



The One Thing

Above all else—Do this or none of the rest matters

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What is the one thing that every new networker should know? What is the number one priority thing they should focus on when they first get started?

Such is the question posed by my friend, George Madiou. Immediately, three things come to mind. But George didn't ask for three things. Or even two. He asked for one. And only one. Now, that, dear reader, is an entirely different matter. I've experienced several things through the years that I classify as true game-changers, absolutely necessary, make-it-or-break-it, if you will. Narrowing the list down to a single item is not an easy task. However,

I accept George's challenge, so having given the matter serious thought. This is my answer . . .

The number one thing, when you first get started, in my opinion, is to dive head-first into a deliberate personal development program.

More specifically, read, listen, and watch everything you can get your hands on about communication skills. Here's why:



Everything you do in networking requires interpersonal communication. Prospecting, sponsoring, promoting, prospecting, testimonials, introductions, follow-ups, prospecting, training, mentoring, praising, prospecting, and apologizing for your mistakes—when you’re building a voluntary army, everything you do requires interpersonal communication.



The better you communicate, the better your results; and the networking business pays you for one thing: results. In a very real sense, the better you communicate (and the more of it you do), the more you get paid. Nowhere is this more true than with prospecting. If you don’t know how to connect with people, the other aspects of the business (sponsoring, mentoring, etc.) won’t apply anyway.

Here's the thing though: one doesn't develop communication skills overnight.

It's a process, the unavoidable irony of our business. A networker is most vulnerable when they first get started. They are most likely to get discouraged and quit early on. This is the very time they need communication skills the most. And yet, when they first get started, their skills are the least developed. This is the great paradox of our profession, and it's why it's vital to start personal development right away.

My first sponsor understood the importance of personal development and he got me involved on DAY ONE. Once I began to see the fruit of personal development in my own life, I had the most wonderful thought. I thought, *what a great business! It even has a personal development program attached!* Eventually, one day, it

dawned on me that I had been wrong. It's isn't a business with a personal development program attached.

It's a personal development program with a compensation plan attached; a very different perspective, indeed.

Most people get started in the business for one thing: more income. But—and a big but it is—income is not the one thing. In this business, income is merely one thing among many. And it isn't even the first thing; just the opposite, in fact. The income comes last. After the results. Moreover, the results come only after doing a list of other things first. And the very first thing on the list of things that come first? Develop your personal communication skills.

And *that* is THE ONE THING.

Note: The importance of deliberate personal development cannot be overstated. You may not enjoy the PD genre, you may not “have the time,” or you simply may not know where to start. Been there, my friend. Do you want answers to these challenges (and others), or would you rather make excuses? The answers are available, you know. A great place to start is [The Critter Lessons Series](#).

—RM

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