

# Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

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**November 2006**

"Personal Excellence is the most substantive publication anywhere for personal growth and professional development. Read it to learn. Apply it to succeed."

—Nido R. Qubein, international speaker and consultant



# Share Your Treasure

You have a unique gift.



by Dick Richards

EVERY PERSON HAS A unique genius. And each genius requires that it be employed for the common good. I use the term *genius* not in the sense of high intellectual capacity or extraordinary creative achievement, but in an ancient sense that appears in most cultural and spiritual traditions. Your genius is the exceptional power that comes most naturally to you, as the process in which you engage so spontaneously and easily that you probably do not notice it, as the business you are in, as the energy of your soul, and as an answer to the question of why you exist.

Today we see an awakening of interest in genius. In his book *The Soul's Code*, James Hillman writes: "Each person bears a uniqueness that asks to be lived and that is already present before it is lived." In his *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, Deepak Chopra writes: "You have a talent that is unique in its expression—so unique that there is no one else who has that talent, or that expression of that talent."

Your genius is your divine spark, the essence of how you can best express yourself, specifically chosen to guide and protect you. It is a gift to you, and your gift to others. You are responsible for it and to it. It shows up, seeking expression, in everything you do. It is not your purpose; it serves your purpose. It is not your calling, but a power given to you to fulfill your calling. It is not your soul, but the energy of your soul. It is not out there somewhere in the future, but is present now. It has always been with you, and will always be with you.

## Two Points

Various traditions agree about genius on at least two points:

**1. A dangerous ignorance.** Most traditions admonish that it is dangerous to ignore or abandon your genius—that if you shun your genius, you cannot fulfill the purpose of your life; that finding your special gift or treasure is an obligation; that failure to find nurturance for your genius kills it and you; that all people have a genius, to be served or disobeyed at their own peril. A friend told me that he wanted to write a book. "I'm

convinced this book will destroy me if I don't let it out." Your genius is like my friend's book. It wants to be let out, released to serve the world.

**2. The purpose of genius is to serve the common good as a gift to the community.** There is a sense of genius in which it is not yours at all but belongs to everyone else. This is conveyed by the Bible: "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" and "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another." In Jewish thought, every person has an obligation to share their special treasure. In the Tao Te Ching, *teh* refers to the power of each person to be uniquely whoever he or she is and to participate in the *tao*, the source of existence that nourishes and sustains everything.

One of the more eloquent expressions of genius-in-service-to-others comes from the Dagara. When a Dagara woman becomes pregnant, people in her village ask, "Why is this person being sent to us at this time? What gifts will this person have that our community needs?" Rituals are performed in which the life force of the fetus is asked what the child will bring to the community.

You have not merely the option of recognizing your special treasure, but an obligation to discover it and direct it to the common good. Your genius is the gift that you must give to others. PE

*Dick Richards is a consultant, coach, and author of Is Your Genius at Work? (Davies-Black), from which this article is adapted. Visit [www.ongenius.com](http://www.ongenius.com).*

**ACTION:** Share your gifts.

# Service Network

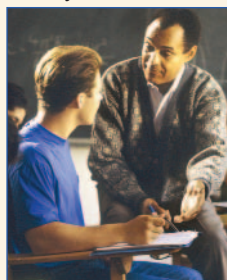
Crack the networking code.



by Dean Lindsay

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO get your service networking into high gear, gain visibility, and develop relationships is to volunteer. Be sure to look for volunteer jobs that will provide you opportunities to show off your skills and personality, and meet and interact with new contacts.

For example, you might volunteer to: 1. Serve on committees for your professional association. You can help shape policy and learn from other experts. 2. Chair a committee or run for office at your chamber of commerce. Let people experience your leadership, communication, and organizational skills in action. 3. Work the reception desk at the trade organization of your best customer. You will meet people as they sign in. 4. Help direct people to the right rooms at state and national trade shows, conventions, and conferences (often called being a people mover). 5. Be a greeter at a leads/referral group meeting. The greeter spot is ideal for the self-diagnosed shy, because the title alone forces you to connect. Plus, as a greeter there is an automatic assumption that you are "in the know," and others will naturally come to you for info and help. 6. Join the board of your favorite charity. You will likely con-



nect with key industry leaders and gain a reputation as a leader yourself.

## Crack the Networking CODE.

If you are determined to crack the networking code and build priceless relationships, research the various networking options and commit to a networking strategy. Get out and reach out. Be proactive. Open relationships.

To make connecting easier and more focused, look for groups and events where networking is encouraged. Don't join any organization unless you are committed to being an active member for at least one year. Consider your affiliations carefully. Call and ask if you can attend as a visitor. Most groups allow at least one free visit.

Many places offer networking possibilities. Here are a few suggestions: 1) organizations to which you already belong; 2) your professional trade associations; 3) state and national trade shows, conventions, and conferences; 4) trade organizations of your best customers; 5) your chamber of commerce; 6) sports clubs; and 7) churches and spiritual organizations; 8) workshops, classes, and seminars; 9) college associations; 10) referral or leads groups; and service clubs.

I am not suggesting that you join any group only for the business opportunities. But many relationships are forged in service organizations. Go for the right reasons and let your light shine. PE

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**ACTION:** Volunteer your service.