

# Time and energy for networking

by Erivelton Nepomuceno 

**M**any people think that the time spent with work colleagues in a coffee shop is useless—or at least that those precious minutes would be more productive in the lab or in front of a computer. That is quite a big mistake that, hopefully, age and wisdom can revert. Many times, lonely academics—or worse, solitary individuals—will emerge from those self-entitled focused workers. In this second issue of 2023, I hope that this editorial could be a call for change in—or a booster to—the importance of socialization and networking.

First point: networking requires time. We should spend time with people for the simple reasons of getting to know them and letting them get to know us. A good friend is one who understand us very well. It is only possible if he has been trained many times and in different circumstances. Not so different from a machine learning algorithm, a relationship requires a substantial set of experiences over a considerable time window. Everyone will recognize a friendship certification—or, continuing to use the machine learning term: a friendship validation—if, in a circumstance of stress or need, someone jumped in front of us and understood our needs in a way that no other people could. It could be a personal matter or a technical and scientific collaboration on a project. Reciprocal understanding comes after a training time stage.

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Second, one should devote energy to networking. It seems obvious that, if you are together with someone, you are doing that. However, your energy could be directed elsewhere. Mobile phones are an incredible source of distraction. Quite often, we see people prioritizing virtual connections over those who are in front of them. This does not mean that a relationship cannot be nurtured by virtual meetings. Online calls, meetings, and education have proven to be very useful. In both cases, our attention is the key issue. We only need to answer the question of which subject we are spending our energy on. The answer will determine whether meetings are successful or not.

The power of our networking will be defined by the work devoted to building relationships over time. It is simple, like our first physics lessons. Nevertheless, without our energy, entropy tends to grow, and organized social networks may not appear—again, like physics. The very fact that each of us—human beings—is unique is so incredible and deserves our meticulous exploration. Being in front of another person is a precious moment that can save lives, keep our mental health in good shape, and create the professional network so important for our success. By the way, it is time to grab a cup of coffee with some friends. Fancy a cuppa?

## About the author

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