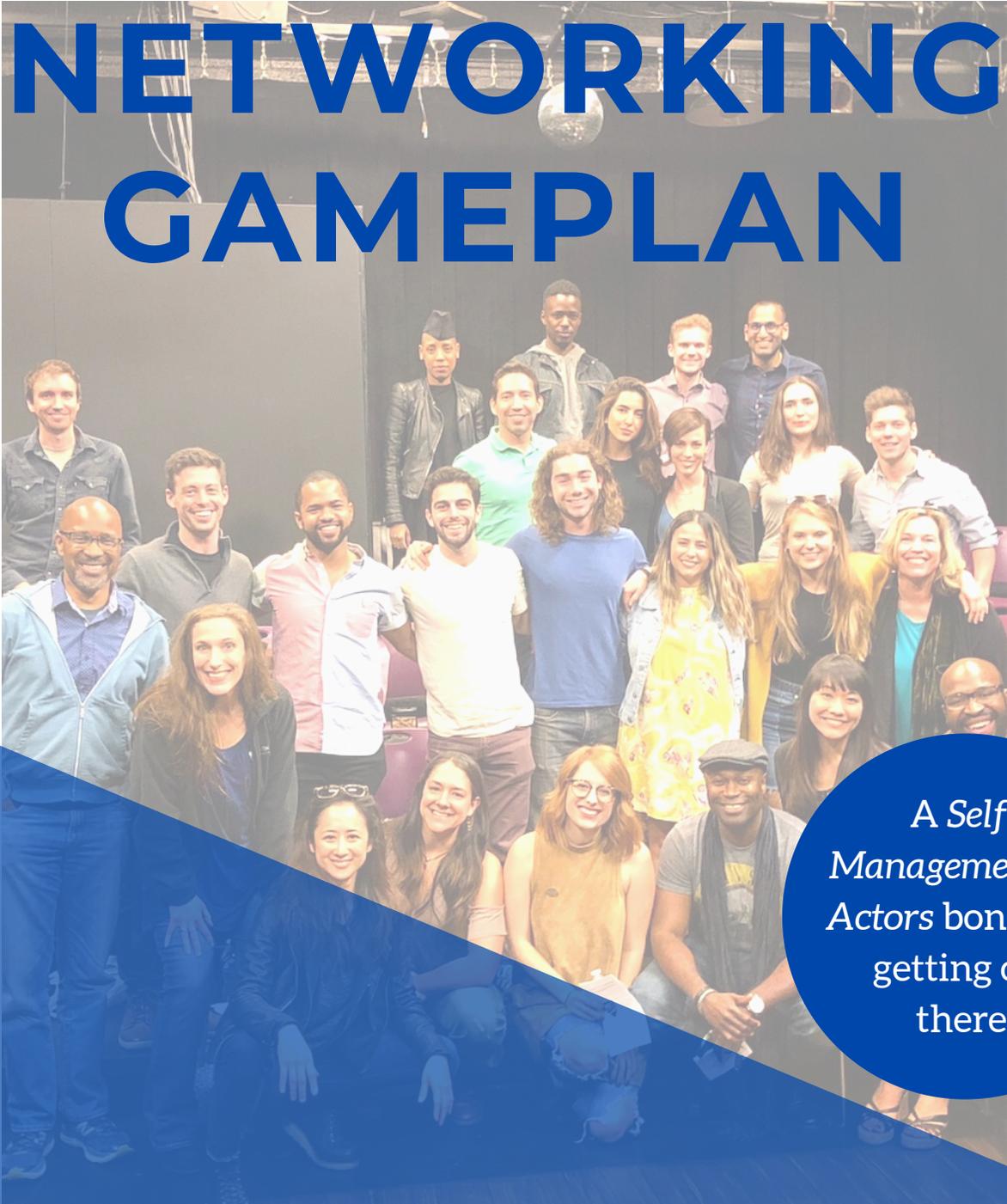


YOUR *SMFA* NETWORKING GAMEPLAN



*A Self-
Management for
Actors* bonus for
getting out
there!

BY BONNIE GILLESPIE

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YOUR SMFA NETWORKING GAMEPLAN

A SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR ACTORS BONUS

Hi! And thanks for grabbing your very own copy of the **SMFA Networking Gameplan!** With my help, you're on your way to having much clearer focus about the art of the schmooze and your best-fit place in the whole networking scene. Yay!

Be sure to dig in on 4th edition of **Self-Management for Actors** for a deeper dive on the goodies in this workbook. (Don't have the book? Hit smfa4.com to remedy that!)

What follows is a list of Brandprov prompts you can use to practice your fluidity at networking, being interviewed, living on-brand. Before we get to that list, I've detailed five specific types of networking you can be engaged in today.

The goal is not to dive in on all five simultaneously and make yourself crazy. Your work is to determine your strengths (we're all better at one type of networking than the other four), lean into that one immediately, and make a date with yourself to improve each of the weaker areas within the next 100 days. I want you to *actually* get out your calendar and schedule a 90-minute session with yourself to get better at a type of networking that may be more natural for your target buyers but a little more difficult for you right now.

With all of this, please don't ever say you suck at something. You're only less practiced at it. There's a really easy way to fix that, of course. Practice! Get the worst/first time out of the way. Do it while the stakes are low (they only get higher the more successful and well-known you are in your market). And whatever you do, show up on-brand! It's marketing you 100% control, down to the outfit you wear, the drink you order, and the words you use when asked, "So, tell me about yourself..." at any event. Heck, at EVERY event.

Have fun with this process, and be sure to let me know how this is going for you. Use the #SMFAninjas hashtag (it's like the Bat Signal, but cooler) so we can celebrate your tier jumps along the way!

Bon

BONNIE GILLESPIE, author
Self-Management for Actors

5 TYPES OF NETWORKING



PICK YOUR STRONGEST **SMFA** MUSCLE

1. Industry networking events.

Unless you live in a non-market, there will always be an industry event you can add to your calendar within the next month. Even if you have to commute in a bit, there's something going on and if you're great in the room, you have fun with Brandprov, and you can snag a wingman to join you for maximum impact, all the better. Sign up, show up, be on-brand, and make it your goal to be interested (not interesting).

2. Non-industry non-networking events.

Yep. It's true. Industry players walk among us and practice yoga, show up at political rallies, volunteer for causes they feel strongly about, take their dogs to the park, and enroll in classes at continuing ed programs. Same as you. Now, I'm not suggesting you get all stalkery, but as you research your targets and learn what it is they're into, you may start to find yourselves in the same circles. This is a long-game form of networking, but it's effective.

3. Classes, workshops, showcases.

Never pay to audition. You know that. It's against the law. But paying for a class that happens to be taught by a target? That's potentially a great way to build relationships... especially if the targets doing the teaching bring their industry friends to class from time to time (which many do). Don't charge in on this one 'til you've done enough research to be really sure you're investing wisely. And most importantly, be sure your craft is at its best so you're not seen as green when you get your shot.

4. Social media.

Everyone has built friendships, relationships, even romances and business partnerships from the starting point of social media. The reason it's so important that your social media profile – IF you have one (some creatives do better *without* being so visible) – be a solid 24/7 representative of your brand is precisely because it's doing a lot of the heavy lifting about showcasing who you are in the eyes of the buyer. Engage authentically. Do NOT buy followers. And have fun. If it's not fun, go dark online.

5. Snail mail.

Long ago, this was THE dominant means of connecting with your target buyers. It still works and in some cases it works better because so few people are showing up in our snail mail inboxes anymore. Don't sling spaghetti at the wall with mass mailings (they *feel* mass on the receiving end); get strategic. Be specific as to how your existence helps us solve a casting problem we regularly have. Be professional. Be consistent. Whether it's a postcard or a letter of introduction, run everything through the brand filter, send it, then forget it.

SMFA BRANDPROV

BY BONNIE GILLESPIE

BRANDPROV IS THE ABILITY TO IMPROVISE ON-BRAND.

There's being on-brand, and then there's being *so* on-brand that you can be caught off-guard with questions that make NO sense and still represent your brand well as you improvise.

You see Brandprov at play on any talkshow or red carpet or paparazzi-covered moment or mind-numbingly tedious junket (especially one that's not terribly well-edited). The more "live and raw" it is, the better the chance you're going to see whether a celeb is ninja with Brandprov or better suited for experiences that can be scripted by a publicist and then edited down to its best bits.

Listen, it's not a job requirement that you be fantastic at improvising on-brand. You do not have to live in a space where talking about yourself, your upcoming projects, your history, your life, your co-stars is easy, but *dang*, it's a good thing if you can start building the muscle for not being flat-out bad at it right now.

Now that we've done all this work to determine which type of networking is the best one for you to lean into first, let's be sure you're well-practiced at the art of Brandprov so you can make the most of the opportunity to connect authentically with buyers when you do intersect!

Drill yourself using the prompts in the pages that follow. Self-tape while doing these with a friend. Do Brandprov jams with fellow ninjas when you meet up in your accountability groups or before a class. Take every opportunity to test your ability to keep teaching the buyers how to cast you next. Yes, this is all about the stuff you do OUTSIDE of the audition, because I assume you're already brilliant at the craft of acting. It's all the other stuff that gets you the edge.

Let's DO this!

SMFA BRANDPROV PROMPTS



SO... TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF!

Please see pages 107 (the chapter on **Your Business Plan**) and 286 (the chapter on **Working It**) in the 4th edition of **Self-Management for Actors: Getting Down to (Show) Business** for even more suggestions about how best to use these Brandprov prompts to work out any schmoozing kinks.

The basic format for each of these items begins: "What is your on-brand... [BLANK]?" So even if the question is more complex, or asks what your "favorite" something might be, always run the question through the BRAND FILTER before answering. It's not relevant what your favorite drink **actually** is; it's only Brandprov when you're answering on-brand. It's not relevant how old you **really** are; it's only Brandprov when your answer is delivered on-brand for your castable age.

What would your one-word brand be? And why?

If you have a logline, what is it?

How old are you?

Scary movies: scary, fun, or boring?

What are your on-brand colors?

What do you do to keep fit?

What makes you blush?

What product would you endorse?

What's your best body part?

What's the last text you sent?

What's the perfect food?

What's your bedtime read?

What's your charity of choice?

What's your favorite city to visit?

What's your favorite Disney movie?

What's your favorite holiday?

What's your favorite swear word?

What's your go-to outfit?

What's your ideal vacation destination?

What's your on-brand animated character?

What's your on-brand car?

What's your on-brand drink?

What's your on-brand font?

What's your on-brand fragrance?

What's your on-brand place to live?

What's your on-brand theme song?

Which are your on-brand emojis?

SMFA BRANDPROV PROMPTS



SO... TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF!

- Which of the after-parties is your can't-miss destination after the award show?
- With whom do you most want to work?
- Who is your hero?
- Who's the most intelligent person you know?
- You hit the red carpet. Who's your +1?
- If you were given a toothbrush on the red carpet, what would you do?
- You roll up to the award show in what vehicle?
- You win a major award. Whose name is first off your lips?
- You win a major award. Whose name is last off your lips?
- You're up for a major award. Who are you wearing?
- Are you a practical joker?
- Are you the kind of friend you'd want to have as a friend yourself?
- Describe yourself as a car.
- Did you ever cheat on a test?
- Do you collect anything?
- Do you correct people's mistakes?
- Do you have a list of things to do before you're a certain age?
- Do you have any scars?
- Do you hold grudges?
- Do you want children?
- Have you ever been in a fight?
- How do you get sweet revenge on someone?
- How do you plan to vote in the next election?
- How happy a person are you?
- If you could ask your future self one question, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about yourself today, what would it be?
- If you could go way back in time to change one thing, what would it be?
- If you had a production company, what would you name it? And why?
- What is the through-line in every character you've played?
- When you're asked out by a reporter, do you say, "Sure!" or do you shut it down?
- What's your response to haters?
- Tell the dirtiest joke you can think of.
- What advice would you give middle-school you?
- What hashtag best sums up your brand?
- What's your on-brand response when asked to do a FMK on your latest co-stars?
- What is your superpower?
- What job would you have if you weren't an actor?
- What nicknames have you had?
- What on-brand line works its way into your acceptance speeches?
- What shows will you never agree to guest on?

SMFA BRANDPROV PROMPTS



SO... TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF!

- What's the best decision you've made in life so far?
- What's the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?
- What's the best piece of advice you've ever given anyone?
- What's the question you least want asked?
- What's the quickest way to your heart?
- What's the worst decision you've made in life so far?
- What's your definition of contentment?
- What's your first thought upon waking?
- What's your on-brand activism?
- What's your on-brand gift to give out at the holidays?
- What's your on-brand Halloween costume?
- What's your on-brand meal?
- What's your on-brand non-profit?
- What's your on-brand romantic gesture?
- What's your on-brand TED Talk?
- What's your on-brand vice?
- What's your personal motto for life?
- When do you die in a horror film? And how?
- Which directors will you never work with?
- Who will play you in the movie of your life's story?
- Who's the best interviewer for your brand?
- Why should I cast you?
- Would you rather trade your intelligence for looks or your looks for intelligence?
- You're asked about the latest political or social scandal. What do you say?
- You're asked about your brother's recent arrest. What do you say?
- You're asked about your diva of a co-star. What do you say?
- You're offered five dream roles tomorrow. Which do you say yes to first?
- You're in the reboot of the Spice Girls. What's your spice handle?

This is a totally free workout and there is ZERO excuse for you to *ever* feel ill-prepared for being asked to talk about how you fit into the world of a talent agency, a management firm, a TV series, or any other showbiz world!

Once you feel like you've gotten a sense of how to drop breadcrumbs down the path for how we're meant to cast you next — something you do with every single thing you say to buyers in real life or online — don't let yourself get rusty! Pick up your camera and do this workout again. At every new tier!

You are your full-time brand manager and we only know how you fit in thanks to the work YOU do to let us know.



ABOUT BON...

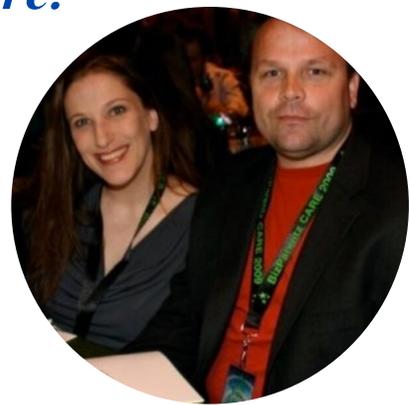
SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR ACTORS

Bonnie Gillespie is living her dreams by helping others figure out how to live theirs. As a weekly columnist, she began demystifying the casting process for actors in 1999. Her most popular book is **Self-Management for Actors**, the curriculum upon which her teaching is based.

As a producer and casting director, Bonnie specializes in indie darlings. Whether casting or coaching, she is passionate about leaving the entertainment industry better than she found it.

Bonnie lives by the beach with her partner Keith Johnson... the luckiest man in the world.

Enoughness is an inside job... and sometimes you need a guide to find your way there.



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OTHERS WITH
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WORDS TO USE
ABOUT YOU
EVERY TIME
YOU SPEAK.**

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