

A JUMPING-OFF POINT

“The Strength of Weak Ties”

Mark Granovetter is an American sociologist who is best known for his work "*The Strength of Weak Ties*". His theory distills down to this basic premise: it's not your family and friends - your "strong ties" - that exposes you to a broad network of information and connections; rather, it's your acquaintances, distant friends, etc. – your "weak ties" - that does. In order to expand your exposure and your influence, it's important to create and maintain a network of "weak ties". Through them, you'll be able to reach an audience that your strong ties cannot provide.

For example, "Anna" is looking for a job in a new field following the completion of her degree program. In addition to her own exhaustive legwork, Anna also asked her family members and good friends (very "strong ties") for their suggestions and to keep her in mind if they hear of anything. Some have even put in a good word for Anna in their spheres of influence, but the results have been minimal. After examining her "weak ties", she decided to contact Ben whom she had known for several years and with whom she had kept in intermittent contact despite his move to another state. Ben has maintained frequent contact with people at his last long-term position where he was well-regarded...at an organization that would be a good match for Anna's talents and interests. Ben has put the word out about Anna to his contacts, some of whom are in a position to hire and has also given Anna other solid suggestions to pursue. Anna now touches base with Ben more regularly to follow up. Anna's sphere of influence has now grown exponentially through knowing and utilizing her "weak ties" with Ben.

In looking over the names of the wonderful women and men I have mentioned in this newsletter, I realized that they all came into my life through "weak ties". Many of them have already strengthened my business in some capacity and all of them have expanded my network. I hope I have done or will do the same for them. When you have the opportunity, take some time to examine your "weak ties"...any one of them can be the jumping-off point for your growth.

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