

Start Where You Are **by Rose Jonas, Ph.D.**

All the books tell you the best way to find a job is to network. Network? You don't network! That's too slimy, too '90s, and anyway, you're too shy. Face it. For all the tough guy face you're putting on this job search, you don't have any idea how to network. Don't feel bad. You'd be surprised how many high powered executives quiver at the thought of networking. Most of us don't like putting ourselves OUT THERE. We feel so exposed, so needy.

A string puzzle lies before you, a messy pile of twine, unravelable. When you look at it, you feel anxious, incapable. Each strand is knotted and leads off somewhere. Because the area beyond the string is clear and uncluttered, you're tempted to jump to it and avoid the hassle of diving into all that hemp. Don't do it; it's an optical illusion; clear plexiglas awaits your soaring nose. This is a trick puzzle. Each strand represents the path to your next job; each knot is a person on that path who will lead you there. You must methodically follow the string. You may find it leads nowhere; you may find you don't like where it ends. In either case, you drop that string and pick up another.

But start where you are. Unless you know, almost palpably, that what you want is OVER THERE, in which case the place to start is OVER THERE. The first step to where you're going lies right at your feet. Start there.

Who do you call? Call your mom. Call your neighbor. Call your spouse's golfing partner. Call the people you used to babysit for. They might know of something or someone. Your goal with each is to find the next person you need to see, or another idea of where to look. It's best if you know clearly what you want. People more readily guide you when you do. You won't generally know at the beginning, however. Don't worry about knowing. Just move. You'll get more focused as you go.

What's your networking goal today?