

## Creating Your Why Filter

#BYDN

**Would you like to skip FOMO and pass on a cluttered calendar filled commitments you regret making?** Great, then let's get down to developing a focus for your networking efforts.



WHY WHY WHY WHY WHY.....

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In an era of endless networking choices and 24/7 distractions in the palm of your hand (aka your mobile phone), it's easy to get off-track (and mindlessly scroll away the hours hoping for a different outcome). To stay focused, you're going to create a "why" filter.

## A quick refresher from Build Your Dream Network\* on the importance of "why":

- Understanding why you're engaging in an activity alleviates networking stress and anxiety.
- Knowing your why eliminates FOMO and clears out unnecessary clutter from your calendar.
- Effective and generous networking means being present, having a why guides you (and is better than a tiny, but loud voice in your head chanting "why am I here!").

○ To create YOUR why filter, start by writing down the "thing" you're trying to accomplish:

*(this could be gaining information on careers in a new industry, building stronger connections with my colleagues at work, raising my profile in my current profession, discovering new opportunities etc.).*

Take a long look at what you wrote down and flip over to your current networking efforts (glancing at your calendar, email RSVPs, online groups will help you do this). Do your current networking efforts reflect what it is you're to achieve? Are you making smart networking choices?

yes

no

**Let me give you an example** of networking misalignment (and an urgent need for a "why" filter!). A mid-level executive shared with me her frustrations on being passed over several times for promotion, listing all the community activities she was doing as justification for

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deserving recognition. My reaction to her frustration was: how do any of these activities (as noble and worthwhile as they were), relate to her advancement? My question took her by surprise, then the executive had a swift career OMG! moment. She had simply *hoped* that the company would recognize her for all the things she was doing (even the stuff she had begrudgingly taken on and hadn't had the nerve to drop).

### **As a result of our conversation, this executive:**

- Proactively sought out opportunities to share her knowledge and technical expertise;
- Immediately stepped off non-core work committees that were in fact, energy-draining time wasters for her;
- Pursued high-profile leadership roles in leading industry associations; and
- Selectively maintained involvement in a limited number of non-profits that she truly enjoyed.

### **Her “why” filter for making networking choices to advance her career became:**

- Can I showcase my knowledge?
- Do these responsibilities portray me as a leader?
- Is it an opportunity to raise my profile as an expert/leader within the industry?
- Does this initiative or cause matter to me?

**You only have so many hours in the day, so you need to be ruthless with yourself (especially if you're the person who says YES! to everything and everyone).**

With the story above in mind, ask yourself again if you're making smart choices with your networking time.

**Be critical and realistic.**

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- Now, thinking of what it is you're pursuing at this time, write down four requirements, outcomes or action items that will help you achieve the outcome you're seeking:

1.

2.

3.

4.

- Next, transform your four answers above into 4 questions (*I've provided prompts to help you along*):

will this ...

can i ...

is there ...

how do i ...

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**Take a breath.** You're close to having your why filter. You may be quite happy with what you've written down – perhaps you had immediate clarity similar to the executive I spoke with! Or you may still be mulling your answers. Either way, put this exercise aside for a day and come to it tomorrow. *Affirm your “why” (and assess your current commitments) after letting them percolate for a while.*

**Here is some further reading if you need more on “why”:**

- Page 29 of **Build Your Dream Network** (*The Why Filter*). Read from page 29 to page 34, as I outline the “why” filter I used when I was writing my book.
- **Joe Styler’s career networking story at page 75 of Build Your Dream Network** (*Expert Insights: Network Around the Corporation to Move Up the Ladder*) focus on Joe’s intentionality in building a network within GoDaddy (where he works) and within his industry. The clarity on what he was striving towards is what explains WHY Joe would invest a significant amount of personal time to build industry connections.
- “**How to use “the why filter” to save yourself from burnout**” on Caitlin Harper’s blog (Caitlin was an early reviewer of Build Your Dream Network when she was working at Business Insider. Since then Build Your Dream Network has become her go-to networking resource and we’ve become great friends). <https://www.caitlinelizabethharper.com/blog/make-better-decisions-why-filter-build-your-dream-network>

○ Additional thoughts, ideas, reflections?

