networking for introverts (cont.)
career coach (and an introvert), has had luck with this plan. She recalls attending events with an extremely extroverted CEO who aimed to collect as many business cards as possible. “I would set a much smaller, focused goal,” she says, “I’d try to meet, say, four people who work in business development, which was my field at the time. And in the end the CEO and I would realize the same results.”

Script your intro. Samuel C. Pease, a managing director at New Directions, an executive career-coaching firm in Boston, helps clients draft a three-sentence elevator pitch that nails down their unique talents, their professional background, the kinds of jobs they’re seeking, and the “ask”—a.k.a. the next thing they need. Not sure how to craft your own pitch? Get the basics down first, including what might bring you closer to your larger goal (inside info on new ventures in your field, say, or a personal introduction to a power player). Then put this into language that feels natural, not forced, coming out of your mouth. Practice in the mirror. Also, be prepared with a few specific questions. Once you get someone else talking, you can relax and listen.

Duck out now and then. If you’re at a big event, like a conference, resist the pressure to attend too many panels and parties, says Cain. Taking much-needed breaks help introverts recharge. Return to your hotel room, go for a walk, or find a quiet spot in the lobby where you can decompress. As you probably know, introverts draw energy from being alone, while extroverts draw it from being around others. Stepping away for a few minutes will help you come back stronger.

AVA DUVERNAY

The force behind the upcoming civil-rights drama Selma is also the first African-American woman to have won best director at the Sundance Film Festival. Ava DuVernay took some time to speak with Real Simple about creativity, changing careers, and maintaining grace under pressure.

WRITTEN BY Jane Porter

Did you know growing up that you wanted to be a filmmaker?
No, I had no idea. I wasn’t like Steven Spielberg, knowing as a kid I wanted to make films. I didn’t become a filmmaker until my mid-30s. [She is now 42.]

Tell us about that.
I transitioned from a career that was going quite well. For 12 years, I’d been publicizing other people’s films through my own marketing company.

How did you make the leap? Secretly. I started writing a script at night and on weekends, and eventually I shot my own short on a Christmas vacation. It was imperfect and crazy and nerve-racking and not good, but I did it and then just kept going.

What came next? From there, I shot a documentary in my spare time while representing clients. Then I took 15 days off right before one of my big campaigns to shoot my first narrative feature, a film called I Will Follow.

Do you wish you had come to this second career sooner? At one point, I did think all those years in PR were a waste, because I got started very late. But I came to see my time as a publicist as formative. I took every single thing I learned from that—not as far as the publicity tactics, but as far as running your life—and brought it to the set with me. Running a film is like running a business. It’s like a small company: You have a hundred or so employees. There’s a task at hand, and there’s a budget to meet. There’s a goal, and it has to get done.

How has your childhood influenced your films? I grew up in a matriarchal environment, raised by a lot of women. My mother, grandmother, and aunts are huge figures in my life; most of my work so far has been focused on black women. My family emphasized following your heart. When I started making films, they really cheered me on. That’s helped me move forward.

What’s your leadership style like? Having been part of the crew in the past, as a publicist, I’ve seen the tendency to diminish crew by not calling them by name or not taking a few extra minutes to...
**PRODUCTIVITY PRIMER**

**FIX THOSE LAME FILE NAMES**

If there’s a file on your computer called something like “presentation 3dembythisone finalfinalfriday.ppt,” you probably know about the agony of losing precious time searching frantically (and perhaps fruitlessly) for critical items. “Names without organizational structures are useless,” says productivity expert Laura Leist, the author of Eliminate the Chaos at Work. “Pick a strategy that suits your needs, whether it’s by date or by content, and apply this across all relevant files.” Which docs warrant which treatment? For files created repeatedly for the same purpose—say, a weekly-meeting agenda—lead with the date (11.22.14. wklyagenda). For all others, begin with the content. “And when applicable, add V, for version, followed by a number, to distinguish drafts,” says Leist. So the document above might be named dembypresentationV3.ppt. “The time that you spend renaming will be nothing compared with the time that you’ll save when you’re no longer hunting down randomly named files.” —Kaitlyn Pirie

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**THE GUIDE**

**WORK & MONEY**

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