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He Who Dies with the Most Toys...Still Dies.

by Keith F. Luscher
Author, *Prospect & Flourish*

Nearly a week following yet another anniversary of the September 11th attacks of 2001, I am sitting here working, trying to catch up on sooo much (not just this week's article!), and in the background plays the morning news.

The anchor discusses evolving mid-east policies with a retired Army colonel, and seeks his guest's perspective on the proposed strategy of "relying less on direct human involvement (i.e. fewer troops and intelligence agents), and more on technology (reconnaissance, surveillance and engagement)" to "contain" terrorists in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The colonel is quick to dismiss the notion as naïve. Indeed, it got my mind thinking...was this not one of the major policy mistakes that was identified as ultimately leading to our vulnerability to attack up until and on September 11, 2001?

In the aftermath of that day, the ultimate question was, "What went wrong?" And one of the major issues identified was, when it came to gathering intelligence, there was too much reliance on technology and not enough on human interpersonal relationships.

And now, eight years later, some proponents are suggesting we make that mistake again. Indeed, I am not attempting to get political. However, it is a valuable lesson from history and world affairs that we can take and apply to ourselves in business networking and prospecting.

Networking and prospecting is very much about gathering intelligence—not covertly as we must often do in some ways to keep our freedoms secure—but if you rely too much on your social media "toys" and the like you will never make a full human connection. You will never truly get inside the shoes of your prospect. I say this not in a spirit of intrusion or manipulation, but in one of empathy, caring and of a desire to understand.

As I prepare updates of both *Prospect & Flourish* and *Don't Wait Until You Graduate II*, for release, I have come to address these issues more head-on as our cultural and business landscape continues to be reshaped by this social media revolution.

This world is in some ways becoming even smaller. As we connect from screen-to-screen, we must leverage that—indeed we must transcend that plain—from technological connections to human connections. We must transcend to face-to-face, and ultimately, heart-to-heart. When we have reached this level, we have achieved TRUST.

And trusting relationships are vital to successful business relationships. Ironically, it's not all that different when our brave men and women put themselves on the line to protect our country. They find themselves among new people and are truly the human face of the United States of America. They are not just our Ambassadors...they are our Salesmen.

Technology is great. I am a gadget freak. I am a social media hound. I love to write and speak about how it lubricates the process of meeting new people. But I do mean meeting. Indeed, he who dies with the most toys still dies, as will the person who dies with the most friends...

But the latter will have more people at his funeral.