

UNLOCKING FILM OPPORTUNITIES

MINI COURSE WORKBOOK



beyondfilmschool.com

BEYOND FILM SCHOOL

INSTRUCTOR



Amber M Sherman Founder - Beyond Film School

Amber worked her way from small indie gigs as a Camera Assistant to Set PA, then to DGA Assistant Director on big union TV shows and Feature Films without a single film connection starting out. As an AD she knows exactly what's expected and what it takes to get people hired to get their film career started.

Amber unlocked how to get those film opportunities and she wants to give that to you. Expect real advice, honest truth, and actionable steps. Most of all her care to want to help those who were once like her.

BEYOND FILM SCHOOL

What I Promise with this Course

The film industry is such a tough and cut throat industry and most of those wanting to get in feel like they're at the mercy of a stranger, waiting to be given an opportunity. What people don't know is that you can take action to get more of the opportunities to come your way. You don't have to sit and wait. I'm going to give you actionable steps to take your film career into your own hands. You'll feel more empowered after this course knowing you actually can DO something to get ahead. You'll also feel good about the connections you make in your own way. I'm not here to tell you to fake it till you make it. I'll give you the way to connect with people that feels good for you.

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SECTION

1

The WHY

We'll cover why what you're doing is not working, and why making film connections is a more fruitful path to get where you want to be in your film career

SECTION

2

WHERE to Make Film Connections

We'll go over where to find people to connect with whether in person or online in several different ways. We will compile contacts to prepare for communication

SECTION

3

HOW to Make Film Connections

This is all about what to say and how to say it when you start communicating with people you want to connect with

SECTION

4

Reinforcing Relationships

I go over how to reinforce relationships and stay connected with contacts you already have, but also building as you gain more contacts through this course

SECTION

5

Let's Be Honest

I'm going to cover the things here that people don't want to talk about, and you'll get that honest advice you may not want to hear

WHY CONNECT?

Unlocking your film opportunities involves networking. Trust me, I know how you feel when people say the word “networking.” It feels like a dirty word, but it doesn't have to be. All networking is, is meeting people and making connections. It's you making friends and associates.

Don't look at networking as transactional or self promotion - it's people helping each other out, and lifting each other up. Be yourself, stay curious, be willing to learn and you'll begin to build those relationships.

In the film industry it really is who you know. Most of my jobs came from people I knew, friends, or a friend of a friend.

The film industry is going through a volatile time. Major shifts are happening. Studios and streamers aren't spending money willy-nilly now. Which means there are LESS JOBS available. It's just a fact. So we need to go back to basics. Film job websites are so saturated, it's so rare you'll actually get a gig that way. I know you've probably applied to hundreds. I did the same thing. But it's much easier to be at the front of someone's mind and then get that magical text that asks “Are you available?” through making connections.



“The BEST time
to make friends
is BEFORE you
need them.”

-Ethel Barrymore

Goals for Connecting

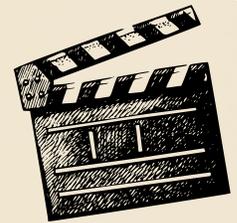
- Learn & Grow
- Get to Know People
- Gain support
- Receive Opportunities
- Give Opportunities
- Have Fun
- STOP Worrying
- Become a Better Communicator
- Collaborate with other Artists
- Inspiration
- Build a team to create with

Nowhere in here is the thought or goal - “to get a job.” If you just want a job, or want a big payday, film might not be for you. I firmly believe that chasing the money is never the answer. It’s probably why I always found myself with a film gig and have had some very amazing experiences. It’s also why I wasn’t worrying about the next gig and where it came from. The intention is absolutely a factor on how well you can connect and reap the benefits.

Take Action!



Set Your Intention



What do you want?

What is your big dream goal?

What are some immediate goals?

What do you want to learn?

Are there any skills you want to learn?

Are there things about you, you want to improve or change?

Sit down, write this out (yes, actually write it out with a pen and paper), **and keep it.**

If you have a journal put this list there.

Write out the things that seem impossible, or even ridiculous. Don't worry about how you'll get there. Just write it.

Wanna share your list with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

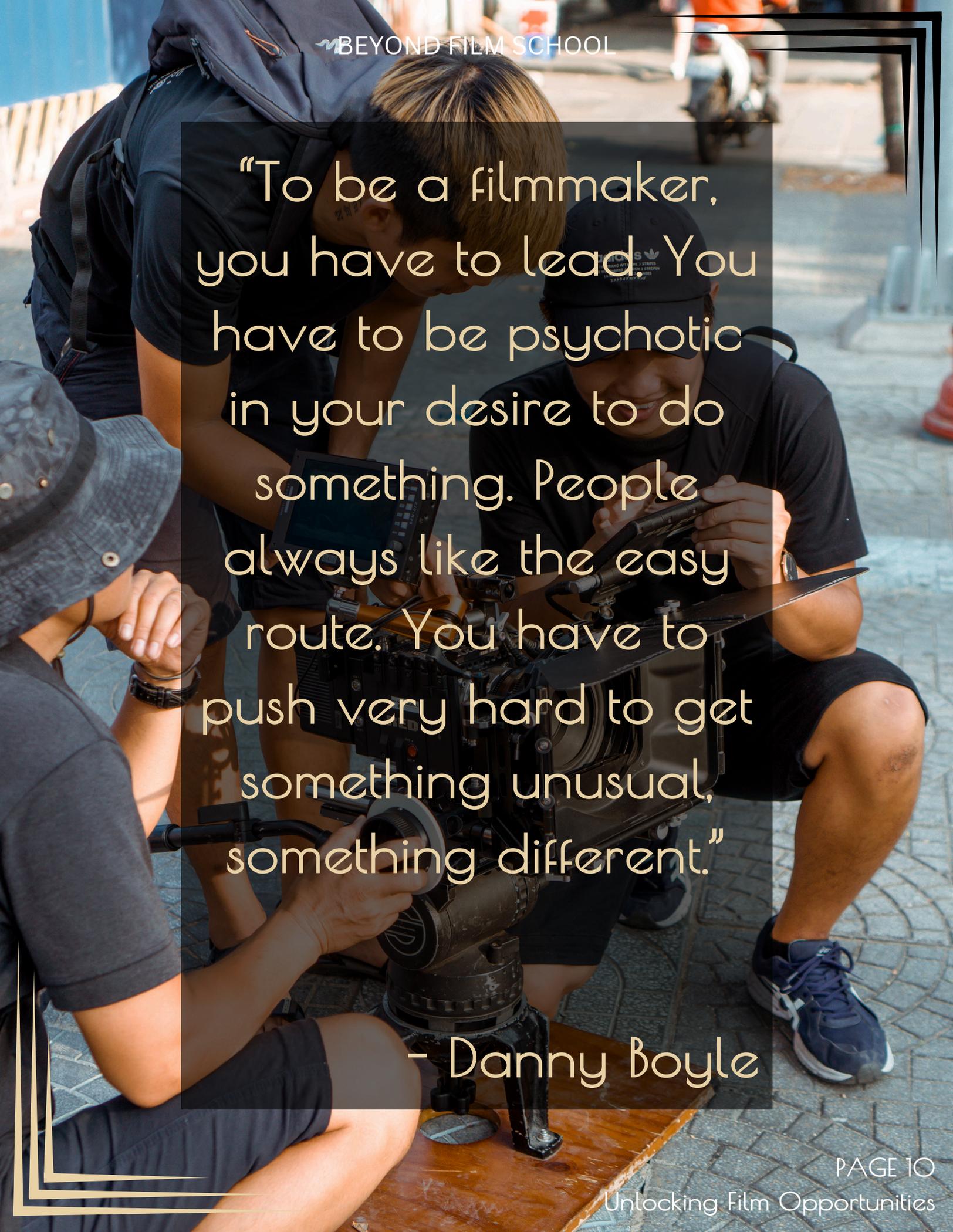
WHERE TO CONNECT

There are many places where you can find people to connect, whether online or in person. We'll cover both. Part of unlocking film opportunities involves getting to know people, but first you have to find out where to go to be around those people you want to connect with.

If you sit at home, and are a hermit (no judgement, because I definitely need my alone time) but wonder why you don't know anyone that works in film - there's a simple answer. You can't meet people if you don't go anywhere.

Part of this is all about chance. I'm sure you've heard when someone discusses their success "it was the right time, right place." But that didn't just happen - that person took a lot of different actions to put them in that spot where they met the "right person."





“To be a filmmaker, you have to lead. You have to be psychotic in your desire to do something. People always like the easy route. You have to push very hard to get something unusual, something different.”

– Danny Boyle

Where to Connect In Person

Events Where You Won't Know Anyone

- State/City Film Commission Events
- Film Festivals
 - As a Filmmaker, Attending or Volunteering
- Film Networking Mixers
 - Use IG, Facebook & Eventbrite to find them
- Film Challenges
 - 48 Hours Film Project
 - Women's Weekend Film Challenge
 - 72 Hour Film Festival
 - Beyond Film School Short Film Challenge
- Local Open Mics
- Community Screenings
- Acting/Improv Classes

Where to Connect In Person

Events Where You Won't Know Anyone

- Actor Organized Events
- Film Workshops/Classes
- Writing Labs, Groups, Table Reads
- Film Industry Expos
 - NAB
 - CineGear
 - AFM
 - Film Expo Group
 - Cinema Con
 - American Film Convention
- Alumni Events (this is in both because it can go either way)
- Film Clubs
- Create Your Own Event!

Where to Connect In Person

Events Where You Won't Know Anyone

- Film Organizations
 - We Make Movies
 - Black Tv Film Collective
 - NYWIFT
 - Women in Film
 - Filmmakers Co-op
 - The MPI
 - Women Make Movies
 - Atlanta Film Society
 - Chicago Filmmakers
 - Screen Alliance of NJ

You can find these organizations online, and you have the option to become a member for some. This leads to in-person events. They are all big on networking opportunities. Do your research, and you'll find even more out there.

Where to Connect In Person

Events Where You Will Know People

- **Set** (This is where you get to know people well and people will see you at your best, and like it or not, your absolute worst)
- **Wrap Party**
- **Wrap Drinks**
- **Eating Lunch with crew – when you're on set**
- **Crew Organized Events**
- **Guild and Union Events** (if you belong to their organization, sometimes they have open events)
- **Screenings of Projects You Worked On**
- **Offering to help on a fellow crew member's passion project**
- **Alumni Events**
- **Plan a hangout for your team from set**
- **Film School** (if you don't attend one, work on student films from film school thesis projects)

Take Action!



Research Events and Go!



Make it a point to look for events and actually attend them. Don't worry if you don't know anyone. We'll get into that in the next section.

Your goal should be to **attend one in person event a month.**

(Zoom events don't count. They're virtual and will count for online networking.)

A lot of them are free, and the expos are always fun and interesting.

Yes, this is hard. But you can do it! It's so rewarding, and you'll learn a lot about yourself.

Wanna share your experience with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

Where to Connect Online

Online Communities:

- Film Local (fee)
- Filmmakers Community (fee)
- Impact
- EP Production Lot
- Indie Talk
- Creative Cow
- IMDbPro (fee)
- Pano Network

(GainRep is a scam so do not sign up with them)

Searches You Can Do:

- Film Groups on Discord
- Filmmaker SubReddits
- Film Production Facebook Groups

Where to Connect Online

Directories for Contact Information:

- [LANY411](#)
- [DGA](#)
- [IMDb](#) Pro (Free 30-day trial)

IMDb Standard - find the names and Google them to find their info

- Research your local Film Commission

Social Platforms:

- Facebook

(Research film groups in the city or community you're interested in)

- [Linkedin](#)
- [Stage 32](#) (subscription based for some features)
- [Crew Me Up](#) (App)
- Instagram

New ones pop up all the time, so keep searching for those around you. Be smart about ones you join, some are a cash grab. I added the ones with fees that have a benefit to joining.

Where to Connect Online

These lists are a great way to get the emails you need to contact people. When productions are on this list they're there to get submissions. They will take your resume. Choose one, because there will be a lot of overlap. They include independent film and union projects. If you get an annual plan it's way cheaper! But if you only want it a few months than you can do that too.

Production Listings:

- Production Weekly
 - Very expensive (\$75 monthly)
 - Gives a few details about the project
 - Production office emails will be listed
 - Weekly Newsletter send via email
- Below the Line
 - Database that you can search
 - \$30 per month
- Production List
 - Daily notifications
 - Includes unfilled positions
 - \$59 per month

Take Action!



Compile Your Contacts



Download the template or create your own and compile the contact information. **Keep track of who you contact**, and when. This way you know when to follow up, and avoid accidentally contacting the same person twice as if they're a new contact.

Make sure to stay organized when doing this. I've gotten responses and forgot where they came from, or why I initially contacted them. This can turn into data for you to see which platforms are working for you. If you change your approach and get more or less responses you'll be able track this.

Wanna share your experience with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

HOW TO CONNECT

Now, that we've gotten through where to find people, we can now get into the "HOW" of it all. WHAT you say and HOW you say it is absolutely a factor in if and how people will respond to you. Everything you put out there, and put forward has a first impression, and judgement. I know we like to say "do not judge", but everything a human does is based on making a judgment or an assessment. It's how we survive and evaluate if we feel safe or not. It's how we interpret the world around us. It's a feeling we get and a vibe we feel. So, you are being judged no matter what.

While it's a thing to NOT care what others think, it is a great way to see yourself reflected back to you. It's reflected back with how people treat you, or react to you. We want to make sure how we're being perceived matches up with who we want to be and who we're projecting to the world. Make sure you make people feel safe, don't be too eager, or too closed off. If you're closed off less people will want to interact with you and then you receive less opportunities. Also don't fake it, just be who you are.



“When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everyone will respect you.”

- Lao Tzu

How to Connect In Person

Elevator Pitch

“So, tell me about yourself”

This WILL come up, especially in interviews so know how to talk about yourself in a nutshell.

Elements of an Elevator Pitch:

- Name (if needed)
- Where you're from
- Job/Goal
- Fun Fact

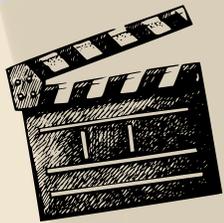
*****No longer than about 20 seconds*****

My Elevator Pitch:

Hi, I'm Amber, I'm originally from Buffalo NY, currently living in NY. I'm a DGA Assistant Director, and looking to work on more feature films and any chance I get to travel I will, and I try to squeeze in running when I can.

Short and sweet. It gives a few things to start a conversation, and details people can relate to. Similar interests can be revealed here. Make sure to tailor it to whatever group of people you're with, job you're interviewing for, or event you're attending.

Take Action!



Elevator Pitch



Draft your elevator pitch.

Remember to keep it to 3 or 4 lines. Take your time, and as you're writing it, and say it out loud.

Practice! Practice! Practice!

Practice your pitch with your friends, family, and in the mirror.

You have to get comfortable talking about yourself, without rambling on, sounding confident in who you are.

When you have an interview/event coming up be sure to practice it beforehand, and change it accordingly.

Wanna share your elevator pitch with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

How to Connect In Person

Events with Strangers

Mental Preparation:

- Give yourself a pep talk!
- Stay Open-minded - **No Expectations or Judgement**
- Uncertainty is ok, and nerves are normal
- Focus on who you can help, NOT what will you gain from this event
- Tell yourself you will be remembered
- No matter what happens you will learn something from the event.
- Know that you deserve to be in the room and have something to offer as well
- Don't let fear win

There are big differences for networking events where you walk into a bar and everyone is standing and chatting and a structured event like a class.

With structured events there's a common goal, so there's less pressure. To mentally prepare for those events tell yourself to participate. Very often people will go to learn something, but literally talk to no one.

How to Connect In Person

Starting a Conversation w/strangers

The Set Up:

- Smile
- Make eye contact
- Walk up to a group of people, or a person and introduce yourself
- Be open, welcoming, & kind
- Check your body Language

Conversation Starters:

- “Are you working on anything exciting right now”
- “Where are you from?”
- “I overheard you mention ... and I wanted to ask you...”
- Start with a compliment
- Mention what you have in common (maybe in the room full of Producers, you both are ADs)
- State the obvious
(I once saw a group of people I haven't talked to yet and said “I haven't met you yet, but wanted to say hi, because you seemed like a fun group.”)
- Ask a question seeking advice about something specific
- Ask about what people are currently watching

How to Connect In Person

Tips for a Networking Events

- If you go with friends don't talk to just them
- When you see new people walk into an event invite them to your circle to chat
- Ask open ended questions
(Questions that require more than "yes" or "no" answers)
- Introduce people to each other
(If you know a few people, or if you recognize commonalities between people)
- LISTEN!
(Don't think of things to say while the person is talking. pay attention to what they're saying.)
- When you need an exit out of a conversation you can take a call, get a drink, or go to the restroom
- You don't need to drink alcohol – seltzer, soda, or water with lemon all look like drinks
- Give advice when you can to help those less experienced than you in something
- Chat w/ the host of the event & thank them

How to Connect In Person

“So, what are you trying to do in Film?”

You **WILL** get this question when people start to get to know you. This usually happens when they start to like you, and want to help you in your career... or they want to bring you into their department, a.k.a hire you.

Know the answer to this question!

Know your goals, and don't be afraid to share them with people who ask, or have done what you want to do one day.

You never know what they can help you with, or who they know that can help you.

Share your Goals!

How to Connect In Person

Getting & Giving Contact Information

Don't share your contact information with literally everyone – it's ok to be selective.

Quality, not quantity.

If you hit it off and want to pick their brain more ask for their information. It's perfectly fine for you to initiate. I don't think I've ever been rejected when I've asked.

- Make it easy to share your info (I use a dot card)
- You can create a QR code to your website
- Yes, some people still have business cards
- You can share right through your phones if you both have iPhones
- You can put your contact in their phone and have them text you right away

Take Action!



Start a Conversation



When you go to events, structured or not don't rely on people coming to talk to you.

Initiate a conversation with someone.

Take control, and don't be afraid to ask someone a question to get to know them. Be curious, and find joy in learning about people.

Whoever you hit it off with, and get their contact info - make sure to **follow up with them in email or text a few days later.**

Wanna share your experience with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

How to Connect Online

Your Messages to People

Your Tone:

Remember to **not be too casual, or too formal.**

You're a person talking to another person - show your personality.

I start with "Hi (insert name)" or "Hello (insert Name)"

Stay away from "Sir," "Ma'am," "Dear," "To whom this may concern," This is too formal. Using "Hey" is too casual.

Length:

Keep it to **2 to 3 sentences if an email**, and if messaging within a social media platform stick to 2 or 3 lines.

Give them enough to work with, but don't tell your life story.

How to Connect Online

Your Messages to People

Your WHY:

Know the reason why you've chosen this person to contact.

What's the goal that you're looking for in sending this email or message?

The Connection:

Make sure there is a connection between you and the person you are emailing/messaging. It can be location, demographic, hometown, belief system, etc. The connection is what makes your email stand out, and/or relatable.

Your System:

Stay consistent with how you email, keep track, and stay persistent.

Whatever you choose to do, **make it a routine.**

How to Connect Online

Things to Keep in Mind

Do NOT Spam:

Either in email or in online groups. We all need a job, we get it, but all you'll do is annoy people.

Follow-Up:

Please remember to follow up if you haven't received a reply, but no more than once, or twice.

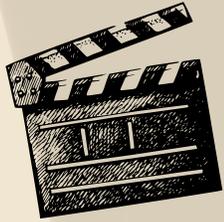
Your Mindset:

While you're on your email mission DO NOT go into this thinking no one is going to get back to you – if you do, no one will. I guarantee that.

Don't Flake:

When you set up chats, coffee dates, or anything where it takes up that person's time, don't "no-show" you'll just kill the lead you made. They won't be open to rescheduling with you. If you can't make a meeting communicate it ASAP! Be sincerely apologetic about it.

Take Action!



Reach Out By Email



Be sure to reach out and contact people directly by email. (People you don't know)

Your goal can be whatever you want it to be when you contact people, but make it your goal to **Email 5 people within the next week.**

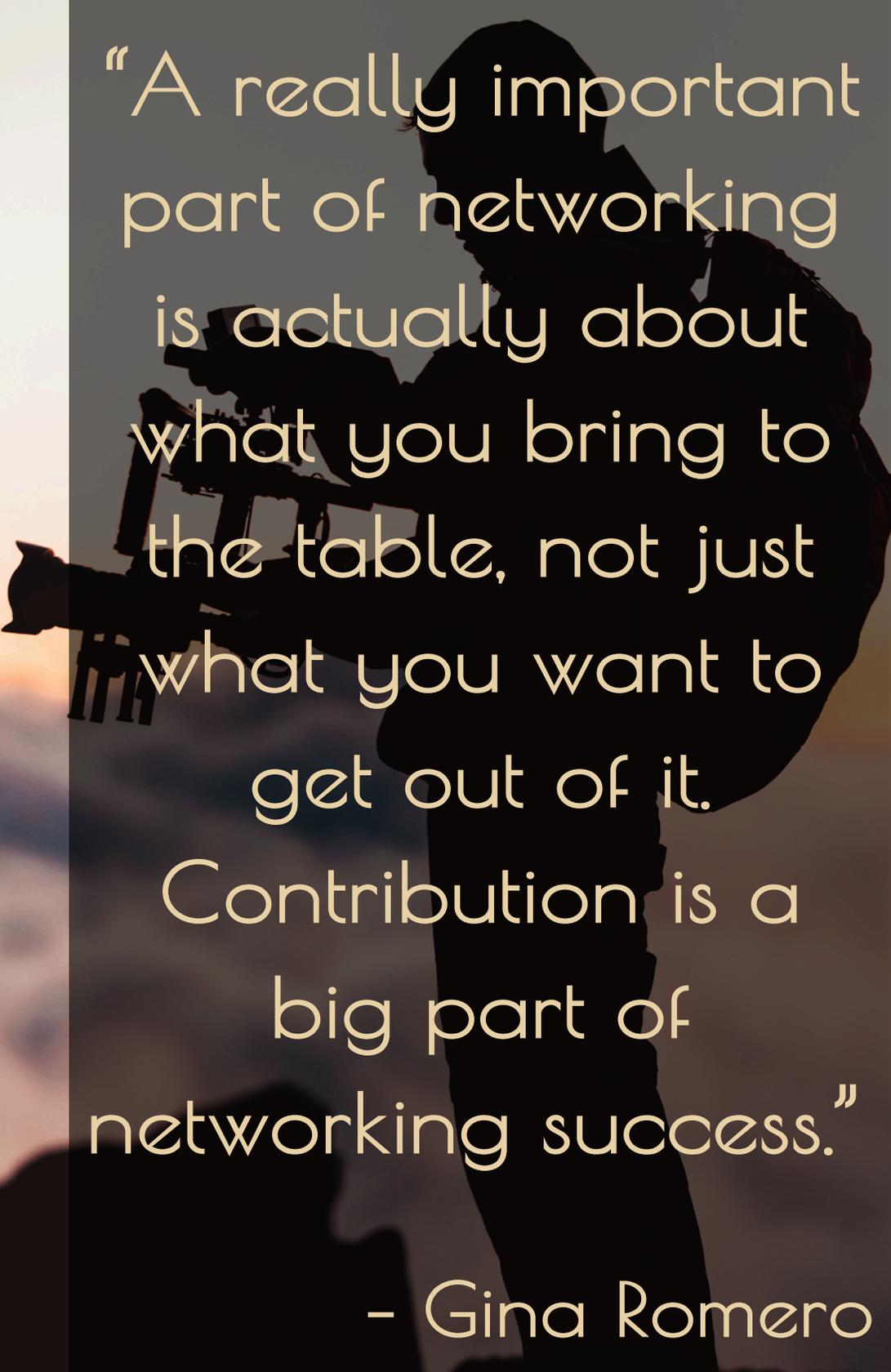
Wanna share a win with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

REINFORCE RELATIONSHIPS

This is the sweetest spot you want to be in when it comes to your film career. This is where you have gained some contacts, have a Producer, AD or Director that will hire you repeatedly. You don't need to hustle as hard as you did when you had no contacts. Once you start to know more people you WILL get to know more, the more you're on set.

Collect your contacts along the way, and make sure to stay in contact with them. It's important for you to keep your contacts up to date with what you got going on. It's vital to not let a connection die just because you may not be currently working with them. You need (and should want) to spend time with people you felt a bond with, not only on the job, but also outside of set. Spend time with those people, circle back to them when they come to your mind, and they'll keep you in theirs. The Opportunities will come so much quicker! And this can't be done with everyone, we only have so many hours in the day. Focus on those that you like, as others will do the same.





“A really important part of networking is actually about what you bring to the table, not just what you want to get out of it. Contribution is a big part of networking success.”

- Gina Romero

Reinforce Relationships

Ways to Reinforce

- Texts of gratitude & appreciation
 - Thanking people when a job ends, showing interest in working with them again and appreciation for the job
- Contacting them when you see something cool/special that reminds you of them
- Email updates if it's been awhile since you last worked together
- Phone calls
- Plan things and hang out outside of work
- Crew get togethers
- Getting 'drinks' with the crew and your department
- Attending wrap parties
- Attending the screening of your project
- Helping them get ahead
- Reach out when they come to mind

YOU HAVE TO DELIVER!

When you're on a gig, show, or project you need to be on your game. Opportunities don't come to those that are lazy, not ready to work, or have an attitude problem. If you were a person that made your bosses job harder this will not be easy to make connections, to then re-connect.

Reconnecting doesn't work if you did a mediocre job while you were on set.

Reinforce Relationships

Connecting on a Deeper Level

Do you have things in common?

- Same hometown
- Pets
- Sports
- Green thumb
- Fitness
- Similar career tracks
- Both in a relationship/Married/Have kids
- Alumni from the same school
- Love to travel
- You're both coffee snobs
- Into Anime

This list can be endless - find things you align on that creates a connection. This leads to conversation outside of film/work chat that leads to you being remembered, and also you gain a friend. Friends lead to more opportunities.

In the end you want more than work friends, but actual friends you like to do things with. Ultimately, you look out for each other, and have a deep interest in each other's lives, families, and success. You should want to help the people around you, as they'll want to help you.

****Ask Yourself: How Can I Help Them?***

Once you switch your focus to paying it forward, and helping those around you, you stop stressing about the jobs, gigs, and opportunities you don't have.

Reinforce Relationships

Ask For Help

When you have connections include them in your goals and the things you're trying to achieve - **people will want to help you.** It brings people joy when they're able to help someone.

When you have relationships you can reinforce them when you need help with things.

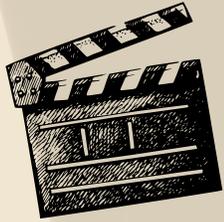
Remember:

- You don't know who **they know**
- If you know they know someone you'd like to meet, tell them why and ask for an introduction
- Get specific - ask for exactly what you need/want from them. If you get too vague they won't know how to help you and that ends up in a no reply. Then a connection could dry up. **But also everyone is vague - So, stand out!**

Vague: "Keep me in mind when you need help on what you work on next."

Specific: "I'm looking to learn more about the production office, and want to become an office PA. If you know anyone that would be willing to sit down with me chat about being an office PA, please let me know."

Take Action!



Reinforce & Reconnect



Take 1 of your contacts and connect with them on a deeper level. Ask how they are and get interested in their lives. Play a game and seeing how long you can go without talking about work/film projects.

Think about 2 people you can connect with to help or give advice to? **Help out 2 people.**

Reconnect and **send 2 of your contacts a text/email** to let them know you appreciate them, and/or give them an update on what you're up to.

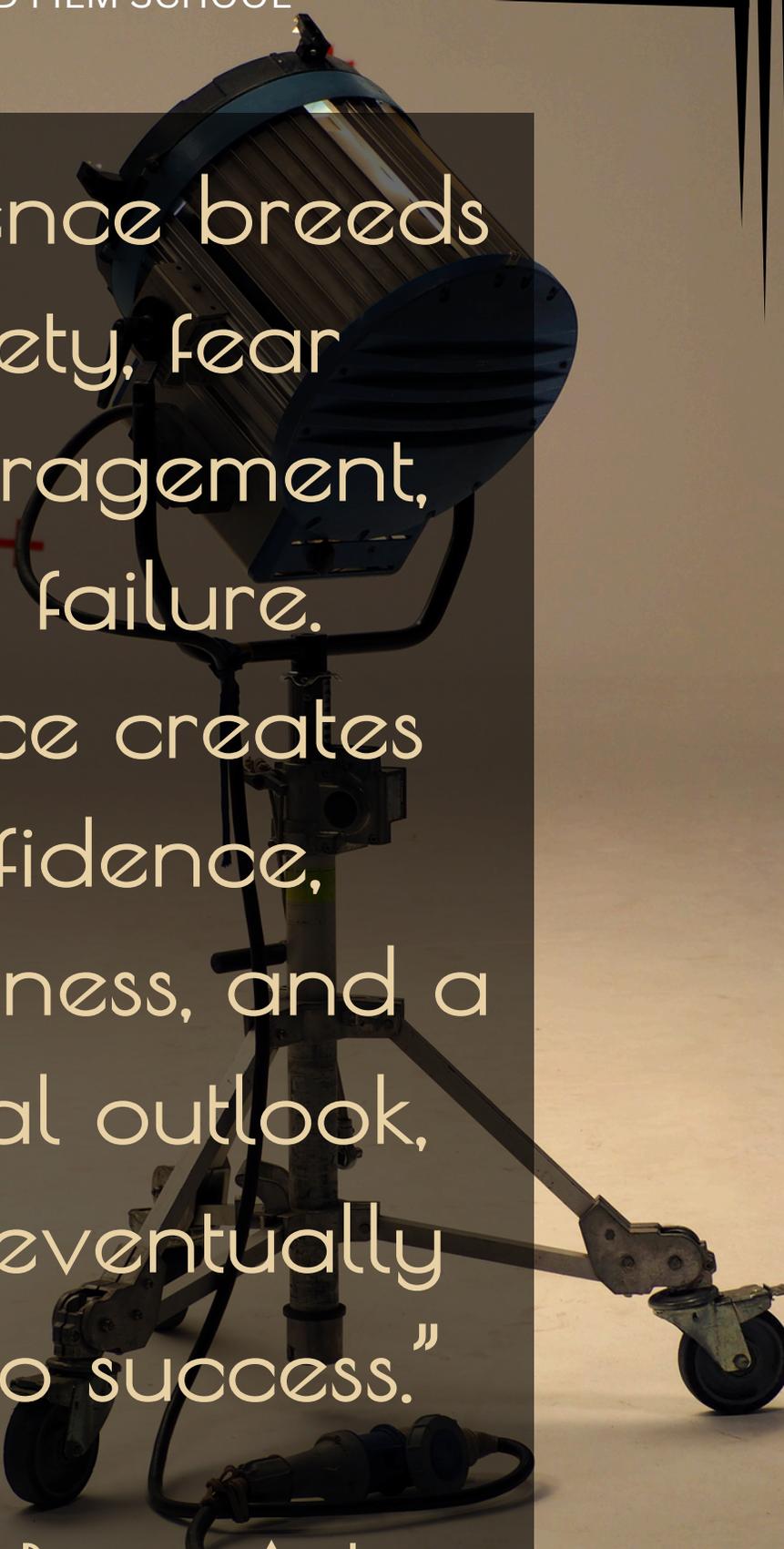
Wanna share an online community with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

LET'S BE HONEST

When it comes to your film career you must realize it will not be an instantaneous thing. Your career will be a culmination of all the small steps, and every connection you make. Each small step leads to the next and the next. When you look back through your small steps you'll realize the giant difference that one small friendship, or that small one day shoot made in your career.

Patience and getting to know yourself is the key to your film career success. But it will also take discipline. Do the work. Learn more. Show up. Do something everyday that helps you get closer to your film goals. Working in the film industry takes a lot of work, and if you're not willing to do the work than the film industry might not be for you. Unlocking film opportunities is not easy. The work in this course may have been easy to read and watch, but the actionable steps is the hard part. Make sure you do them and you will see a difference in your film career.





“Impatience breeds
anxiety, fear
discouragement,
and failure.
Patience creates
confidence,
decisiveness, and a
rational outlook,
which eventually
leads to success.”

– Brian Adams

Take Action!



Check list



- Set Your Intention
- Research an event and GO!
- Compile/organize you contacts
- Draft & practice your elevator pitch
- Start a conversation with a stranger
- Email 5 People you don't know
- Reconnect with 2 people you know
- Go deeper with 1 contact
- Help 2 People

Wanna share your progress with me? Tag me on Ig @beyondfilmschool

YOU GOT THIS!



Thank you so much for taking this mini course! There was a lot of information packed into each section, the videos, and the workbook. Take your time with the actionable steps, but make sure you do them! The more you grow your relationships the more fruitful your film opportunities will be. You'll also get to know some great people out there in film, and make great friendships.

You got this! I am your cheerleader! You can reach your film goals. The reason I know this is because I did it. I wasn't getting hired. I was the absolute worst with getting to know people, opening up, and trying to be myself. It took me so long to figure out what I was putting out to the world versus who I thought I was. It took me so long to just be patient, enjoy the journey, and be grateful. I know you will learn, grow, and get to where you want to be, and you will have a great network of friends, and colleagues to support you! Please feel free to email me with any questions, and also share your success! I love hearing about how you're doing. I'm invested in you. I wish you the absolute best in your film career.