



Connection Pros

As we start to get into the New Year, many of you might be looking for new places to go and make connections with others. There are so many places to try out but where do you start? While I've said there is no best place to network, one of the greatest ways to meet and connect with others is by getting involved in a charity or other volunteer organization. Through my involvement in local, regional, and national charitable organizations, I have met some of the best people I know. Plus, getting involved on a national level has expanded my connections way beyond my state borders.

Many of you might be saying to yourself, "I don't have time to give. I barely have enough time to get to the things I want to get done now." I felt the same way. I started getting really involved in 1993. I owned a small retail chain and had two small kids at home. I wondered where I would find the time to get involved in something new. You don't find the time, you make the time! We only have 24 hours in a day. Do you make the most effective use of your 24 hours? I didn't. But, all it took was making a few changes and I found the time to help those less fortunate than myself.

Where should you volunteer your time? You'll need to follow your heart on this one. You must pick an organization for which you have the truest and deepest passion. These are normally organizations that have had some impact on your life, not one where you think you can meet the richest, most powerful and influential people. If you volunteer for a charity to climb the social ladder and don't have true convictions for the group, people will see right through you. You will never be embraced by the powers that be. However, if you believe in the cause, really support the organization, and show them your abilities, skills, and your desire to help, the connections you can make are limitless. Plus, it can benefit you in many areas of your own life.

I am involved in a few volunteer organizations. One of them is a national leadership group that is made up of 500 of the most passionate, most involved and most powerful up and coming young leaders in the country. Being involved with these people has impacted every area of my life. If I had not offered to give of my time, I never would have had the opportunity to be involved with this incredible organization. Find the group that really fires you up inside and start giving them a piece of your time. See you next month.