

# Cut The Weeds.

## Focus On Priorities And Strategy Avoid The Time Zappers

By Hank Moore, Corporate Strategist™

One of the by-products of being high-profile is that you get hangers-on. Most mean well and want to associate with someone successful. Some are groupies, and some are outright users. The art is to discern and marginalize the weeds from your path.

One mean-weller kept hounding me. He wanted to introduce me to people to form “strategic partnerships.” Turns out that they were people with their hands out, thinking that somebody (anybody) could magically open doors for them. I tried to set boundaries with that person. He would not respect perimeters.

One of his “strategic partners” called me and conferenced in the introducer. This was not a scheduled conference call, and I felt blind-sighted. Neither one asked if this was a good time to talk or apologized for calling with no warning. In a rapid-fire sales delivery, he proceeded to talk, starting out selling stock in a venture, then shifting from one idea to the next. I patiently listened and tried to get away. This person had already called me weeks before but could not remember who I was or what I was all about. This was a “dial and smile” sales call, and it was one-sided and self-focused, all about him.

The caller then announced that he had a time commitment and that I had one minute to state my case. I explained that they had called me and that I could not tell my “story” in one minute. I said that if he did not remember talking to me before, then that was the problem. He challenged that it was my obligation to “make a difference,” defined as me giving time and money to his pet causes. I suggested that they turn their attentions elsewhere. The caller then got hyper and talked all over me. I stated that I wasn’t interested in his projects and needed to end the call.

People who hound and use you in business are out for whatever they can get, from whomever they can get it. If you resist, they will go on to the next warm body. This is why I have a problem with networking: some are users and others are used by them, while others don’t know what they are doing.

One must be resolute in protecting their most valuable and limited commodities: time, knowledge and resources. Weeds are everywhere, crying “gimme.” One can never cut all of the weeds down because they re-grow elsewhere. I’ve learned the hard way the value of prioritizing time and focusing on the people and projects that matter.

### Questions to Ask About Weeds and Networking:

- Is the person making the request a true friend, a business associate or just an acquaintance? Who are they to you, and what would you like for them to be?



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- Will there be outcomes or paybacks for the other person? Will there be outcomes or paybacks for you? If there's a discrepancy in these answers, how do you feel about it?
- Are there networking situations which are beneficial for all parties? If so, analyze and align with those situations, rather than with the fruitless ones.
- What types of "wild goose chases" have you pursued in your networking career? Analyze them by category, to see patterns.
- Is the person requesting something of you willing to offer something first?
- Are the people truly communicating when they network? Or, are hidden agendas the reason for networking? Without communicating wants, it is tough to achieve outcomes.
- How much time away from business can you take? How does it compare with the business you can or will generate?

Cut the weeds by seeing your time for networking and volunteering as a commodity. Budget it each year. Examine and benchmark the reasons and results. Set boundaries, and offer your time on an "a la carte" basis. Associate with those who feel similarly. Show and demonstrate respect for each other's time. Be careful not to pro-bono yourself to death. ♦

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