

matters of life & **beth**



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# Hello, My Name Is ...

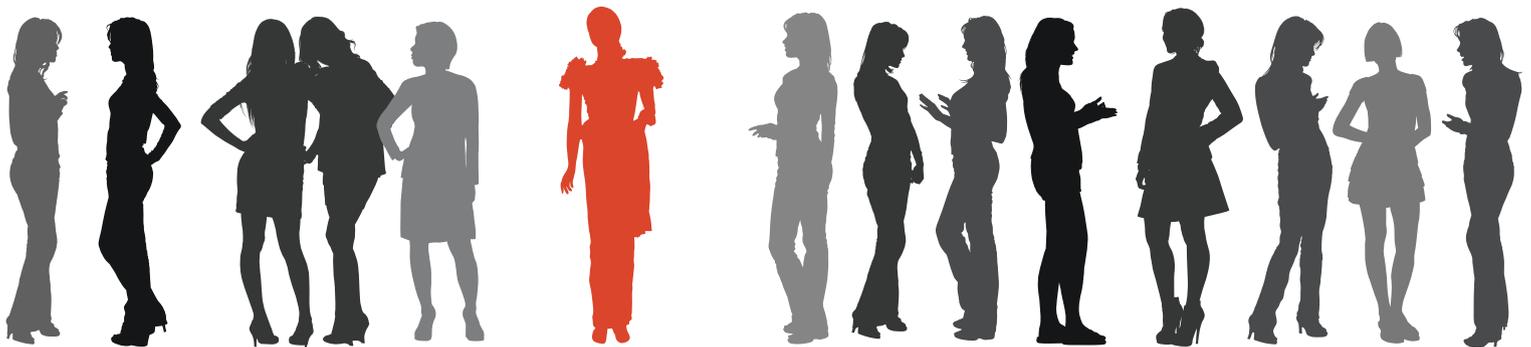
**I'm not a big fan of events where name tags are required.** Although I'm a chatty person, I find it difficult to make conversation with people I don't know. I'm sure many people feel the same way, but some are naturally better at working a crowd than others. When you're put in the position of meeting new people and you must find things to talk about, it can feel like work.

In the past, I've avoided networking events or groups where chitchat with unfamiliar faces was likely. Recently, however, I was encouraged to get involved with several women's groups as a way to nurture personal and professional growth. With my book and blog in mind, I decided it was time to go beyond my usual limits and start connecting. The first group I joined was the North Andover Women's Club. This organization has existed for more than 80 years, and I admire its goal of community enrichment. At my first meeting,

workforce or find more flexibility and work-life balance," Snell says. "Andover Women in Business is a nonthreatening way to reach out to other women in the local community to share ideas, skills, resources and networks. [The group] is informal and prides itself on being warm and welcoming to all members."

There is no fee to join AWIB, and as a member you'll find a supportive group interested in sharing opportunities, encouragement and an entrepreneurial spirit. Members gather for regular meetings as well as impromptu coffee talks. My first get-together included only a handful of us.

Conversation jumped from, "Hey, I know you. We used to work out at the same gym," all the way to "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills." Sure, we talked business in between, but most inspiring was the camaraderie generated by people who share a similar sense of



the women were thoughtful, strong and enthusiastic. The energy in the room was contagious. I immediately felt I'd become part of a positive group and that I could add value to it.

Linda McHugh is NAWC's secretary. She joined the organization when she returned to North Andover after living away for many years. "Having grown up here, it was important to me to come home to reconnect and make new friends," McHugh says. With deep roots in town (her great-grandfather was a local doctor, and her grandfather was the town's first pharmacist), McHugh feels strongly about giving back to the community. "It's rewarding to see the club grow and do nice things for the town," she says.

About the time I became acquainted with NAWC, I learned about Andover Women in Business. Aileen Snell created this Facebook group in 2014, and it has grown to more than 500 members.

"Deciding to start Andover Women in Business was triggered by listening to so many friends and fellow moms looking to reenter the

motivation and hope for the future. Getting to know each other was the first step. Exploring ways to help each other was second.

The last group I was introduced to was Women Inspiring Women in New Hampshire. This organization, which requires an \$85 annual membership fee, offers networking and educational programs. Its approach is non-aggressive. Its website states, "Our focus is on relationship building. ... We encourage people to get to know one another and then if it feels right, pass out a business card."

I like this philosophy, and with a new appreciation for networking will gladly don a name tag and see where the conversation takes me.



**North Andover Women's Club** — Find it on Facebook

**AndoverWomeninBusiness.com** — Find it on Facebook

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For more from Beth, visit her blog at [3OlivesandaTwist.com](http://3OlivesandaTwist.com)