



January 2020

NETWORKING ASTM WELLNESS

by Megan Burke Roudebush

with

Laura Sage, Erika Gruner,
and Kris Gruner



One year ago, keepwith® introduced our content vehicle Networking AsTM to the world. Networking AsTM is our (nearly) monthly publication linking networking (i.e., strategic relationship building) to important topics, such as wellness, entrepreneurship, power and yes, even meatballs. Our first issue last January focused on wellness, because wellness is top of mind for many of us in January. What we did not know then is that our January 2019 article would lead to subsequent Networking AsTM Wellness articles and in-real life events at boutique fitness and wellness studios in the Chicago area. We even did our first professionally shot Networking AsTM Wellness video documenting the Networking AsTM Wellness event we did at CHILL meditation studio in Chicago (<https://www.keepwith.com/video-chill/>).

In this one-year anniversary edition of Networking AsTM, and one-year anniversary edition of Networking AsTM Wellness, we feature Laura Sage, CEO at CHILL (<https://www.chillchicago.com>) who has built several businesses designed to get us all to meditate and relax, and Erika and Kris Gruner, who along with Chris Falcon, are Founders of WIN Athletic Club (<https://www.winathleticclub.com/home-1>), an exquisite fitness facility that was “founded on the belief that the experience of fitness is better shared,” (um. #networkingaswellness!). To say that keepwith® is excited about this issue of Networking AsTM Wellness is an understatement. As keepwith® grows, our Networking AsTM content vehicle will grow and our Networking AsTM Wellness brand will grow with us. Look for more Networking AsTM Wellness content, more Networking AsTM Wellness events and more opportunities to connect networking and wellness.

NETWORKING AS™ WELLNESS

Get enough sleep. Eat right. Exercise. Unplug. Be mindful. Be grateful. Find balance. Take vacations. Relax. These are the recurring instructions that appear in the articles through which we all scroll when spending too much time on our mobile devices. What is missing from this discussion is how important it is to focus on the company that we keep - our personal and professional networking relationships – and how critical it is for us to spend time and energy cultivating and maintaining the relationships that matter. Read on to learn about some exciting ways that several leaders in Chicagoland are connecting networking and wellness.



Laura Sage

CEO at CHILL



A graduate of Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, Laura conceptualized Chill when she couldn't find a modern meditation studio in Chicago. Laura was the sole marketer and investor relations professional at a relative value hedge fund for over a decade. She is also the founder of The Lynn Sage Foundation which funds innovative breast cancer researchers. Realizing that many finance and nonprofit professionals were intimidated by, or apprehensive to try, meditation she created Chill and is committed to making meditation approachable. A critical component of this mission is to utilize technology to share new experiences with guests and corporations.

How do you define networking?

LS: The opportunity to meet new people and build relationships.

How do you define wellness?

LS: I think of wellness as something that is good for you, whether good for your body, mind or soul.

In your view and experience, how are networking and wellness linked?

LS: You want to cultivate healthy relationships with healthy being synonymous with wellness. I don't view wellness and networking to be directly linked. But you don't view peanut butter and jelly as linked. Two things that go great together.

LS: [The connection between networking and wellness is exemplified by] how people network and connect at our programs---We host a lot of networking groups; let's use networking in a broad sense. We host a ton of women's groups or intracompany groups...and on a more micro level, we find that our members certainly become friends with the Chill team and other members. Coming to Chill is another opportunity for them to network with likeminded people who care about wellness.

Why do we all need to chill more?

LS: Because it is good for you.

How has networking helped your business?

LS: By nature, I am more of an introvert than an extrovert. I always have to get myself at least a little bit pumped up to interact with strangers and particularly to speak in public, but I have yet to be disappointed with the results. I like meeting new people. More often than not, I find people are curious and interested in what we are doing and are grateful for the opportunity to ask more questions. I have found networking, specifically in the context of being a small business owner, to be immensely constructive.

As we reimagine wellness to include deliberate networking activities, here are three things to consider:

1. Focus on the quality, not the quantity of the networking relationships you start and maintain.
2. Schedule regular time on your calendar for networking activities, just as you schedule workouts.
3. Spend your time and energy on positive, constructive and supportive relationships and step aside from relationships that do not fuel your overall well-being.

On September 13th, CHILL and keepwith® collaborated to create a Networking As™ Wellness event at the CHILL studio in Chicago. For a video by Ten12 Productions featuring this inspirational experience, go to: <https://www.keepwith.com/video-chill>.

keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

[keepwith.com](https://www.keepwith.com) | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com

If readers could do one small thing to incorporate meditation into their lives, what would you suggest?

LS: A small morning routine that I have that I find helpful incorporates three elements:

1. Journaling every morning about what I am grateful for.
2. Journaling about what I would like to see happen: visualizing.
3. Meditating for 5 or 10 minutes every morning.

It is a short routine- 15 minutes; I do this pretty religiously.

The benefits I experience as a result of this routine: the gratitude element that gives me a perspective. I live a charmed life. It is easy to forget that when you get mired in details. The visualization keeps me focused and helps remind me what my priorities are. The meditation gives me an opportunity to clear my brain; exercise my brain; level set to get the day started.



What prompted you to start Chill?

LS: I was possessed. It was a little idea that kept building momentum and a bunch of serendipitous events happened that made it become a reality. Soon after we opened the doors, I said I was possessed. There wasn't something that smacked me in the face. It was a small idea that I kept researching and as I did that, I kept gaining momentum and different events happened that helped bring it to fruition.

What are the benefits to meditating in a group setting (i.e. meditating with members of your network)?

LS: Collective energy cannot be marginalized. I am someone who thinks it is amazing to just meditate. Either as an app, or self-guided, or at retreat, or at Chill. I am an advocate of any type of meditation. When you do it as part of a group, the energy is palpable. Also, it is really nice to be guided. It takes a bit of a responsibility off of yourself. It is usually more interesting. You don't know what will happen next. You also have the opportunity to ask an expert.

Is there anything else that you would like readers to know about you, Chill, meditation, networking or wellness?

LS: Chill was designed to live less stressed and more mindful lives. Everything we do, whether inside of our four walls or outside, has that mission in mind. Whether it be taking a class, or going on a retreat, or attending one of our educational programs, or even buying our products, we want to have people live less stressed and more mindful lives.

LS: We have learned that there are a lot of different ways to live less stressed and more mindful lives. That is why our business has developed the way it has. Pick your flavor. Take a class with a friend; take a class with a lot of friends; massage; retreat; educational programs (delve into practice) or introducing Chill to your office. We are trying to make it approachable and to offer a lot of different ways to participate.

For more information about Chill, go to: <https://www.chillchicago.com>.



keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

keepwith.com | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com

NETWORKING AS™ WELLNESS

Magic happens when people work together on something based on a common goal or interest. Such magic is especially evident when that common goal or interest is wellness related. Group fitness is an often overlooked networking opportunity. Some people believe that you must attend a formal networking event and be dressed up, holding a cocktail to be networking. This is not true. Look to the yoga mat or spin bike next to you the next time you exercise and introduce yourself to someone working out nearby. You never know where that conversation will lead. Erika and Kris Gruner, two of three Co-Founders of WIN Athletic Club, truly “get” Networking As™ Wellness. Read on to learn about the community they are creating.



Erika Gruner

Co-Owner/Administrator
WIN Athletic Club



Kris Gruner

Cofounder
WIN Athletic Club

Meet Erika and Kris Gruner, Founders of the WIN Athletic Club in Glenview, IL.
Along with partner, Chris Falcon.

Erika Gruner was a Division 3 collegiate athlete as a swimmer at Depauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. At Depauw, she met her husband and co-founder of WIN Athletic Club, Kris Gruner, in a class called “Teaching and Coaching Individual Sports.” While coaching for the Evanston McGaw YMCA swim team, Erika competed in several triathlons in the Chicago-area. Aside from athletic pursuits, Erika worked as an account-executive for Fedex and then became a stay at home mom for her 3 children while running her own small computer consulting business. Now an empty nester, she is excited about her “encore” career of helping Kris start a new business #WINlife.

Kris Gruner spent the first 25 years of his career in the commodities trading business. In that time, he built and managed his firm's risk in option trading and market making across the entire U.S. Treasury yield curve with full P/L responsibility. A critical part of his business was to train and manage young traders to help grow revenue and maintain a foothold in an extremely competitive industry. At the end of 2017, he decided to retire from the option trading business. Having been a collegiate athlete and high school football coach for many years, he decided to join with a business partner, Chris Falcon, and create an entirely new business built around fitness and performance. Now open in Glenview, IL is WIN Athletic Club. WIN is a boutique style group fitness facility. It features boxing, strength, spinning, active recovery stretching and yoga. Sports performance is also offered to train youth and collegiate athletes for maximum results. His other business endeavor has been as an investor in small private equity deals and real estate development as a way to expand his experience and business interests.

How do you define networking?

EG: Simply networking to me is taking a unique thing about a person that you know and connecting them with somebody else that has a similar interest.

KG: I think of networking like most people do: cultivating relationships. I have always felt in life and career it is not necessarily the relationships you make that help you in the moment. Always sit down with people - it is karma and will always come back. You never know when they can help you. Cultivate relationships even if they don't help you in the moment.

EG: We have two daughters, seniors in college. One has a job and one is looking. Don't be afraid to ask someone that you are interested in what they do or where they work.



keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

keepwith.com | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com

NETWORKING AS™ WELLNESS

How do you define wellness?

EG: Wellness to me is living a balanced life. Self-care is critical. Nutrition is a very big part of it - what you eat. For me, I know one of my main things I constantly have to work on is feeling well in my mental health and my physical health sometimes comes second...it is a balance. Wellness is a balance.

KG: Balance in life. For me, I own a gym. I have always been fit. I played collegiate football. I always worked out, but I'm not afraid to have a hamburger and fries every once in a while. Deprivation is not a part of wellness if it creates anxiety or even fear. Ultimately, self-control wins the day. Have a cocktail but drink a lot of water. Workout but take a rest day. Having friendships and being social - I moved around a lot but have kept up relationships. I still go skiing with a buddy from Kindergarten. Wellness is not just a balance of eating and working out...but really having people in your life that matter to you, that care about you, and for whom you do the same.

When you hear the term Networking As™ Wellness, what does that evoke for you?

KG: Two things - it is the personal and the business side: Networking As™ Wellness. The guide in my life is the personal side - I take pride in always being there for my friends and the friendships that ground me. I take my personal philosophy into my business: be as real as possible. If people can understand that you are honest and you have integrity, they tend to gravitate to you. At WIN, we do not want to have a big sales pitch, we want you to feel comfortable. The worst thing in the world is when people pressure you and I take the idea of feeling comfortable and being real into my business life.

EG: For me, I am going to be honest: I do not like to go sit and have a meeting, coffee, or ladies who lunch to network - that is not me. I like to walk and talk; invite someone to my plyo spin class tonight at 4pm and catch up afterwards. It is all about doing what I love and networking while I am doing it.

KG: Collaborations are what matters too - for the wellness of your business. We have a collaboration with Eat Purely in Winnetka, it's food prep for gyms and fitness facilities. It doesn't cost us anything, but it's a great relationship. It's those back and forths... help without cost... that strengthen our relationships and our business.



What would you like readers to know about the WIN story?

KG: I think most of all, outside of the obvious part is that we are a group fitness facility. The interesting part is the way we want to cultivate experiences for people that matter. We were founded on the idea that the experience of fitness is better shared. You can have a bike in your basement but what about the energy of human connection? Of going to a place and feeling the person next to you go faster? What's important now - I am here, so I better get my best workout. We want to cultivate experiences for people that lift you up - we have our Sweat and Socials, to gather as a group and release those important endorphins. Those experiences matter.

How does networking play a role at WIN?

EG: Networking is everything for us - we are a start-up business this is brand new and trying to build. I was an account executive for Fed-Ex for several years and went through their sales training. The one thing I remember is "if fishing is easy, they'd call it catching" - getting seats filled is not easy but we can do it organically through networking.

KG: Every single instructor or trainer hired here is someone who has been recommended - over ten people from trusted sources. We tried Indeed and Facebook posts - both resulted in dead ends or horrible leads. We found our people through word of mouth and networking.

keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

keepwith.com | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com

NETWORKING AS™ WELLNESS

What else would you like readers to know about you, WIN, wellness, networking or anything else?

EG: I just like to tell Kris and my story. WIN has come full circle for us. We both were collegiate athletes - I was a swimmer and he was a football player. We met Senior Year at DePaw in a class called "Teaching and Coaching Sports." Since then, we have been married 26 years, he has been a coach, I was a coach and continued competing in triathlons, so WIN is our encore career. For so many years of our marriage, Kris would come home and I would say how was your day and he would say, "It was long this, short that," I had no idea what he was talking about. WIN is basically our passion - it's fun. All of our three kids are in college, so we're empty nesters. If I didn't have this going on, my wellness would not be where it is right now.

KG: I have been a junior football coach in Evanston for 10 years, and a high school football coach for the last 3 years. At WIN we started a performance training for athletes so, I bring over our linemen on the weekend and do specialized training with them.

We are about to launch a kids' boxing program where kids can come in and learn how to box - not because they are going to beat up a kid, but to build strength and empowerment - think Chris Falcon and Pink Power Project, a program designed specifically for middle school girls. Kids come in once or twice a month, do some boxing. We have seminars on nutrition, building self-esteem, seeing how your energy really flows. We feel strongly that we can help kids have a life well lived through nutrition, self-esteem, and physical fitness.

We also hired a guy who does high intensity training and boxing to help Parkinson's patients - boxing class really helps these patients through focus and the physical combinations.



So much of networking involves building and supporting ones own community and the communities of others. At WIN, Erika and Kris are building a community in which wellness and networking are integrally linked.

Download the WIN Athletics App and use promo code "keepwith" to receive a free class.

keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

keepwith.com | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com

NETWORKING AS™ WELLNESS

Just as any successful exercise regimen or healthy eating lifestyle requires daily dedication and repeated habits, the true power of experiencing how your network supports your wellness comes from continually working on it. We all must dedicate the time necessary for establishing, maintaining and improving our network relationships. Ultimately, your network is the group of people whose company you have chosen to keep...the hand selected board of personal advisors who have your back and whose back you have in return. Given the critical role that our networks play in our lives, keeping up with the people whose relationships matter most to you, in a truly authentic and reciprocal way, positively contributes to our overall health and wellness.



About Networking As™

Networking As™ is a recurring series of articles, blog posts and videos highlighting how networking is integral to a particular topic (for example, Networking As™ Wellness). Networking As™ publications may be accompanied by real-life networking events. Future issues will include Networking As™ Mentorship, Networking As™ Business Development, Networking As™ Parenting, Networking As™ Diversity and Inclusion, Networking As™ Impact, and Networking As™ Career Development, among others.

Have an idea for a future Networking As™ publication? E-mail megan@keepwith.com

Why Wellness

At keepwith®, we see the interplay between networking and wellness arise in two contexts: (i) when we spend time on our relationships, we experience positive health benefits; and (ii) results from dedication to regular and meaningful exercise and healthy eating habits mirror results from dedication to regular and meaningful networking activities.

Many people renew their focus on wellness at this time of year, which is why we originally chose wellness for our inaugural issue in January 2019. keepwith® is thrilled to celebrate our one year anniversary of our Networking As™ content vehicle and the one year anniversary of Networking As™ Wellness, which is an area of our business that continues to expand.

About keepwith®

We are a company that teaches people how to network well. We provide tailored advice and education that empowers people to form relationships that matter. Said more simply: we teach networking.

Founder Megan Burke Roudebush values authentic relationship building above all else. From New York City and now based outside Chicago, she enjoys volunteering, mentoring and most of all, networking well.



Megan Burke
Roudebush

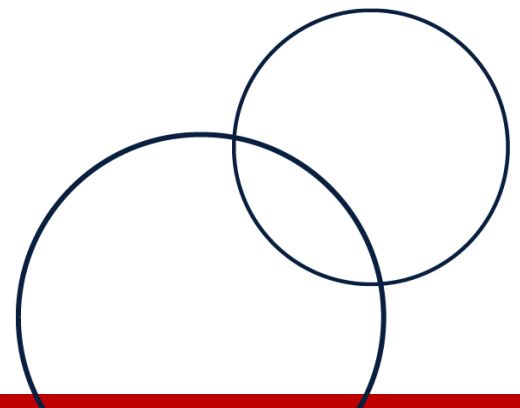
Please Follow us

- On Facebook (keepwith®'s company page): @keepwithnetworking
- On LinkedIn (keepwith®'s company page)
- On Instagram @keepwithnetworking
- On Twitter @keepwithnetworking

Hire us

Know a company, organization, or conference that would benefit from networking education and advice?

Please contact Megan Roudebush (megan@keepwith.com) to schedule a brainstorming call to figure out how we can help.



keepwith®

WE TEACH NETWORKING

keepwith.com | 646-298-2158 | megan@keepwith.com