



LNP 270 Networking Done Right Jill Merriman

Kelly: Hi and welcome back to the Legal Nurse Podcast, we're in for a treat today. We have Jill Merriman as our guest today and our topic is "Networking Done Right."

Welcome, Jill.

Jill: Hi Kelly, how are you today?

Kelly: Great. Let's tell our audience a little bit about you. Jill Merriman is a business consultant who helps business owners improve their bottom line. As an accountant with over 30 years' experience and a certified sales trainer, Jill realized that so many business owners didn't know how to network effectively. By helping professionals learn how to network correctly with her "Networking Done Right" system, they will be able to increase their sales and transform their business.

Jill's presentations are unique and thought provoking. Her enthusiastic hands-on teaching style sets the stage for an encouraging and upbeat learning experience. She is the host of her iTunes podcast show called "The Natural Networker," where she shares real-life networking scenarios and stories with her listeners. Today, Jill will share with us her tips on how we can maximize our networking return on investment.

Welcome, Jill, and thanks for joining us.

Jill: I'm excited to be here. I love talking about networking.

Kelly: You know what, it's one of my favorite things to do. I know a lot of legal nurses don't enjoy it, but I love it. So, tell us how do you help business owners increase their bottom line?

Jill: Well, the easiest way is that I show them how to tailor each pitch to what their customer wants or needs. Most people, when they talk about their business or what they could offer someone, they always lead with how they want to be spoken to or sold to. And you know

face it, everyone loves to buy, but no one loves to be sold to, and so people get that. You know, they get that icky salesy salesmen, car salesmen or whatever you want to call it feeling, and so it's really important to ask more questions. Ask, and you could tell what it is they're looking for and then tailor your pitch. And that's what I am really good at helping people with.

Kelly: So, the first thing is to start listening before you start talking?

Jill: Absolutely. That's why God gave you two ears and one mouth. We always hear that. You know it's such an easy thing not to do. It's easy to ask questions, but it's just as easy not to ask questions because people get so excited about their business, as I'm sure the nurses do. They want to share with people, and they want to tell them about the company they're with or their services. They forget that's a living person in front of them, and they have needs and wants, too. And so, if you're asking the questions, it will be a little easier for you in the long run.

Kelly: So true, so true. So, how important is networking for business owners, especially for those that are intimidated by it?

Jill: You know I can't emphasize enough how important it is because otherwise it's like you're a man on an island. Even though you have a brick and mortar store, or you have a service online, or you're a real estate agent, whatever it is, you really need to be out there networking with people so that you get what they call 'raving fans.' You want in the long run for people to be recommending you, and you won't be out there talking to people three, four times a week at networking events.

That's not what it's all about. It's to find the right networking venues so that people get to know you a little better, and then they recommend you because you are at top of mind or what I call "TOM."

Kelly: Top of mind, TOM. Okay, good to know, good to know. So, why do you think people are afraid of networking?

Jill: You know, I get this question all the time and I always have the same answer. They really just don't know how to do it. I know it sounds so basic and painfully obvious, but really, it's not. People just don't

know what to say, what to do, where to stand, and that's why my *Networking Done Right Program* is in three parts. I teach people what to do before they go networking, while they're networking, and after they're networking because each component is just as important as the next. So, they get so nervous, and they don't know what to say, so most of the time you'll find someone saying, "Okay, I'm going to a networking event," and then they stand in the corner, or they're on their phones, or they stand and talk to the person that they came with.

In your case, that would be a fellow nurse. "Yeah, let's go networking" but then they don't benefit by just talking to each other. They could talk to each other on the way there and on the way back, but while they're there, they should split and conquer like, "Okay, you take that part of the room. I take this part of the room," and make it like a fun game, and then you could learn a lot more about people.

Kelly: So, give an example. You gave an example of while you're there, split and conquer, what should you do before you go?

Jill: Well, that's a really good question because before you go, there's a little bit of homework involved. You know, you can't just go online to a Meetup group or a networking group someone tells you about and go, "Great, I'm going." No, there's a little bit of homework in that. You have to see what the group is about. So, here's one of the tips that I give people that I do all the time And I have to tell you Kelly that everything I'm telling you I do myself, so I know it's proven, it works, and it's easy to do right.

I call the person who's running that event and I ask them, "Could you tell me some of the members who already signed up to go?" Now if it's the Chamber of Commerce, you could very well ask them, "Who are some of your Top 10 members who are always there?" If they say to me, a plumber, a landscaper, someone whom I don't know who has an online service of some sort, that might not be the best for me, depending on what industry I'm in.

It matters who they are and who they know, which is just as important, but if you feel like you're going to get there, and you're not going to have that much to ask them or say to them, there are so many

groups out there. You can find another group that's more suited to your industry and to what you're all about.

Kelly: Preparing for a meeting, essentially.

Jill: Exactly, that's what I was just going to say. So, the preparation is that you call the group leader or the person running the event, and you ask them who's going to be there or what type of industries frequent that particular event. And if they don't know, say, "You know, let me think about it, and I'll give you a call back in a week or so" because maybe you've called when you just saw it, and no one signed up yet. Or, maybe the person you're trying to reach isn't available or something like that.

The other thing that I like to tell people is to pay attention to how they show up, and I have this really fun way of doing it. We do a little bit of a spinoff of "What Not to Wear." Do you remember that TV show?

Kelly: Yeah.

Jill: Where the people have on the t-shirts and maybe they have sweatpants, and they want to make them look good. When I do my presentations in "What Not to Wear," I ask someone in the audience beforehand if they would like to be my model. I put out color swatches and different clothes that maybe aren't appropriate for networking, and then I dress her the way she should look. I show people without pointing out that, "Hey, you shouldn't be wearing that, you in the audience." They kind of see what the person is wearing and they're like, "Maybe I shouldn't be wearing, especially women, something that low-cut, or something with a rip in it, or the wrong color."

Think about it yourself, Kelly. Do you have something, an outfit, a dress, a blouse that when you wear it, you like it, but people say, "You look tired. Are you feeling okay," or they never comment on it? How about that, they never comment?

Kelly: I'll have to pay attention, but do you know what first popped in my mind and it's a little bit off-topic. But I remember in graduate school there was a hot fireman who had asked me out on a date. I met him,

and I could not wait to go on a first date with him. And he showed up at my door in sweatpants. I go like, “What, what?”

Jill: See, so you’re a perfect example of what I’m talking about because they say within the first seven seconds people could size you up and they already have an opinion of you, right or wrong. So, when he came to the door, you had this opinion. He might have been the nicest guy. You said he was hot looking.

Kelly: When he was out at the bar.

Jill: He wasn’t wearing the sweatpants, right?

Kelly: He was not in sweatpants.

Jill: That’s it. That’s weird that he came to the door with sweatpants on.

Kelly: I have no idea.

Jill: And he didn’t say anything? He didn’t say, “I just came from the gym, sorry,” nothing?

Kelly: Maybe, I don’t even remember.

Jill: Wow, so there you go. You just made my point that people do notice what you have on, and sometimes it really could blow the deal. And I guess it didn’t go so well. You didn’t marry the hot fireman, did you?

Kelly: No. Darn it, no.

Jill: So that’s one of the things that people really pay attention to. That’s a hint to your audience to think about something that you like that maybe no one ever comments on, or someone says, “You look tired.”

For instance, I have olive skin, so colors that I cannot wear are olive green or yellows like mustard (horrible), muted orange, or oranges. They just make me look drab, and they drain the color. So, I remember early on, and this goes back years ago in the 80s, I used to love the color yellow but every time I wore it, people would say, “You look a little tired. You feeling okay?” And then it started to hit me, and then of course I

got into the whole image consultant and analysis and I saw that they were absolutely right.

Kelly: Okay, all right. Yeah, I'll start paying attention to that.

Jill: You want to hear another thing that's a little off-topic? Like you've mentioned something off-topic, so I'm going to join now. My daughter, who's 23, taught me this, and those young ones, they know it all right when it comes to fashion.

Kelly: Yeah, it's all types of tips.

Jill: Right, if you're shopping, take a picture of yourself in the outfit. So, you're looking at the mirror, you're at Macy's, you're at one of the big stores or a boutique, and you're saying, "That looks good." You know what, do yourself a favor. Take a picture in the mirror, and then look at it because sometimes it doesn't look as good as you think.

Kelly: Okay.

Jill: Right, so that's how people see you, and I do that now without fail. I never leave a shopping dressing room, a shop dressing room, without taking a picture. Half the time I don't buy it because it doesn't look as good. It makes me look chunky around the middle or it makes me look like the stripes are weird, or the pattern is too busy, and I think, "It's okay," but with taking a picture, you see how other people see you.

Kelly: Yeah. Yeah, so you don't have your sisters to truly tell you what you look like. That's perfect.

Jill: Exactly right.

Kelly: Thank you for that tip.

Jill: You're welcome.

Kelly: That's a great take-home. Thank your daughter for us.

Jill: I will.

Kelly: She made it on the podcast. That's great.

Jill: She did. She does a lot of Instagram, and she does imaging, blogging, and things like that. I get all my tips from her in that department, so that's good.

Kelly: That's a good one. I'm going to be sharing that outside of this podcast too.

Jill: Yeah, because think about it, Kelly, people how many times do you ask the person next to you whom maybe you don't even know in the dressing room and you're like, "Excuse me, does this look okay?" What are they going to say? "Yeah, sure." I mean I'm usually honest to people that ask me. I say, "You could do better." That's what I usually say and that's a nice way of saying, "I don't love it. Do something better, find something better."

Kelly: Yeah, the truth helps everyone.

Jill: Right, it does.



This is Pat Iyer. Before I continue, listen to what I have for you. I've gotten so many questions on how to start an LNC business, so I wrote a book on the topic. It is called, not surprisingly, **How to Start an LNC Business**.

This book is for you if you are in the early stages of your business or want to move to a higher level of success. You will gain the principles for building a strong LNC business.

I will show you how to set **SMART goals** to which you can hold yourself accountable and **how to track and measure your results**.

Get concrete information about having a sound operating plan and mastery over your finances. This book shares tips on how to organize your finances, track income and expenses using calendars, budgets, logs and accounting software.

- This book is geared to the legal nurse consultant who is **searching for tips to jumpstart a consulting business**.

- The principles and tips in this book will help you gain **success in starting or growing** your legal nurse consulting practice.

Order the book using the link in the show notes for podcasts 270 and 271 at podcast.legalnursebusiness.com and use the code listened to get a 25% discount on your order.

Kelly: All right, so the next question for you. How do you approach someone without being too salesy or too bold?

Jill: Well, I always say, “Don’t talk about your business.” Just don’t even talk about it. You’re not there to promote your business when you’re at a networking event, if you’re on the soccer field sidelines with other parents, or you’re in the grocery store line—as excited as you are to tell people about your business. And I say this with network marketers because I train a lot of them, and they get so excited they’re fired up, but you turn people off. They never even get past the face of you jumping going, “Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, you have to know this.”

My easiest takeaway on this is just don’t talk about your business because it’s all about them. It’s not about you. When you go to network, it’s all about helping someone else. If you could get that mentality of being a servant, of helping other people, it’s always going to come back tenfold to you. It’s going to come back to, “Oh my goodness, you’ve helped me so much. What do you do?”

It absolutely will. So, you’re asking them questions, finding out about them. If they’re on the grocery line, you might talk about something like one of the magazine covers or about certain candy like, “Did they have to put all that candy right there? I just love it.” Most times if it’s a woman she’ll comment, “Yeah, I just love that chocolate” or something like that.

It’s about conversations that have nothing to do with business and then lead it into their business or what they do. Maybe they don’t have a business. Maybe they’re a stay-at-home mom, but that’s a great opportunity to kind of talk to them about your business once you find out what it is they’re looking for, and I help people with that in the *Networking Done Right Program*.

Kelly: Right because their husbands or their sisters or someone else might know someone.

Jill: Absolutely. It's always about not just them but the referral, their referral base. Most people have at least 200 people in their circle of influence. That includes a hairdresser, a postman, the UPS guy, all those people, relatives, the warm market. So, there are definitely people who you could connect with in their circle.

Kelly: So true, so true. In fact, that's how I hired one of my subcontractors. It was through my hairdresser.

Jill: There you go.

Kelly: Yeah.

Jill: There you go. That's the best referral when someone knows them. Yesterday I was on the phone with someone and they asked me if I had a referral for a position they were trying to fill. And I thought about it for a minute and then I said, "Well, give me three attributes that you want this person to have." And they said, "Well, they have to be honest. They have to be punctual, and they have to know exactly what I'm saying before I say it."

I'm thinking, "So, you want a mind reader. Where am I going to get one of those?" A couple of hours later it came to mind. I know the perfect person, but if I hadn't asked them to give me three attributes, I probably, like most people, would've said, "I don't know anybody who's looking for a job." I didn't ask who's looking for a job. I asked what attributes do they want?

Kelly: What would the number-one tip that you would give someone? When you're talking about attributes, what's the number-one?

Jill: About having the right attribute?

Kelly: Yes, that we can give to our listeners for a return on investment for networking.

Jill: For return on investment, okay. While they're networking, what would be the best return on investment? I would say the organic conversations are the best. Just like you found someone, a

subcontractor, through your hairdresser. Right away, people think that if they're networking, they have to spend money, so their return on investment would be 100 percent if they're not putting any money into it, and they're only putting time into it.

I always say, "Talk to people where you're at, wherever you are." If you're in the post office line, you're in the grocery store, you're on the sidelines on a soccer game, you're at a meeting, a corporate meeting, but at a different office, you're in a doctor's office if they're nurses, wherever they are.

They could talk to people and find out about other people and what they can do. Depending if they're looking for someone like you are, they could say, "Who do you know? Keep your ears open, I'm looking for someone who could fill this position," but for their particular business, they might want to just say what they're looking for. Do they find people to help them with their nursing staff?

Kelly: Sometimes they're trying to find new attorney clients.

Jill: Okay, so let me tailor it to exactly what your audience wants. If I were one of them, the nurses, I would definitely reach out to the different associations, especially the women's associations because I just tend to find that women business owners are a little bit more open to helping other women. It's all about women helping other women, and I would Google and see what legal organizations are in the area.

In our area, there's a county woman leadership group for just lawyers, for just attorneys, and they meet on a quarterly basis. I would go to that luncheon because that's your audience. That's awesome.

If they're not having one and you're thinking, "Well, I don't want to wait three months to go to one," then I would look at professional young professional groups or professional groups within the different Chamber of Commerces that are in the area. They do have professional organizations that meet on a monthly basis, at least the ones that we have here. Then I would call them up and say, "Could you tell me if there are any attorneys who attend these luncheons or these meetings?" They'll probably give you two or three because there usually are two or three attorneys who go to those.

Kelly: That's great advice. I would've never thought to call ahead to see who was going, but you don't really want to go and waste time if no one's there that you want to network with.

Jill: Exactly and it brings me back to the return on investment. If you're just going to one networking event after another hoping, there's the keyword, 'hoping,' it's not about hoping. You have to network on purpose, right. There's a reason and there's a purpose for you to go, but if you're going to say, "Yeah, I went to network. It doesn't work for me," you're probably going to the wrong groups. That's probably what it is, so do a little bit of homework ahead of time and your return on investment will be that much greater.

Kelly: Okay, well it seems pretty obvious to me that you have this networking thing down and done right.

Jill: Thank you, a good play on words.

Kelly: Yeah, of course. So, how can our audience follow you and get our networking done?

Jill: Oh my gosh, I would love to help your nurses. I really would because that's something I haven't done, so that's a challenge for me. I mean, usually it's network marketers, real estate agents, insurance, and all that, but this is a new untapped area and I could tailor a whole program just for them. I would love that. So, they could email me, jill@jillmerriman.com. And if they have an organization that they belong to, if there's a nurse's organization, a meeting that they would like me to speak at, I would love to do that, or I could help them one-on-one. They could go on my website, www.jillmerriman.com. They could connect with me on LinkedIn, and that would be good.

Are they on LinkedIn at all? Do you know?

Kelly: I am, so as soon as we stop recording, we're going to be LinkedIn buddies.

Jill: Yes. Okay, great.

Kelly: Yeah, a lot of us are. Yes.

Jill: Okay, great because I just did this whole presentation two weeks ago, “Networking on LinkedIn,” specifically for LinkedIn. How do you get into the groups without being salesy and how do you connect with people? So, they can find me on LinkedIn, Jill Merriman, and just send me a little note that you heard me on this podcast, and I would love to connect with you. That would be great.

Kelly: Okay, wonderful. Okay, so repeat the website again?

Jill: It’s just my name. It’s www.jillmerriman.com and that’s spelled J-I-L-L M-E-R-R-I-M-A-N.COM.

Kelly: Okay and we’ll find you on LinkedIn for sure.

Jill: Awesome, I’d love to help out. Thank you so much for having me.

Kelly: It was great. I enjoyed talking.

Jill: I can’t believe it just flew by so quickly.

Kelly: I know. It does, it does.

Jill: I mean, I didn’t even get a chance to tell you my funny stories when I networked in a towel and I was on a bus. That will have to be another time.

Kelly: It will and thank your daughter for the tip on the pictures.

Jill: I will.

Kelly: Okay.

Jill: Thank a lot Kelly, have a great day.

Kelly: Hey, you too. Hey, and before we sign off, I want the audience to know Pat Iyer won the Vanguard Award at the National Nurses in Business Association. What an honor.

Jill: Wow.

Kelly: I know.

Jill: That's fantastic.

Kelly: Yes, I was so hoping to be at that conference, but I was unfortunately sick. I wish I could give her a great big hug of congrats, so congratulations, Pat.

Jill: I will have to email her. Yeah, congratulations, Pat, that's awesome.

Kelly: Yes. Okay, audience, don't forget to like us on LinkedIn, follow us and tune in next week. Thanks, Jill, for joining us.

Jill: You're welcome, Kelly, have a great day.

Kelly: All right, you too. Bye-bye.

Jill: Thanks, bye.

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