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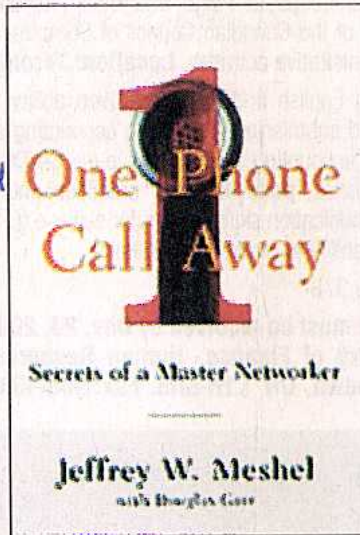
BOOK REPORT

Networking taken to ^{9360Q4} a new level

The book *One Phone Call Away: Secrets of a Master Networker* (Portfolio, 204 pp., \$32)
The author Jeffrey W. Meshel with Douglas Garr

“Ask not what your country can do for you, etc.” John F. Kennedy’s immortal phrase just about sums up the germ of this book, written by the co-founder of a New York financial firm. In fact, one chapter is titled, “Ask not ‘what’s in it for me.’”

Meshel’s suggestion isn’t entirely lacking in self-interest. However, in a reflection of the materialistic returns to giving promised by TV evangelists, Meshel says if you are sincerely interested in the needs of the other person, you’ll be repaid — in



spades. Don’t look for an immediate quid pro quo, he says. And don’t be in a hurry. It may take years for the return on your investment of concern, but it will be worth the wait.

And if you make this kind of investment with thousands of people — see the idea? It’s a “you owe me one” philosophy, but life experience teaches that what Meshel preaches here works.

Some of the book reads a little

like snippets from Dale Carnegie: remember people’s names; look people in the eye; if you’re shy, work to overcome it, always have your business cards with you, and so on.

But the second half of the book gets to the heart of the matter, which is the formation of membership in and the maintenance of formal networking groups (a blend of the Knights Templar, the Masons, Rotary, professional and business organizations and the golf club).

This is taking networking to another level, in which the network needs to be carefully managed and the membership judiciously selected. Meshel, who has been involved with many such networks, offers the ins and outs of how to do the same, with lots of anecdotes to demonstrate successes and obstacles his groups have encountered.

The result of these alliances, deliberately composed of people with diverse involvements and connections, is what Meshel’s title suggests: whatever you need is *One Phone Call Away*. *John Simpson, Financial Post*