the Underconnected by Devora Zack (Berrett-Koehler, \$16.95, paperback original, 9781605095226/1605095222, July 27, 2010)



Devora Zack has the test results to prove she is an off-the-charts introvert. She also knows in her gut that networking events for people like her can be a waking nightmare. Despite all that, she has trained herself to succeed on her own terms in an arena where only extroverts, famously adept at small talk and working a room like a vacuum cleaner, are supposed to shine. Her book, brimming with her hard-earned knowledge, is both a pep talk and a field guide to making networking work better for those of us not naturally drawn to large rooms mobbed with complete strangers.

Skeptical introverts should be aware that, first of all, Zack has assembled a set of tips, techniques and strategies that can be highly useful and even prevent panic attacks; second, she writes with zesty humor about overcoming anxieties unknown to back-slapping extroverts. How many times have we been collared by an animated self-promoter and wondered how to end the exchange? Zack has developed a foolproof solution for herself: she simply says, "I am a consultant," and the person races off, freeing her.

Her personal solution illustrates one of her guiding principles for introverts: prepare for networking events, in this instance by having canned responses ready. Along those same lines, let's assume your new acquaintance in a vast, off-putting banquet hall asks a question you consider too personal. Do you say, "What #X&% business is that of yours, buster?" and sabotage a potentially profitable business relationship? Or do you have an all-purpose line in your repertoire, something like, "I try not to think about it. And you?" Pause, be prepared and pace yourself, Zack tells us, to make the most of the moment.

Addressing stereotypes of extroverts and introverts, Zack emphasizes understanding and accepting the different social styles of our brothers and sisters. Although introverts will enjoy the table of negative perceptions ascribed to extroverts ("brash," "show-off," "nosey," "fake," etc.), turn-around is fair play, and the sensible introvert will take to heart the negatives that are often associated with introverts ("awkward," "unfriendly," "secretive" and "dull"). How do we meet and click rather than reinforce our prejudices? Zack recommends updating the Golden Rule to her Platinum Rule: "Treat others how they want to be treated"--so that we train ourselves to "see" the actual person in front of us rather than a projection. It's all about reframing a situation, she advises, and when it comes to changing our preconception of networking as a draining yet necessary evil, we should always remember, "Real networking is connecting."--[John McFarland](#)

Shelf Talker: A peppy, road-tested guide to improving networking skills and improving results for everyone, even the proud wallflowers.

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