

RON SUKENICK | **KEN WILLIAMS**

21
DAYS
TO SUCCESS

Through

NETWORKING

The Life and Times



of Gnik Rowten

What People Are Saying About *21 Days to Success Through Networking*

“Sukenick and Williams have mastered the art and science of one of the most sought marketing tools in the 21st century. It’s amazing to watch Gnik as he builds a solid network of contacts in only 21 days. This is a book I’m sharing with everyone, every day, all year long.”

—Steve Bono, presidential director, Lightyear Wireless

“This book makes it easy to comprehend the commonly overlooked values of networking success. The networking fundamentals I have learned from this book will serve me for the rest of my career. ... *21 Days to Success Through Networking* is the perfect balance of fun and informative reading.”

—Sara Deuser, database coordinator and finance assistant, National Precast Concrete Association

“I am embarking on a new adventure like Gnik and found Gnik’s Aha! moments insightful and important. The story allows the concepts to be well defined, easily understood, and enjoyable. I like the simplicity of the ideas and took notes so I can remember what to do. Great read!”

—Dawn Davis, special education teacher,
Davis School District (UT)

“Thought you would like to know your book just helped me at work. ‘What others have to say is more important than what I have to say.’ I just got bonus points with my boss. Thanks!”

—Abigail Stearns, personal banker, Chase Bank

“It is a quick and easy read. It’s a good book, and I totally like the ideas and the teaching that you are doing through your characters.”

—Jeff French, service missionary, Philippines

“I am always amazed by Sukenick and Williams, and their boundless energy, connecting with people and making their time and lives better. After the first paragraph of the manuscript, I lost myself in the story, coming up for air at each Aha! moment.”

—Rich Tensmeyer, project engineer and data manager, Clarke Engineering

“This book is a must read—Sukenick and Williams will show you how to become a master networker as you read their fascinating story of networking success. You will love Gnik and his mentor Pam, and learn with Gnik as he develops into a master networker in only 21 days. I know this book will be one you refer to over and over again.”

—Andrea Nierenberg, author,
Savvy Networking: 118 Fast and Effective Tips for Business Success

“Loved the book. It was an enjoyable read and pulled me in because it’s real and believable. Some great ideas for improving relationships—both business and personal.”

—Annette Dalton, hair stylist and home-school mom, Mechanicsville, VA

“This book instantly changed the way I approach social interactions.”

—Jake Dorris, ramp agent, FedEx Express

“[This book] completely changed the way I look at and approach networking and making connections with people. Gnik (with a ‘G’) showed that the entire process is supposed to be easy and genuine, and more importantly he showed me how to do it myself.”

—Mark Williams, sales trainer, ZAGG

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Prologue

The familiarity of the coffee shop was surreal. Two weeks ago, Gnik had met with his manager and handed her the short resignation letter that he had drafted more than six months before. He had left the date blank, but he knew that someday he would have to scratch the itch he had been feeling to start his own company.

Molly,

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I am resigning my position as marketing support associate, effective two weeks from today. The past 18 months have provided me with education and development experiences that will have lasting effects on my career. Thank you for the role you

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have played in my professional development. Please let me know how I can be of assistance during this transition.

Sincerely,
Gnik Rowten

He had finished his goodbyes at work, and the reality of his upcoming transition was looming. Gnik would be moving away in just two days; ordinarily, he would have preferred to stay at home and keep packing, but the “Crew,” as they called themselves, insisted on getting together to say their goodbyes to Gnik. The Crew, Gnik’s best college friends, had hung around together since they were freshmen. *This seems so weird*, Gnik thought. *Things won’t ever be the same.*

Gnik was the first to arrive, and he staked out a territory in the back corner of the shop. Foot traffic was light, and Gnik was certain the Crew would be able to reminisce without interruptions.

As Gnik sipped his gourmet coffee, he welcomed the surge of caffeine. He hadn’t finished half his beverage before the Crew had finished gathering. The chatter of old friends reconnecting fell into a natural lull, and Chad, the group’s unofficial spokesman, spoke to everyone present.

“Thanks for making time in your schedules to give Gnik a proper send-off.” He turned to Gnik. “So, buddy, are you excited to be moving on to bigger and better things?”

Gnik forced a smile and faced the center of the table. “I’m a little freaked out, actually. I’ve been on autopilot since I decided to move. I feel like there’s something big ... something

Prologue

important waiting for me in the City. But I don't know *what* I was thinking. I don't know anyone there. I don't have a job to go to. I have no idea what I'm doing! What the *bleep* was I thinking?"

Excited murmurings rumbled around the table as the group shifted in their seats, giving Gnik their full energy and support.

Chad sat down and motioned to Gnik. "I wish I had the guts to follow my dreams like you do. You'll be amazing."

Gnik closed his eyes, absorbing the positive vibes from his friends. Transported in time to some future moment when he would have the work and the new experiences he desired, his eyes shot open, and he got serious. "There's nothing special about me. If I can do this, there's no reason you can't, too."

In unison, everyone around the table nodded. Chad spoke for all. "Maybe you're right. Maybe ..."

Gnik pointed at the table. "Okay, I'll tell you what I think. First, I appreciate the confidence you have in me. That will help when I'm having a rough day. But I'm not going to let you get away with wimping out on yourselves."

His gaze focused, and his seriousness intensified. "I'll go and represent you guys. I'll figure it out, by trial and error. And when I figure it out, we'll get back together, and I'll teach you what I've learned. I can't let you give up on yourselves. We're supposed to change the world, right?"

Gnik's former college classmates looked to him in anticipation. Chad again spoke for the group. "Deal. Don't forget about us when you're rich and famous."

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Others in the group piped in with their own words of wisdom.

“It’s not what you know—it’s *who* you know!”

“It’s all about networking!”

“It’s all about *people*!”

“Okay, okay,” Gnik laughed. “I got it. When I get to the City, I’ll start working on my network. Don’t forget, though—we’re all in this together. We’re all on Facebook, so I expect us all to stay in touch. Plus, I’ll post regular updates on Facebook or my blog, and I expect you to follow me.”

The Crew joked with each other and encouraged Gnik until the barista good naturedly invited them to let him close for the night. Gnik returned home to continue packing. For the first time in days, he felt confident that moving was the right choice.

And as with all good things in life, we will start at the beginning ...

4 d a y

The Gift of Attention

The rain was coming down steadily. Gnik took a deep breath and looked out his apartment window. *The air smells so clean, and the grass is really looking green.* He laughed as he thought about Pam chastising him yesterday. *She was right about having a positive perspective. Look at all the people out there, hunched over and shuffling down the street. Rain is so cleansing. I wonder if they see it that way.*

Gnik grabbed an umbrella as he rushed out the door and hurried to the bus stop on the corner. It was time to head to the grocery store and pick up some sustenance. He could only stand to eat out for so long; he wanted a home-cooked meal, even if it was only his old college standby of macaroni and cheese. Most of the people he passed on the street didn't lift their eyes enough to notice his smile. As Gnik danced the final

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steps into the covered shelter he nodded to the line of passengers crowded inside, waiting for the bus.

“Mornin’! A little wet today, ain’t it?” It seemed an elderly man in a cap and trench coat wanted to start a conversation with Gnik.

“I love the smell of the rain,” Gnik grinned.

The man continued, “I guess it won’t let up until afternoon. I saw the weather report on Channel 4 this morning. I like Channel 4 better than Channel 9. Their weather girl is right most of the time. That guy on Channel 9 has been wrong about the rainfall amounts the last three times! If I don’t know the weather and I forget my galoshes, my feet get wet and my socks are soggy all day. I *hate* soggy socks.”

Gnik’s first instinct was to turn away and focus on his smartphone, but he resisted the impulse. *This guy seems nice, if a little odd. What have I got to lose by listening to him for a few minutes?*

He turned to face the old man. “I know just what you mean—I hate soggy socks myself.”

The man saw his opening and barged through, developing a complex conversation with little involvement from Gnik. An occasional nod from Gnik was all that was necessary to keep him going. Occasionally, Gnik caught his attention wandering and quickly brought it back to the man with another nod, a smile, and an “uh huh.” Seven minutes later the bus arrived. As the passengers took their seats and Gnik lost sight of his new friend, he found himself thinking that the interaction had been quite enjoyable.

Day 4: The Gift of Attention

At the next stop the old man passed Gnik on his way out. He placed a weathered hand on the younger man's shoulder. "Thanks for listening to me, young fella. Thank you very much."

Gnik was surprised at the depth of the old man's appreciation for such a simple gesture as listening. *That was so easy. I wonder...* He caught himself mid-thought. *I wonder what would happen if I spent my whole day listening, rather than talking.* He recalled a seldom-implemented adage from long ago suggesting that because we have two ears and one mouth, we should listen twice as much as we talk. *I'll try it*, he thought.

Lost in thought, Gnik was startled when the smartly dressed business executive sitting directly behind him leaned up and offered Gnik his hand.

"Good morning. I'm Garrett." Gnik awkwardly contorted his body to shake Garrett's hand. "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with that gentleman."

Gnik smiled, as if they shared an inside secret. "He was certainly an entertaining conversation partner."

"Not only that," Garrett continued, "but when was the last time you were thanked for listening? Whatever you're doing, I think you're on to something important." Garrett stood up. "This is my stop, but I'd like to continue our conversation sometime and follow up on what I observed."

Garrett pulled a business card from his pocket and handed it to Gnik. "Have a great day, and thanks for listening." He winked and stepped off the bus.

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During the rest of his bus ride, Gnik realized that people didn't do much talking, which made it hard for him to do much listening.

We should listen twice as much as we talk.

At the grocery store, Gnik decided to try a new tactic. As he stood in the checkout line, he noticed the cashier's key ring had a baby photo on the fob. He pointed to it and said, "Cute baby." That was all it took. The cashier gushed during the entire transaction about how wonderful her baby was. She even offered advice, in case Gnik ever had kids of his own, on what brand of diapers are the best. Gnik smiled, nodded, and enjoyed the woman's enthusiasm for her child.

Gnik carried two bags of groceries in one hand and his umbrella and a third bag in the other as he walked back to the bus stop. As he found a seat on the bus, he noticed the guitar his seatmate was cradling. Remembering the commitment he'd made to himself, that he would spend the day listening, he took a deep breath and asked, "Have you been playing long?"

The guitar player seemed to be about Gnik's age. His answer was brief. "About twelve years." He then realized that Gnik was intently focused on what he was saying. "I started when I was ten. Do you play?"

Day 4: The Gift of Attention

Gnik shook his head. “No. My mom made me take piano lessons, but I always wanted to learn the guitar.”

The man spent the rest of the bus ride explaining to Gnik that it wasn’t too late to take up the instrument, if he was still interested. As the bus approached Gnik’s stop he stood to disembark. “Thanks a lot for the advice,” he said. “Maybe I’ll take a lesson someday.”

The guitar player reached into his pocket for a business card. “If you’d like to get started, I know some great instructors. Text me if you have any questions.”

The two shook hands, and Gnik exited the bus. Though it was raining lightly, he decided the umbrella was more trouble than it was worth and dropped it into one of the grocery bags. He jogged to the end of the block and slipped into his building.

Giving to others can be as simple as giving my time and attention.

As he put away the groceries, Gnik realized that a few minor changes in his approach to the trip had made a big impact on his experience. *Just listening and being friendly to that old guy sure made him feel good. The cashier loved talking about her baby, and now I know someone who can teach me guitar. And all I had to do was listen.* His thoughts flashed back to his dad’s comment, *When you give to others, it becomes easier for them to give to you.*

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“I had no idea that just listening could have that effect,” he said aloud, and then it hit him: *Giving to others can be as simple as giving my time and attention.*

Gnik looked out the window. It was late afternoon and the sun was beginning to peek through the clouds. The rain had let up, and the colors of the sunset were beginning to show. *What a day. I can hardly wait to see what tomorrow brings!* He sat at his corner desk and typed a quick blog update:

It's amazing how small gestures can generate big results. Listening—*really* listening—is a seemingly small and insignificant act, but the payoff can be huge!

Gnik's Aha!



I can give others the gift of my attention. I should listen twice as much as I speak. When I speak, I learn what I know. When I listen, I learn what others know.

About the Authors



Ron Sukenick is considered one of America's leading authorities on the topic of networking and business relationship strategies. He is the president and founder of the Relationship Strategies Institute, a global training and business development company that provides the business community with strategies for developing and effectively uti-

lizing deeper professional relationships. He is a dynamic presenter, an intuitive business coach, an expert consultant, and a successful author. His presentations on relationship

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collaboration and transformation deliver practical information, humor, and immediate results.

Ron's work consistently focuses on the areas of personal and professional relationship success, and he has extensive insight into the processes that connect people to people. He shows his clients how to transcend the standard networking practices to build more authentic and mutually beneficial relationships that enhance the bottom line. He has helped countless companies improve their internal relationships, as well as develop and improve critical relationships with clients, vendors, and others outside the company.

Here are a few of Ron's accomplishments:

- Author, *Networking Your Way to Success* (Kendall Hunt, 1995)
- Co-author, *The Power Is In the Connection: Taking Your Personal and Professional Relationships to the Next Level* (Self published, 2004)
- Contributing author, *Masters of Networking*, a *New York Times* bestseller (Bard Press, 2000)

Ron is a highly recognized speaker and trainer who gives programs for corporations, organizations, and associations. His presentations are known for practical information, humor, and results. For further information, please communicate your interest to Ron at rs@ronsukenick.com.

About the Authors



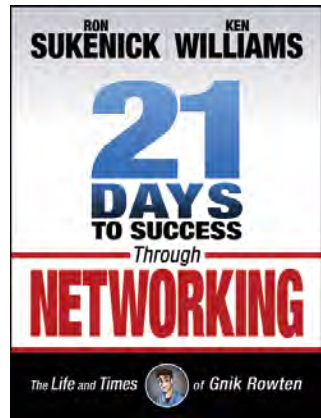
Ken Williams is an emerging speaker with a dynamic history of teaching, coaching, and training teams to achieve success. As a sales manager in direct sales and insurance industries, he recruited and trained sales agents, and learned the importance of creating and maintaining relationships. During his corporate

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A forward-thinking professional, Ken has collaborated with business professionals in diverse organizations to offer his experience and expertise in improving processes, training and mentoring personnel, and improving customer service and relationships. Ken realized his passion for speaking and mentoring when he joined Toastmasters in 2008, and he achieved the designation of Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) just three years later.

Ken is an exceptional communicator in individual and group settings, and he is sought after for business and creative writing. Ken is currently building his own local marketing business in the Indianapolis area. He can be reached at Ken@loyaltymarketingindy.com. This is Ken's first published book.

If you enjoyed reading this chapter of *21 Days to Success Through Networking*, please visit our bookstore to order a copy.



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