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## Episode 473: Thinking Ahead: Grow Your Professional Network Through the Power of Connections

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Jason Stowell: Hello, FBP family. With us today we welcome Steve Spiro, the host of the LinkedIn live show, the Master Connector. Steve is an inspirational speaker and professional development expert on the topic of growing one's professional network. In today's stinging Head show, Steve shares varying strategies and tactics to help you grow a stronger professional network.

Jason Stowell: Good morning, Steve. Thank you for joining us today.

Steve Spiro: Hey. Good morning, Jason. Good to be here with you.

Jason Stowell: Excellent. So before we go into a little bit about your professional activity, can you just tell us a little about your origin story? I find it fascinating how you've grown into the professional you are today.

Steve Spiro: Oh man. So I don't know how much time we have here but border raised the Bronx, dad was an entrepreneurial to liquor store dissuaded me from going into that. So why not go into advertising, marketing, high school and college for that. Got out, couldn't get a job, start a company, opened an advertising agency in the city, New York City and then eventually had a lustrous career in the advertising industry. You went up economy shifts. I went up meeting a very successful entrepreneur who kind of sticks on a roll with me on a mentorship basis and kind of changed it all for me. And I wanted to reinventing myself on a path of self development, books, audios networking, pivoted over into technology and now consulting I do speaking.

Steve Spiro: I've got a LinkedIn live broadcast, as you know, and they call me the master connector, which is ironic because grew up shy and introverted, picked on bully, learning disabled Dyslexic. So it's crazy who I was and what I've kind of evolved to. And I attribute that to the power of mentorship, power of self development and just networking in general and the power of connection.

Jason Stowell: Yeah, I was going to say the master connector on LinkedIn is quite the cornerstone of success. That's incredible. If you don't mind, I just want to jump into it. I speak a number of times and a lot of what you speak about is about being authentic and making sincere connections. And can you just tell us a little bit more about what that means to you because we're all trying to network but you're networking authentically and I'm intrigued by what that means.

Steve Spiro: So at some point I'll be asked to speak on a TEDx stage, I'm sure, and that talk will be topic or titled in our weakness there's power and we all have our stuff. I had my share of it as I shared right there's all these insecurities. I had more hang ups than the phone company growing up and all these things and insecurities. And so what I learned and what I realized was that all those insecurities, those hang ups, those weaknesses was really holding me back. In fact, it was really preventing me from connecting with other people.

Steve Spiro: I had a wall up, a big time wall and essentially by protecting myself I was weak and didn't connect. And so when I finally came to terms with that and I was able to now allow people to understand my weaknesses, my insecurities, some of the challenges and lead with those weaknesses and vulnerabilities, I found that the connections were powerful and I felt powerful in terms of my confidence and so it became amazing.

Steve Spiro: And so I really have a strong belief on the fact that you really be vulnerable. Right? I know. We know Brene Brown and she did an incredible job on that. But it's true. If you do that, you will find that people will want to connect with you better and you'll create some really meaningful connections and relationships and collaboration will occur from that as well.

Jason Stowell: So that leads into one of the other talks I heard talked about, about your shift from being inward focused to outward focused. You share a few insights on that.

Steve Spiro: Yeah, 100%. I was so self absorbed because I was so broken and there was this tendency to just protect and to be inward, and I felt like if I showed myself, people would criticize me. So I really was just self absorbed and it was comfortable. Right. You're a fitness guy. You're being in the fitness industry. You'll probably cringe when I say this, but I could sit and I had done this. I had put on a massive amount of weight. I've taken most of it off, thank God. But I would sit in front of a TV, watch Netflix, and eat a pint of Honedas ice cream in a sitting, and we do that two or three times a week.

Steve Spiro: Right. And it was so good and so comfortable, but afterwards it was so bad. Right. And we know working out, right? You have to push yourself a little bit sometimes, but you feel really good afterwards. Right? Not only you feel good that you accomplish

something, but the endorphins. And there's all sorts of other things that kick in, right. When you work out. And I kind of compare being inward focused to kind of eating Haagenuts ice cream in front of the TV.

Steve Spiro: It just felt comfortable. But afterwards it was like, eh. And then going and being others focused was like working out. It was like, okay, it feels good. Yes, it's uncomfortable, but when you do it, you feel great about it. It's funny because during the pandemic and I guess we're kind of getting out of that, finally. The heart of it, the thick of it. Two years, really, especially the first year when it was really locked down, I felt more connected than I'd ever felt in my entire life because I was becoming others focused and I was reaching out to people and I was having a lot of these zoom calls. I was doing a lot. I was probably doing maybe eight a day. It was crazy, but I felt really good.

Steve Spiro: And the more I focused on other people and looked to add value, look to serve, the better I felt about me. Yeah, it's just amazing. And so one of my favorite books is the book *The Go Giver* by Bob Bergen. That is a great book. An example of what a Go Giver represents, in fact, to the degree of besides kind of claiming to be the master connector. Right. I also on my profile, LinkedIn profile I have go giver on there. In fact, I asked Bob Burke himself, I said, would you mind if I use that title as part of my LinkedIn profile? And he's like, well, thanks for asking. Most people just assume and they put it up there and they don't ask. But I appreciate you asking. And I did.

Steve Spiro: But it's amazing, the more you focus on other people, whether you're in the fitness industry or you're in sales or business development or in business ownership and you look to serve other people, you're going to find yourself really feeling better about you. When you're focusing yourself, you may be comfortable, but it's not ideal.

Jason Stowell: It's fascinating to hear you say that because as you were mentioning, how you feel more connected now via the pandemic. I was just thinking and reflecting that I have some sincere relationships with folks that I've actually never been in the same room with other than this right here. As good as friends. They want in person.

Steve Spiro: Absolutely. For sure. Yeah. It's so true. And honestly, there's a value in this year in that when you would go to coffee with somebody or be at a restaurant with somebody, there's a lot of distractions, there's a lot of things around you. And here now we're on Zoom. We're like locked in, right? We're eyeball to eyeball is you've got a white background behind you. I've got a crazy virtual background.

Steve Spiro: It's not much distractions and people get to know and become hyper aware if I know you're writing notes there. But if you stop someone's looking away distracted, it's just not good. So it's forced us to really engage with people and really be zoned in. And I think it's great and it's allowed us to really be able to create really meaningful relationships this way. You're right. Yeah.

Jason Stowell: That's a very cool fact. So my listeners here, again, as you mentioned, health and wellness. They're typically business owners, operators, franchisees, and obviously

they're always looking to build their own networks to look for different opportunities with our conferencing events or through other socials. Do you have any strategies, any tactical pieces that our owners and operators could learn and utilize pretty quickly?

Jason Stowell: As far as I want to make sincere and authentic relationships to grow my business and my local, regional, global networks. Anything recommend?

Sure. And by the way, I don't know if it's okay to say it, but I want to. Just on a side note, congrats on the million downloads of your podcast. Congrats. It's awesome. Here to celebrate that with you. I appreciate that. Yeah, it's an honor. Yeah. In terms of network, the reason I refer to myself as the master networker, I refer to myself as the master connector because I think it's more about connections.

Steve Spiro: Right. If you're out there networking, right. I've done talks on called the three legged stool of networking. Right. So there's the traditional networking, which is networking events, the old fashioned whether you're going to some meeting hall and you're meeting people, or it's a cocktail party type environment, or you're doing it on Zoom, or whether you're doing it on social media through LinkedIn, which is my personal favorite, or whatever it is, instagram doesn't matter.

Steve Spiro: Or whether it's just living your life. I call unconventional networking, which is just as you live your life, you talk to people, and maybe you're online at a supermarket or waiting for your coffee at a Starbucks. You just talk to people, and the world is your networking event. Right? But the key to networking is really, I believe, the key. And the magic is in the follow up. Right. It's not in the initial. You got to make a good impression, but it's getting that follow up and having because you're not let's be honest, when you're on social, it's great, and you want to have a good profile and you want to have a good content, sure. And a good messaging, sure.

Steve Spiro: But that's not real connection. If you want to take it to the next level, connect with somebody offline, have a follow up meeting or maybe it's a first meeting. I know, Jason, that's how you and I connected, right? We took it off of social on LinkedIn and we brought it to real life and we had a conversation. So my recommendation is if you're having a networking I'm one of those guys. I'll say, great, grab as many cars as you can, right?

Steve Spiro: Be normal. Don't be like some kind of you're not trying to push your product. Be normal, be others focused, but get a lot of numbers. And the magic is in the follow up. So make sure you send a text or send an email, hey, I'd love to add value. Let's get back together again. I'd love to learn more about you and how it can be a value to you or how it can be a blessing to you. Same thing on social. Take it off of social. When I connect with somebody on LinkedIn, or if I haven't had a chance to actually, if I've been connected with them and I haven't a chance to have a conversation, I'm going to reach out and want to have a conversation with you. And I think that's important.

Steve Spiro: Take it off the social. And the same thing. If I'm just meeting somebody randomly, I'll have a follow up text. I want to have a follow up conversation. Because, again,

one thing is having a good image, good profile, good brand. But if you're not taking it to the next level and having that follow up conversation, what good is it? And then the second thing is to the point that we were speaking about before, which is being others focused, right?

Steve Spiro: Number one, connect authentically, right? So you're going to talk about some of the things that you've struggled with. And again, when this is not a dump session, you're not like, airing your dirty laundry, but things that you've overcome, you care about it, right? And hopefully hear what they have to say, and hopefully they'll open up as well and be genuinely interested in them. Right? It's not a check the box.

Steve Spiro: Okay. Where are you from? You're from Chicago? Okay, check. Okay. What do you do? Okay, check. No. You're from Chicago. You lived there your whole life, and there's like six or eight layers. You can go on that question, right? And what do you do? You're in fitness. Why did you choose that? Do you like it? How did you get into that? And there's three or four layers on that. And just be others focused, right?

Steve Spiro: Connect, be others focused and make sure you follow up. And I like to always have some next steps. Next step being, maybe I'm going to invite them to another networking group that I'm a part of. Or maybe I'll invite them to my show in my case. Or maybe I'll say, hey, go look at my LinkedIn connections and maybe find a few people that you'd like me to introduce you to. I'm always going to try to leave with a next step of some sort.

Steve Spiro: And if not, if I feel there's a real value to that person, hopefully, I really believe there is, I'm going to put the next step for myself, and I'll put a reminder in my calendar somewhere, hey, let me reach out to this person in six months or a year or whatever two months, whatever my thought is, and do something with it. Don't just make it another connection to me. Connecting, networking, whatever you call it, it's not about another number.

Steve Spiro: It's not about numbers. It's like, okay, I have 10,000 followers, or whatever it is. It's not about that. It should be about connection. And how could you really do something meaningful with those connections?

Jason Stowell: I think your quote, magic is in the follow up is just an incredible credible insight because we all look at what that first step. But you're right. Equally, if not more important, is that next step. And so that's a really great highlight that I think is important for my listeners to hear. So bridging off of that. And the next step, obviously, as you just alluded to, you want to build professional rapport with these folks. You don't want to just do the thing.

Jason Stowell: Obviously, I want to sell you something, but I know professionally, I've been trained to do five minutes of report building before we do the thing. And then our customers out there, our members, our clients are so in tune now that they know that that's exactly what's going to happen.

Steve Spiro: Right?

Jason Stowell: We're going to try to just build this. Let me ask you about your kids, whether I truly care enough with salesman's, been trained like that. So can I ask, how do you use it? Through your manner, your temperament, your tone? How do you create rapport? Again, that's sincere and authentic and doesn't just feel like he's asking me the questions because he's trying to ultimately sell me something.

Steve Spiro: Well, big part of what I try to go into conversations with is no agenda. In a sense, the agenda. In other words, what am I trying to get? Agenda. Right. It's truly a how can I serve you? How can I help you? Agenda, if you want to say that. Right. Is there structure to the call? In my mind, yeah, the structure is a little my calls are typically break the ice. I want to hear your story. I'll tell you my story and then maybe make some suggestions on how it can help you.

Steve Spiro: If you really feel like you're not if you feel like if you really genuinely care about that person, which I know you do, Jason, this is not you I'm speaking about. But if you go in knowing, how can I help this person and dig in and really understand, then if it results into a sale, great. But I'm not going in there with that. I'm going in there with, let me see what's their pain points, what's their challenges in life, and I'm thinking, okay, who do I know in my network?

Steve Spiro: What do I know? As far as some of the I mean, I've done a lot of reading over the years. I'm an audible guy because learning disabled, right. But it's allowed me to do at least one or two books a month. They got a lot of books in my head, a lot of knowledge that I've put together, and yeah. So I'm thinking, okay, how can I help you? And if it means it's something that I market or sell, sure, but that's not my agenda.

Steve Spiro: And I also know that if I really show value, then maybe by the next time we meet up again, it'll be something that they want to potentially buy from me or use my services or whatever. I'm not in a rush. I want to make sure that it's literally them saying them leaning in and saying, hey, tell me get what you do, because I love this, and is there something that you do that can help me? I want them to be the one to say that to me and not be the guy saying, well, let me tell you about my products.

Steve Spiro: Right.

Jason Stowell: Love the trigger of them leaning in. That's pretty cool.

Steve Spiro: Yeah.

Jason Stowell: So going to have to read something randomly when I was just preparing to speak with you for the first time that you're a black Buddha karate, and I think your wife's a black Buddha karate. Is that correct?

Steve Spiro: She is, yes. I have a fourth degree in gojuru karate and a first degree in Japanese jiu jitsu. And my wife's second degree in gojuru karate as well. So life's interesting in our household, that's for sure, both to be in black.

Jason Stowell: Folks, I wanted to thank you for your time today. And then if you have anything else you'd like to share with my listeners, I'd love to hear that as well, as if our listeners would like to get in contact with you. What's the best way to do that, sir?

Steve Spiro: For sure. And again, thank you for the honor of being here with you, and I really do appreciate it. And I'm excited for what you're doing with your community. Yeah, one thing I'll just say is this. Listen, I think the world, there's some darkness in this world, right? There's some hurting, whether we've got through COVID or not. And people now we're starting to see a lot more layoffs. We're seeing the economy shifting with the inflation and pricing going up, and now big companies starting to do some layoffs. We're seeing there's some darkness right? There's things that are happening.

Steve Spiro: But you know what? If we could be a beacon of light and hope, right? I was at an event at the tail end of that event. It was a big ballroom, and they turned the lights out, and everyone had a candle, and they had the person up in the front of the room, stage, so to speak, light one candle, and then they lit two or three others around them, and they lit people's. And then within five minutes, the whole ballroom was brightly lit through these candles.

Steve Spiro: Because when you light somebody else's candle, it doesn't diminish yours, it doesn't put yours out. And so one of the things I speak about a lot is to be, let's be the light. Let's light other people's candles. Let's give them hope. Let's let them know that we're going to be okay, we're going to get through this. And if you're in a dark place, understand that it's going to be okay. And I just want to be a beacon of light and hope for people and inspire them.

Steve Spiro: My mission on the show is to be the light uplift, inspire and encourage. And speaking of which, I would love for you to tune in. It's on Wednesdays. Every Wednesday. 01:00 P.m. Eastern So we do a 30 minutes segment. We've got amazing guests on our show. It's called the master connector show. If you want to go to Masterconnector Show, that's the website for the show. It's aired on LinkedIn, but it's also aired on YouTube as well as Twitter and Facebook.

Steve Spiro: So if you're not a LinkedIn guys, that's our primary. But find me on LinkedIn. If you are on LinkedIn, for sure, love to connect with you. Also, it's easiest to find me and find all my links by going to [Stevespiro.com](http://Stevespiro.com), and you'll find lots of ways to connect with me and also to hire me as a speaker. My speaker website is [Spiroglobal.com](http://Spiroglobal.com). That's my speaker website. So find me there and you'll see some of the stuff that I do.

Steve Spiro: But, yeah, I'd love to connect with you. If you're listening to this, watching this, definitely let's connect for sure. I'd love to be a beacon of light and hope and help add value in your life as well.

Dori Nugent: Let's get to know Abby Marks Beal from Rev. It up reading. Plus, she recommends the perfect book that complements her episode. Abby. Welcome to our Quick Fire Five segment. I'm excited to have you come on the show next week. Let's start with your first question. What is one item on your bucket list?

Abby Marks Beale: I would say it's to build my online reading course and sell it. The great bucket list item.

Dori Nugent: Great bucket list item. Alright. Number two, whose business brain would you like to pick?

Abby Marks Beale: That was a hard question because I have a few, but I think the one that if I ever got privileged would be Tony Robbins. He has so much experience in so many different areas and he just knows so much. So maybe Tony, if you're listening, I'm here. We'd love to talk to you.

Dori Nugent: All right, now let's talk about your website. What's the most visited page on your website?

Abby Marks Beale: So I was hoping it was going to be like test your reading speed, but when I looked at Google Analytics, it was just boring. My homepage [revitalupreading.com](http://revitalupreading.com).

Dori Nugent: Well, that's a good page to start with. All right, well, being an author yourself, I'm very anxious to see what book recommendation you're going to give to our FBP family.

Abby Marks Beale: So, yes, I read a lot and I would love to give you other books to read, but I have to give you my last or most recent book called Speed Reading a Little Known Timesaving Superpower because you're here to learn about speed reading and that would be very helpful to you.

Dori Nugent: I love the plug. Fantastic.

Abby Marks Beale: Thank you.

Dori Nugent: All right, our final question is what would be one ocean moment of next week's episode?

Abby Marks Beale: So I thought about that, too, and I have to say, you know, I used to hate to read, and I've been in this industry now for teaching speed reading for over 30 years and I used to hate to read. And so I know that there are listeners who hate to read and they know they have to, and so I want to be able to help them know what is it that turned me around, obviously, to make a business out of it, but then that could help them to not hate reading so much.

[As Narrator]

Dori Nugent: Alright, well, FBP family, next week we have Abby Marks Beale joining us and she's a speed reading expert and author. Please join us. Learn how to read faster. Next week,



join my amazing guest as she unlocks the secret to not only reading faster, but smarter, too. Don't forget to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast player so you won't miss an episode. We couldn't do our show each. And every week if it wasn't for some amazing people and some amazing companies.

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**END OF EPISODE**