

## Episode 19 Networking: Human Connection Dinners, with Karan Nijhawan

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**Rushab Kamdar:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Business 360 Podcast where we will take a 360 degree view of all things business in under 30 minutes. I'm Rushab Kamdar, a serial entrepreneur who's owned businesses, and I currently help businesses. On this podcast, we're going to be learning about the different types of businesses.

What's going on, Business Heroes? Welcome to episode 19. In this week, we're continuing our conversation with our guests from last week, Karan Nijhawan. If you remember last week, Karan spoke about Solopreneur Strategies. If you are a one-person business and you wanted to learn tips, tricks, strategies, and the pitfalls to avoid as you're going through your solopreneur journey, definitely check out episode 18.

This week, Karan is actually going to talk about something that his consulting practice does. It's very unique. It's called Human Connection Dinners. It's a form of networking, a unique strategy that can align you with prospects in a way that you never imagined. So if you're interested in learning how to do networking, where you sit down with prospects, with clients, break bread, don't talk business, and actually build a bond and relationship.

You're going to want to check out how Karan built a business where he's done over 184 Human Connection Dinners. Let's get to it.



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You started this company Jube a few years ago. And as I mentioned in the intro, you've hosted 184 Human Connection Dinners. So maybe you can let the listeners know what exactly are these dinners, how are you deepening these relationships for your customers and for them to do it with their customers?

**Karan Nijhawan:** [00:01:52] Yeah, man. Great question. So Jube is two words put together Just Be. Just Be, um, this was a name, I think my sister helped me create back when I'm like, I'm going to quit my nine to five. I don't know how to start a business. What should I name it? So Jube was really a by-product of, you know, think about the last networking event you went to, or the last couple of networking events you went to.

Oftentimes just hearing the word networking makes people want to cringe. They feel like they got to be on their, A game. They got to bring business cards, they got to wear their best suit from the closet. And it's just this vibe of like, I want to go to meet new and interesting people, but I also don't want to be pitched nor do I want to hang out with people who aren't anything like me. So I think the thing about networking that scares people is that it's a, it's a free for all approach where everyone can come in and go as they please. And I just, I just found that I wasn't really building relationships and I come from a pretty small city of like 110,000 people.

So like when you go to the events, you kind of know everyone. So I was just being, you know, pitch slapped at every networking event, had walkaway with a



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stack of business cards. And I would realize that none of these business cards, like I barely remember what the person looks like. I have no idea what the conversation was about, cause it was all about them trying to sell me on something.

And maybe I even probably fell into the trap back when I was in my corporate days of treating networking events as sales opportunities. So after going to so many of these events and not really building real relationships, I read a book called Mastermind Dinners, which was all about bringing people together over food.

And I thought that that was a pretty unique idea. Nobody was doing it in St. John's Newfoundland at the time. So I would reach out to strangers entrepreneurs, business owners, thinking to myself if I hang out with other business owners maybe one day I'll become one. Maybe one day I'll reap some of the benefits. Maybe I can reap some of their learnings, some of their headaches, some of the trials and tribulations that they've gone through. And the only rule of the, of the event was simple. As you can't bring your business card. So, you know, you get an invite from a stranger saying I'm inviting you to a networking dinner, but you can't really network the old way and you can't bring your business card.

It was kind of interesting, right? It piqued curiosity. And I found that these dinners were more about deep, meaningful relationships such as imposter syndrome,



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such as troubles with anxiety and depression and troubles with relationships at home, troubles about not making payroll. Conversations that entrepreneurs are all having, but didn't have a place to congregate and have those honest conversations.

So dinner by dinner, I started bringing people together. And what I thought was going to be business conversations very quickly it just gravitated towards life conversations. And then I found a way to monetize these dinners. And then I started doing these dinners for companies and for their prospects and for their leads.

And I started doing that for companies and their teammates and their employees, because ultimately I felt like networking was broken and that networking kind of like the iceberg, right, like when you meet someone, you kind of just meet the top of them. You miss out on the big piece, which is really on the bottom.

Um, and my dinners were kind of the opposite. Like you, you didn't really meet the top 11% of the iceberg. You met like the bottom, uh, 89%. So yeah. Dinners by dinners, these, these experiences just became catalyst moments in people's lives where years would go by and they would still not forget that dinner because they had a life-changing conversation or they got a piece of feedback on their business that completely changed the direction of where their business was headed.



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And I realized nobody else was really doing it with my flavor, with my vibe, with my intensity, with my passion and I think it's the, it's like that it's that one decision I made four years ago that it's continued to pay dividends for years.

**Rushab Kamdar:** [00:05:33] And when you do these dinners, you're essentially hosting them, right? You're moderating it, right, so that even the clients or the customers that you have, and then they bring their prospects to these dinners, you're still a moderator in those dinners?

**Karan Nijhawan:** [00:05:46] Absolutely. So, I mean, you think about any sort of group dynamic, especially when you're trying to, you know, wine and dine your clients, or you're trying to close business. The less you focus on the transaction, the less you focus on the actual sale, the more likely you are to make the sale. So all of these dinners have never been about selling a product or service. They've always been about selling yourself, building the relationship with you as a human to your client or to your prospect.

The by-product of really good human to human relationships is people want to do business with you, of course, they build that knowing, liking, and trust that we hear about all the times and the words of influence and psychology of sales, these dinners are just moments in time where you spend two to three hours, sometimes five hours at dinner with a group of strangers and you'll leave feeling like family because the depth of the conversation with a moderator, um, I don't ask questions like what are you doing this weekend or who's your favorite sports



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team or what are you watching on Netflix today? Like, those are very normal conversations that we ask where we don't know what else to talk about.

So I've got this Rolodex of really deep, meaningful invoking questions, both on paper and in my mind, because I've been doing this for four years where I know how to navigate a conversation in a group setting, kind of like an orchestra where I'm the conductor and little do the participants know that every question that I asked is bringing them to a deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper place, emotionally physiologically, mentally, spiritually. They're just going deeper and deeper to the point where, by the question number three or four for the group, you know, 90% of the time people are bawling, they're in tears. It's because they've, they've gotten to a place in a group environment where they're about to share some secrets or they're about to share some moments in their life that maybe had a profound impact on them.

Um, so yeah, these dinners have been referred to as therapy by a lot of people, that have been referred to as like masterminds by a lot of people and ultimately it's just this cathartic experience of like, wow, I've been holding onto this thought for 20 years and this dinner, which has nothing to do with the food, allowed me to become someone new.

**Rushab Kamdar:** [00:07:47] So let me, I ask you this then, but, you know, this is very interesting, but if you're bringing, um, a company and their potential customers together in a dinner, but you're not talking necessarily business, how



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do they essentially create that dynamic where the customer or the prospect is like, you know what I want to work with this company, especially when these dinners can get emotional and, and very deep.

**Karan Nijhawan:** [00:08:13] I mean, you think of a typical prospecting cycle, whether you're an entrepreneur, whether you're a solopreneur, whether you're a fortune 500 company. The typical prospecting cycle is, you know, you've gotta count reps, you reach out, you try to build the relationship over zoom, you sign a contract. And like that's kinda how the relationship goes. And then to take it a step further, yes, some people do like to wine and dine their clients, but it still feels very transactional. Now, when, when you bring a group together and you talk 0% about work and what you do and how good your services and you focus a hundred percent on the conversation around your client, around your prospect, and really make them feel like you're creating this experience that they've never been to before they walk away having not been pitched, having not learned maybe anything about your product or service. In fact, they walk away leaving learned about, about themselves. So I think it's like you have you as the client, you facilitate this experience that allows your client or your prospect to grow and talk about some of the stuff in life that probably has a more profound effect on you than, than quote, "business talk".

So when I do this in group settings, people ask me all the time, like, how does it work with strangers? How does it work when people don't know each other?



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How do you get people to open up? The thing I do before every single question or every single now breakout room on Zoom as we've been doing these dinners on Zoom is I lead the question, but I also share a personal story first.

And when I get vulnerable and intimate and honest in front of the entire group, what it does psychologically and subconsciously it creates this barrier of safety where people feel safe and open enough thinking, whoa, this guy just went super deep. Maybe I'll go super deep too. And then again, as the questions go on throughout the course of the night, the course of the night, that's hilarious. But yeah, the questions just get deeper and deeper and deeper, and it just creates this more and more of an emotional bond.

**Rushab Kamdar:** [00:10:07] We've, we've known each other now, you know, I don't know since December, I think, right? So it's been, you know, five, six months for any, you know, if anybody wants to timestamp this, this podcast interview, um, but since knowing you, I've seen that you have this unique way of looking at entrepreneurship, solopreneurship, whatever we want to call it, and you don't necessarily follow the standard rhetoric that's out there. Uh, in your own opinion, why do you feel you have such a different perspective on approaching, uh, your own business or approaching starting a business?

**Karan Nijhawan:** [00:10:40] Dude, my type A personality, my Virgo within me that wants to see every step-by-step, that wants to see the document, the roadmap, the blueprint of what my business looks like. It's literally the one thing in business



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that nobody can give me, right? So it's like the one thing about business and starting your own business is that there is no fundamental rule book or map or blueprint. It's literally you figuring it out. Sure, you can take pieces that inspire you and from other business models but you get to create whatever it is you want to create.

And I think I've seen too many people get sucked into this trap of building a business that they don't want because they think it's the only option for them, where they created to make their friends or their family happy, or they create it so that social media thinks that this person has got their stuff figured out or that they've got this perfect life.

So they'll rent the Lambo or the Ferrari or whatever and they, they, they create this persona. I know when I go to bed at night, the person who I speak to the most myself, like that person needs to be satisfied, right? Before my fiancée, before my parents, before my sister, before you, before anyone else externally needs to be satisfied, I need to be satisfied and I need to have a good night's sleep every single night, knowing that I did the right thing.

And I just feel like life is too short to follow a path that you'd know is not for you or that you feel like is not fulfilled for you whether that's saying no to certain clients, whether it's no to certain business opportunities. Like money can all, money can, can come and go. Coming from a guy where money was always scarce, let me be the first to say money is just a by-product of value and energy.



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It comes and goes at the snap of a button. You can create a hundred thousand dollars tomorrow if you really want to. It's not even about money anymore. So now I'm just feel, I feel super aligned well with myself and I feel that those that see that kind of energy radiate out of me and they are in my group environments where they get to reap some of that energy for themselves.

They know I'm just on a, I'm just on a different path, man. I'm just on a different mission and I really don't care what others think of me or how it might perceive me, or I just know that like I'm doing the right thing with a group of family members, aka, like my tribe who are with me every step of the way. So like, I don't need to be famous to everyone. I just need to be famous to the right people.

**Rushab Kamdar:** [00:13:02] Hey, Business Heroes. I want to thank our guest, Karan Nijhawan. We had sat down for an interview on Solopreneur Strategies, which was episode 18. And we started talking about Human Connection Dinners and the information he provided was so valuable that I ended up making a second episode out of it. So I hope you enjoyed it and I look forward to you joining us next week, where we're going to talk about conscious communication in the professional world and why it's so important, specially in 2021.

Thank you for joining us on the Business 360 Podcast. To learn more about our guest, go to [thinkbusiness360.com](https://www.thinkbusiness360.com). In life, I follow two things that keep me grounded. Number one, if you only listen to someone's successes and not their



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failures, you've only heard half the story and number two, compete with yourself and help everyone else. You stay classy, Business Heroes.



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