

**Aloha and The Joy of Connecting** by Wendy Keahi Kirley

For me, it's been a lifetime of saying "Aloha" to strangers, neighbors, friends, and family. My husband and I even greet each other with the word Aloha frequently throughout the day. Yes, I live in Hawaii where, while used as a greeting, Aloha also expresses concern on various levels, depending on whom one is greeting. But in general, Aloha means "I Care".

It's that sense of caring that drew me to The Joy of Connecting. The Joy of Connecting, a marketing event for women in business across the US, and now in Spanish speaking communities as The Latina Joy of Connecting, impressed me first by its logo: A heart enveloping the words "The Joy of Connecting" and including the group's intent, "Marketing With Heart". Women are naturally drawn to hearts, probably because we grow up understanding the value of love. It is normal for most women to remark that they *love* a product, an experience, a speaker they heard, song, artist, etc. Women are generally more inclined to be connected with their emotions, therefore are more intuitive when interacting and often draw deeper meaning from an experience. The heart is an important part of The Joy of Connecting logo and expresses more by its placement there about what can be experienced at these events that exist especially for the way women are.

As I searched further on The Joy of Connecting website I learned about other women who are licensed hosts of groups around the country. Each represents a different business interest of her own, but all are bound by the same ideal of wanting to help other women grow along with them! Unheard of in most business communities is this sense of camaraderie among virtual competitors. "Now this is for me!", I thought with excitement. My own idea of success includes everyone else; I personally am not for standing on a heap of others that I trampled to get to the top. Why can't we all succeed together?

"Exactly!" says Bonnie Ross Parker, founder of The Joy of Connecting, host of the online show "Business Plus: Real Ideas for Real Results" on The Women's Information Network, and co-author of the book [42 Rules for Effective Connections](#), among various other credits. Upon meeting Bonnie via phone, I already knew that she was someone I wanted to associate with. She genuinely does care; that's Aloha.

Across the Pacific and the US Continent lives a woman who expresses Aloha daily by what she does for other women and consequently other women follow her lead as they do the same good for women in their part of the world. In Hawaii a lei, a circular string of flowers, is given to another in celebration and with Aloha. I see this connection that exists because of The Joy of Connecting as an ongoing lei of friendship, compassion, and caring that uplifts spirits, builds capacities for personal and business growth, and just feels good.

I watched a video of a The Joy of Connecting event held at Bonnie Ross Parker's home prior to becoming a licensee and knew that it was something I wanted business women in Hawaii to experience. Of course it felt right, it was that same Aloha spirit that I know so well! At a The Joy of Connecting event we don't just get together and pass out business cards or give timed speeches. In most cases, a host shares her home where an effort is made to prepare a warm atmosphere that is comfortable and inviting. A host takes time and care to prepare a meal, packets for attendees that include a roster and remarks about each attendee. Presentation time can vary depending on the number in attendance and

each leaves not just with a list of contacts and ideas, but feeling better than she may have when she arrived. After hosting The Joy of Connecting events in Hawaii, these are a few of the comments I've received:

*"(The) Joy of Connecting in Hawaii was fantastic. Wendy did a lovely job of hosting. (The) Joy of Connecting is a brilliant concept."*

*"I had a grand time yesterday! I felt the event was much more uplifting and productive than a day at the office. The group of women who attended are indeed quite passionate for their line of business and it was my honor to spend the afternoon with all of them. Thank you!"*

*"I've been looking for an event like this, I'm glad you're doing it!"*

When those of like minds unite, magic is made. That magic is a strength that is generated because of being surrounded by others who care. In Hawaii we call that Aloha. It's obvious that we in Hawaii are not the only ones who understand what Aloha means. Mahalo (Thank You) to Bonnie Ross Parker for doing all that you do for women in business. May the Aloha continue in and through us all!