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## Co-working Community

We frequently hear the word “community” tossed about without giving much thought to what it truly means. Is it simply a collection of like-minded people? Is it a group with a shared past, present or future? What does it take to join, or become a member, and once a member, what responsibilities do the members have?

Dr. M. Scott Peck, in his book *The Different Drum – Community Making and Peace* defines a genuine community as “...something more than the sum of its parts, its individual members”. He also points out that there is no such thing as an “instant community”. True community develops over time as each member adds their own distinctive uniqueness to the mix. They, in turn, learn what they can add to the mix and what others bring.

Perhaps the most important aspect of community is support. The more supportive the community, the more successful it’s members. America has a culture of rugged individualism. It’s a nice “ideal”, but usually very far from reality. Nothing will help you succeed more than having a supportive community behind you.

I think you can see what this could have to do with co-working. Choosing the right space, the right “community” is going to make the experience much more successful. “That makes sense” you say. (You did say that, right?) So how do you decide?

As I noted in my last blog post, there are many different co-working spaces and models. Big, small, private, public, intimate, loud, quiet, cheap, expensive or in-between. So, let’s break it down – here are several questions to ask yourself to determine what sort of community is best for you.

- Do I need or want quiet, to avoid interruptions or do I work better in a boisterous high-energy environment?
- Do I want to be with others in the same field or business or do I want to be surrounded with people who may have totally different interests?
- How much do you want to pay and what amenities do you really need?
- Does it feel right for me?

There are many more questions, but these quick four will get you started; but let's look at the last question again. "Does it feel right for me?" This is probably the most important.

Luckily, there's an easy way to find the answer. Spend some time there. Most, if not all co-working spaces will gladly let you try it out at no charge. Use the space for a few days. While you're there, introduce yourself to the others – this isn't the time to be shy. Ask them what they like or don't like. You could be spending a great deal of time there, and the success of your business could depend on getting established and comfortable in the right community.

Bottom line? Don't be lured in by the flash, the surface stuff. Dig deeper. Will this be the co-working space; the community that will help you succeed?