



# NETWORKING *News*

*Women helping women through networking to achieve their personal and professional goals*

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**D**o you suffer from Bottom syndrome? No -- JLo isn't the expert on it and you can't solve this problem by going to the gym. To understand this condition, you need to read William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

As a diversion within Shakespeare's play, a small group of laborers are going to perform their own play, the story of Pyramus and Thisby. Peter Quince, the director, is reading off the roles they will perform. Although Nick Bottom is the first to receive his assignment, each time Quince lists a new character Bottom eagerly volunteers to take that role, reciting all the reasons why he can do it.

Does that sound familiar to you? How often do you do this? Sitting in a committee meeting, volunteers are needed. Or your client asks for a whole laundry list of items. Or someone in your family needs some help. And your response is "Oh, I can do that! I can do that! I can do that!" And suddenly you've volunteered for all sorts of projects and are overwhelmed.

Just as Quince explained to Bottom, "You can play no part but Pyramus", we must decide what parts we should play. According to Laura Berman Fortgang, in her book *Living Your Best Life*, "It has been shown

we can do only three to five things at a time if we are to do them well." She goes on to explain, "When you make contact with your feelings, you can sense when you betrayed yourself by taking on yet another obligation that distances you from your goals and priorities." Her recommendation is to list your priorities, memorize them, and then "use the memorized list as a measuring stick against every demand on your time."

We've heard many times that we need to learn to say "No". But we also need to decide what to say "Yes" to. Your list can be prioritized by: 1.) what you do best; 2.) what you enjoy doing; and 3.) what you have the time to do.

What is it you do best? This needs to be your focus. Sure you can do a variety of things (we are women – born to multi-task!), but they only distract you from your main role. And there are probably other people who can do those other things as well or better than you can. So let them! Now add the things you enjoy doing. Whether it's work or relaxation – we give our best effort to the things we like to do.

And most importantly, don't take on more than you have time for. You will stress yourself out. Sometimes you may even have to temporarily

give up something you enjoy doing if the stress of trying to fit it into your schedule overwhelms the pleasure you would have gotten from it.

Poor Bottom – after trying to take on everyone else's responsibilities (and annoying them all in the process), he is turned into an ass by Puck, the Fairy King's assistant. Definitely a lesson to us all! As we start the New Year, remember to nurture yourself and your business. Take time to plan and prioritize. Don't emulate Bottom, but rather learn your limits, where to put your time and effort, and when to say yes.

—Nancy Passow,  
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