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### Alumni Connections Conference stresses giving and passion as key to success

How do I land my dream job? Are there certain tools or strategies for success that will help me in my career? How can I brand myself effectively?

These are some of the questions that recent alumni and high-achieving students came armed with to the first-ever Alumni Connections Conference organized by the Centre for Student Success in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies.

Held on Feb. 25 in the Atkinson Building, the networking and career conference was jam-packed with inspiring stories and workshops put on by alumni and industry professionals that covered topics including financial planning, transitioning from university to the workplace, personal marketing, recognizing and enacting change, entrepreneurship and the value of volunteering. Alumnus Andrew Gutierrez (BA Spec. Hons. '09) called it one of the best York conferences he's ever attended and credited the speakers for helping him to regain focus on his career.

Two emerging themes arose from the evening: the benefits of giving to others as a way to achieve success and the importance of finding your passion. Tim Cork (BA '81), a York alumnus who's the author of the bestselling book *Tapping the Iceberg* and has been dubbed by *The Globe and Mail* as "The Career Guru", emphasized these two ideas at a special plenary session.



**Left: Tim Cork, author of *Tapping the Iceberg*, delivered an energetic presentation to participants of the the first-ever Alumni Connections Conference organized by the Centre for Student Success in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies**

"Anytime you're enthusiastic about things, it's contagious," he said. "If you can find that passion, if you can

find out what you love to do in life, everything will fall into place."

Cork has developed what he calls "G7" or the seven gives. According to Cork, giving is an essential part of networking. He actually calls it netgiving.

He says when we first meet with another person – whether for professional or social reasons – the biggest mistake we can make is to fall into the trap of, "What can I get out of this?"

Instead, Cork encourages individuals to give their time and resources without expecting anything in return. The receiving part, he insists, will automatically come later.

“It’s not about take, it’s about give,” he noted. “I’m talking about give as an attitude. If you have the attitude of ‘What can I do for you?’, big things are going to happen to you.”

As president of an international provider of career transition and outplacement services called NEXCareer, Cork spends a lot of time giving. “Reciprocation may not occur immediately,” he admits. “But what goes around comes around and eventually it will come back to you, in one form or another.”

### Right: Conference participants

Cork, along with the other speakers, discussed many other valuable tips and strategies for success. Some of the most notable included the benefits of self-promotion, maintaining a positive attitude, the importance of being confident, connecting with others through storytelling, providing proper thank-yous and learning to be comfortable with failure by using it as a tool to learn and grow.



“Rejection, fear, failure...bring it on, that’s good stuff,” said Cork. “If you learn from those, it’s just called experience. Experience is success, regardless of what type of experience it is.”



Left: David Peck

Cork’s presentation – along with select presentations by York alumnus David Peck (BA Spec. Hons. ’03), entrepreneur Sarah Prevette and York human resource management Professor Marie-Hélène Budworth – are available as videos [online](#).

The conference was made possible through the support of York’s Alumni Office.

