

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

brought to you by the **future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange**

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### The Importance of Relationship Building

By Casey McVay

Relationships are one of the most important aspects of living a good life. Yet, often times, we don't value the conversations we have or pay close enough attention to those around us. What I have learned in my young life is relationships help us when we reach the proverbial fork in the road.

When we face challenges or opportunities, our relationships, our network and connections, personal and professional, guide us to choose which path to take. We shouldn't always make decisions independently, so when we need help seeing what is best for us, we can rely on those closest to us.



Many important aspects of networking help build these connections and relationships, such as having a smart conversation starter or your "elevator speech," which I remind you should not be boring like elevator music or so rehearsed that it feels forced. However, the simplest of tips are the essential ones, too: Be yourself, be open, inquire, and be generous.

- **Be yourself.** What's not to like? You're awesome. Don't sweat trying to be anything but who you are and people will appreciate your authenticity.
- **Be open.** Not an open book, but open. When we are "all about business," we tend to come across cold, so shake it off, and don't fear revealing something somewhat personal - it lets the other person know you're real.
- **Inquire.** Don't forget "it takes two" in a relationship. Here are some great, easy to remember questions to ask: How do you like working at your company? How'd you get into that? Have any tips for \_\_\_\_?



- **Be generous.** Once you have made a first connection, the best way to keep it going is to be a resource for the other person. No need to overdo it here, though, but providing something interesting or helpful to them, a referral or link to information, can make the difference in building a stronger relationship.

Little, simple things like these can add up to big, amazing long-lasting and reliable relationships, and living a really good life with great people around you.

*Photos from the FLEX Annual Meeting in October, taken by Chett DeLong*



**Eric Thompson** recently became a Venango County community member! Eric grew up in wine country in North East, PA, but he became the new General Manager at Wanango Country Club in March, bringing him to this area.

Eric earned his degree from

Edinboro University in Comprehensive Business Administration. His two greatest achievements are his wonderful children, Carter (age 7) and Peyton (age 4). Also, finding happiness and being successful in a career that he truly loves and enjoys working in.

Eric's short term goal is to finish his Class A golf professional certification for his PGA membership. His long term goal is to attain a Master Professional

Designation with a focus in golf operations/club management, which less than half a percent of PGA members achieve.

Eric is new to Venango County, but is looking forward to getting to know all there is to do here. He enjoys going on the bike trail with his wife, Deb. Eric also enjoys spending time with his family, including taking them to their family cabin in Allegheny National Forest. Some of his hobbies include hunting, fishing, and golfing.

Eric loves learning about the rich history of Wanago and Venango County. He finds it very inviting and welcoming, and stated that "the people here are very nice and down to earth." Eric also noted that there are so many Steelers fans here which is a great change from when he worked as a golf professional in New England with many Patriot fans.

## Everyday Leadership

Our TED Talk recommendation this month is by Drew Dudley, whom encourages a change in our understanding of leadership. He tells the story of the impact he had on girl in college. Simply by making the girl and those around her laugh on her first day of college, he became an important person in the girl's life story. Drew says: "to think that maybe the biggest impact I'd ever had on anyone's life . . . was a moment that I didn't even remember."

Though the moment did not seem significant to Drew at the time, it guided the girl's decision to stay in college and introduced her to the man she would later marry.

"As long as we make leadership something bigger than us, as long as we keep leadership beyond us and make it about changing the world," said Drew, "we give ourselves an excuse not to expect it every day, from ourselves and from each other."

Find this TED Talk at [https://www.ted.com/talks/drew\\_dudley\\_everyday\\_leadership/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/drew_dudley_everyday_leadership/transcript)

**Save the Date!**  
**Bike 'n Brew**  
**July 20, 2019**

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## FLEX Speaker Series—Leadership Venango Panel in June

While FLEX provides opportunities for fun activities, like networking and volunteering, we also focus on helping young professionals grow personally and professionally. In 2018, we launched the FLEX Speaker Series as a way to have experts speak to us on various topics that can benefit young professionals.

So far, we have heard about health, self-development, relationship building, and serving on a board of directors. Also, at the end of April, FLEX members Matt Heath and Ashley Cowles spoke about how to build a successful business.

Matt is an engineer at General Electric, mentor for SCORE, and owner of the Small Biz Accelerator ([smallbizaccelerator.com](http://smallbizaccelerator.com)). Ashley is the owner of Core Goods, blogger at The Small Town Foodie, and program manager at the Venango Chamber, where she heads the Be Here initiative and assists with FLEX.

Matt presented on the benefits of SCORE, an organization made up of volunteers dedicated to counseling small businesses, and touched on the



process of opening your own business. Ashley followed with advice from experience at Core Goods, including challenges faced, getting your name out, and the importance of making connections.

If you missed Matt & Ashley's presentation, you can email Ashley at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) for a copy of their presentation.

The next session of the Speaker Series is on Monday, June 24, featuring a panel of graduates from the 2019 class of Leadership Venango. The group will talk on various leadership development topics. Learn more about Leadership Venango at [leadershipvenango.org](http://leadershipvenango.org).

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## Summer Volunteer Opportunities

We invite you to join FLEX out in the community as we volunteer for local events, including:

- **Grease at the Barrow-Civic Theatre:** Friday, June 21, 6 p.m.: FLEX will work at ticket will call, concessions, ushering, and more, then watch the show for free.
- **Oil Heritage Bike 'n Brew:** Saturday, July 20, Justus Park: We need help with biking activities, ticket sales, security, set up and tear down, and more. Volunteers get a t-shirt and a half price brewfest ticket.
- **Oil Heritage Ice Cream Social:** Thursday, July 25, 5 - 9 p.m., Central Ave Plaza: Volunteers scoop ice cream, give toppings, sell drinks, and help set up and tear down.



Please contact Marketing & Community Partnerships Chair Tessa at (814) 676-8521 or [tbyham@venangochamber.org](mailto:tbyham@venangochamber.org) with questions or to sign up to volunteer.



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“The Future of Venango Area Business!”

Young professionals learned how to run a successful business at the FLEX Speaker Series on April 29, and enjoyed a day of golf at Wanango Country Club on May 18.



## OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

### Upcoming Events & Meetings:

- **Hiking Social:** Saturday, June 1, 9:30 a.m. • Hike at Two Mile Run County Park, then lunch at Deets Sugar House
- **Bike 'n Brew Meeting:** Tuesday, June 4, 5:30 p.m., Venango Chamber
- **Bike 'n Brew Poster Raid:** Friday, June 7 • Stop at the Venango Chamber or Barrow-Civic Theatre at 7 for posters & instructions, meet at Trails to Ales at 9
- **Monthly Meeting:** Monday, June 10, 5:30 p.m., Venango Chamber
- **Membership Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, June 11, 5 p.m., Bossa Nova
- **Marketing Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, June 18, 12 p.m., Venango Chamber or call in
- **Events Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, June 18, 5 p.m., Spilling the Beans

Find more event details on our Facebook page:  
[facebook.com/VenangoFLEX](https://facebook.com/VenangoFLEX)

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

*Joseph Aylesworth  
Brian Payne*

Interested in joining? Email Laura at [laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu](mailto:laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu).

Connect with us:

