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Women in Energy
The ICER International Network

Networks for Growth: Circles of Influence, Mentoring Relationships

April 23, 2025

This event is made possible by the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER) Women in Energy initiative and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). The contents are the responsibility of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICER or NARUC.



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Our Panelists



Ms. Alison Archer



Ms. Michelle Fenton



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Alison Archer

Alison Archer serves as the Director of Regulatory Compliance at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), a position she has held since June 2022. In this role, Alison leads a team responsible for ensuring compliance with NERC (O&P and CIP), FERC Tariff, and NAESB Business Practice Standards. Her department plays a key role in assessing compliance issues, implementing new or revised regulatory obligations, contributing to comment development for regulatory updates, and providing audit preparation support.

Before her current role, Alison was MISO's Regional Director of State Regulatory Affairs for MISO North, where she collaborated with state regulatory bodies on cross-jurisdictional policy issues. She focused on advancing the integration of distributed energy resources into the bulk electric market, fostering policy alignment across multiple jurisdictions.

Alison's career also includes a tenure as Assistant General Counsel at Xcel Energy, where she managed complex regulatory litigation cases. Her extensive legal background includes private practice and a position at the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, where she gained experience across all facets of litigation, from administrative proceedings to appellate work.

Alison holds a Bachelor of Business Administration (Finance) from the University of Iowa and a Juris Doctorate from William Mitchell College of Law. Outside of her professional endeavors, she enjoys traveling, reading, and spending quality time with family and friends.





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Michelle Fenton

Michelle Fenton is a visionary leader in Organizational Development at El Paso Electric's (EPE) with a focus in developing leaders for tomorrow. With over twenty-five years of expertise, she has transformed various aspects of Human Resources, including leadership development, recruitment, performance management, and workforce planning. Michelle collaborates with business leaders to create innovative human capital solutions that address both immediate and future needs. As an executive and career coach, she empowers individuals to unlock their potential.

Throughout her career, Michelle has demonstrated versatility by working in diverse industries such as electrical utilities, banking, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and technology. She is dedicated to guiding organizations towards growth and achieving results through practical solutions tailored to their unique environments. Michelle's commitment to meeting strategic business imperatives and future demands is evident in her efforts to develop organizational functions and individual leaders, cultivating talent for a sustainable and thriving workforce.

Michelle's extensive professional development includes certifications from leading institutions like the Disney Institute and Cornell University. She is an enthusiastic supporter of her community, serving on the board of directors for the Children's Grief Center of El Paso and Workforce Borderplex Solutions. Michelle's dedication to professional development and community service highlights her commitment to making a positive impact both within and outside her organization.





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Supporting Gender Equity in the Energy Sector

The energy sector is widely regarded as one of the least gender-diverse industries.

Women in the
global workforce



47%

Women in the
energy sector



22-25%

Senior leadership roles held by
women at energy-related firms



14%

“The gender gap in employment: What’s holding women back?” International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women#global-gap>

“Increasing women’s participation in the energy sector – addressing the challenges.” EEGResearch. October 2020. <https://www.energyeconomicgrowth.org/blog/increasing-womens-participation-energy-sector-addressing-challenges>

“Women in senior management roles at energy firms remains stubbornly low, but efforts to improve gender diversity are moving apace.” IEA. <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/women-in-senior-management-roles-at-energy-firms-remains-stubbornly-low-but-efforts-to-improve-gender-diversity-are-moving-apace>



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Why Women Matter in the Energy Sector

Gender-diverse workforces are a good business practice

Gender equity improves economic prosperity for all citizens

Integrating women into the energy sector provides agency to women affected by energy decisions

Gender-sensitive energy policies can improve policy outcomes for women

Improving gender equity helps to advance U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and U.S. government initiatives on gender equity and equality



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Available Resource

NARUC has adapted materials into a resource guide, which will help inform mentors and mentees of good practices, provide guidance for different types of mentoring, and facilitate knowledge-sharing within an organization.

<https://pubs.naruc.org/pub/B9B30BB9-BD9E-0F15-83CF-89978DFAB4BB>



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ADVANCING WOMEN LEADERS IN ENERGY (AWLE) GUIDE TO MENTORING



November 2022

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).



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ICER's Women In Energy Program

- **Join ICER's WIE!** All women and men who are employees of National Regulatory Authorities or Regional Regulatory Associations are eligible. Connect with WIE on **LinkedIn**: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5117692/>
- **Peer Coaching**
 - Launched in 2022 and ongoing.
- **Thematic Circles of Excellence**
 - Periodic engagements that allow members of the peer coaching program to connect with other members across continents. Past topics focused on the value of networking and the circle of confidence and workforce re-entry after parental leave.
- **Gender data surveys (annual)**
- **Webinars**



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Developing and Nurturing Networks & Mentoring Relationships

Alison Archer
Director, Regulatory Compliance
MISO Energy

April 23, 2025



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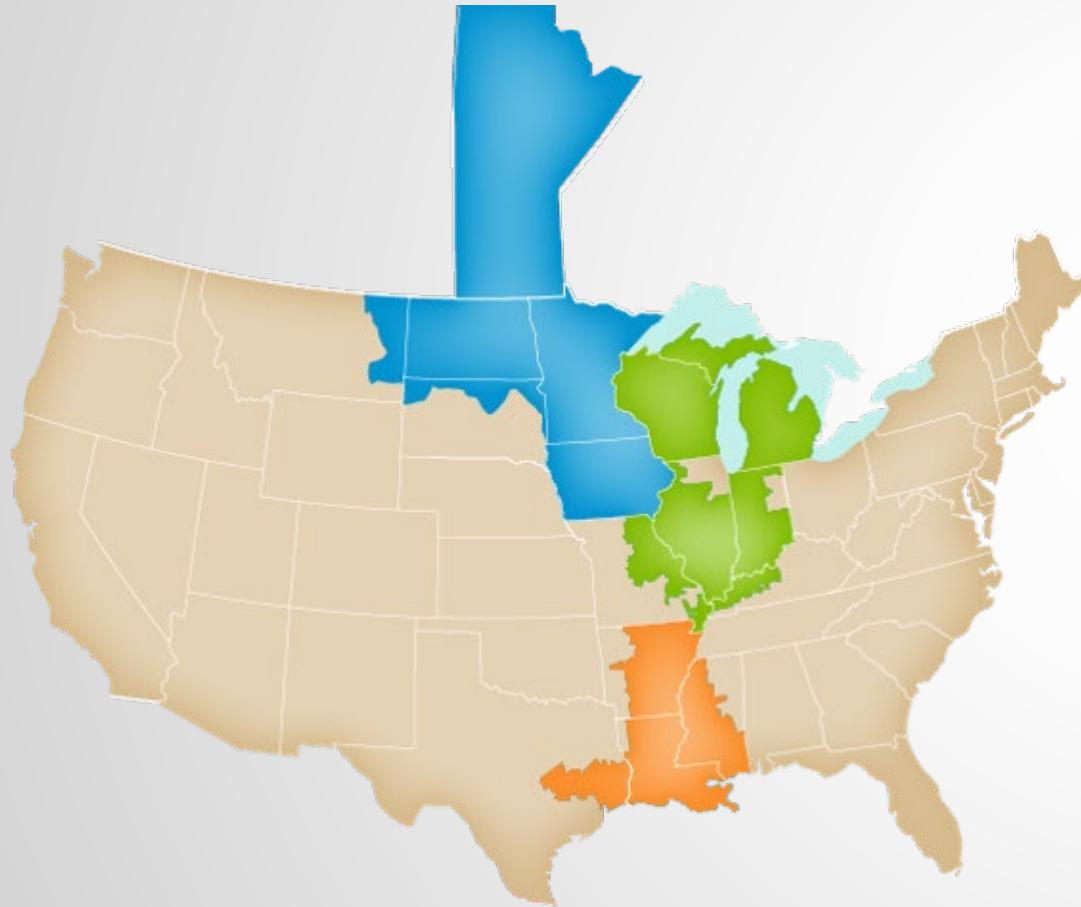


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MISO OVERVIEW



MISO is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization responsible for keeping the power flowing across the region reliably and cost-effectively.

VISION

To be the most *reliable, value-creating* Regional Transmission Organization

MISSION

Work collaboratively and transparently with our stakeholders to enable reliable delivery of low-cost energy through efficient, innovative operations and planning



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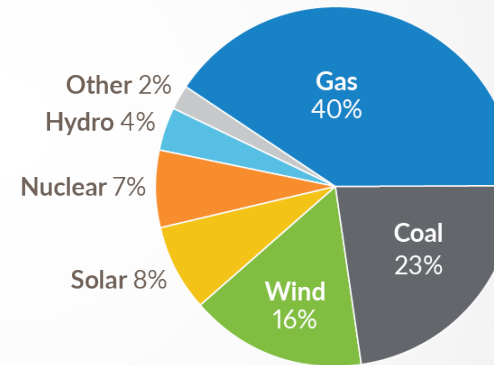


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MISO KEY FACTS

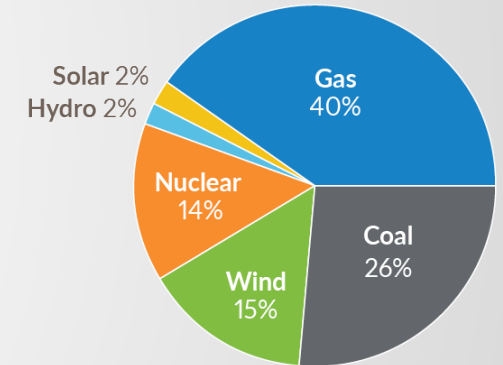
Area Served	15 U.S. States and Manitoba, Canada
Population Served	45 Million
Transmission Line	77,000 Miles
Generating Units	1460
Record Demand	127.1 GW 7/20/2011
Members	60 Transmission Owners
	144 Non-transmission Owners
Market Participants	> 500
Market Transactions	> \$40 billion
Carbon Reduction	Approximately 32% since 2014

INSTALLED CAPACITY
December 2024



202 GW

ENERGY PRODUCTION
January-December 2024



638 Million MWh

*Other: Diesel, Biomass, Storage, Demand Response Resources



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MENTORSHIP: HOW DO YOU DEFINE IT?

Put a word or
phrase in the chat





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MENTORSHIP: HOW DO YOU DEFINE IT?

Nurturing process that enhances our mental and emotional well-being by sharing professional wisdom and encouragement

- Definitions:
 - someone who provides guidance, support, and advice to a less experienced individual (a mentee), sharing their knowledge and experience to foster growth and development.
 - Trusted adviser
 - Role model
 - Leader
 - Good communicator/active listener/patient
 - Genuine
 - Have mentees best interest at heart
 - Lead the answers instead of providing them directly
 - **Two-way street- mentor learns from mentee**
 - Gives candid feedback, asks great questions
- Mentorship being- the guidance provided by a mentor, especially an experienced person in a company or educational institution.





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TYPES OF MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

POLLING QUESTION

What types of mentoring have you participated in? Check all that apply.

- Formal
- Informal
- One-on-One
- Group
- Peer





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INFORMAL POLL

Throughout your career have you had a mentor?

If so, how did you get connected with that mentor (example- formal mentoring program, boss, colleague/former colleague, neighbor)?

What topics do you speak with your mentor about?
(example- career advancement, business/tactical questions financial, etc.)

Why is it important to have a mentor?

Have your mentors been women or men?

Have you been a mentor?

If so, why? What did you gain from that relationship?

Any other thoughts on mentoring?





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THEMES FROM RESPONSES

1. Informal versus Formal Mentorship

Most mentorships form naturally through colleagues or leaders, not structured programs.

2. Knowledge Transfer and Perspective

Mentors help navigate unseen challenges, sharing wisdom from experience and offering new perspectives.

3. Personal Growth and Confidence

Mentorship boosts self-awareness, confidence, and communication — especially helpful for introverts.

4. Mutual Fulfillment

Mentors also benefit — gaining purpose, new viewpoints, and emotional reward.

5. Broad Topic Range

Topics span from tactical advice and career strategy to personal matters like parenting and resilience.



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THEMES FROM RESPONSES

6. Trust and Relationship Building

Strong mentorships rely on honesty, shared values, and often evolve into lasting friendships.

7. Gender and Representation

Women often seek female mentors for relatable insight; mentorship helps bridge representation gaps.

8. Advocacy and Access

Mentors act as advocates, opening doors to networks, opportunities, and career growth.

9. Critical at All Stages

Mentorship is especially valuable early in a career, during transitions, or when facing tough decisions.

10. Leadership Pipeline

Mentorship grows leadership skills in both mentors and mentees — creating a culture of learning.



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WHAT IS DISCUSSED WITH A MENTOR?

- Conversations spanned:
 - **Career advancement**
 - **Tactical business decisions**
 - **Workplace navigation**
 - **Personal matters**
like parenting
 - **Emotional support**
during life challenges





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“I have had mentoring moments, but never a permanent mentor and to be honest, I wish I had one both from my field and in a leadership role that would push me in my growth!”

“I believe that people can be blinded by their own insecurities that they may not fully realize or achieve their full potential. Mentors have a different vantage point that can identify what the individual may not be aware of, and a good mentor will likely know how to uncover and extract their abilities.”

“ I think for most people it would be really hard progress in specific fields or in business without mentors. There are many individual nuances to each field, and help navigating that for someone that didn't have experience is crucial. I think without mentors I would have had a much harder time in my career and potentially even held myself back.”

“The benefits [of mentoring] include guidance, support, networking, skill enhancement and it ultimately fosters career growth.”

“I did not fully understand or appreciate what an effective mentoring relationship could be earlier in my career.”

“In my experience, having a mentor has increased my skill development, job satisfaction and significantly expanded my network. In some ways, having a mentor has increased my confidence in my abilities.”

“As a mentor, I usually learned as much as the person I was mentoring, and I gained some lifelong friends.”



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HOW MANY MENTORS SHOULD I HAVE?

Strike a balance!

Limiting the number of mentors you actively engage with can be immensely valuable

Over time, it's beneficial to add the following recommended mentors to your network:

1. Company insider
2. Skill master
3. The money-minded mentor
4. The industry mentor
5. Network mentor
6. The influential ally
7. The peer mentor





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HOW TO FIND A MENTOR?





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MISO'S WOMEN'S RESOURCE GROUP (WRG)

Our Mission:

The Women's Resource Group is a community that exists to grow, connect, and support the women of MISO by:

- Expanding our knowledge, skills and abilities
- Building trusted relationships
- Serving and encouraging one another



**Women's
Resource
Group**



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WRG POWER HOUR: WHAT IS IT?

- Opportunity to organically create connections with other women at your local office
- Learn practical knowledge about how to be more effective at MISO
- Share tips, tricks, and best practices for people in the energy industry, especially women
- Fun, topical conversations each month





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“The most impactful mentors are often the ones who, like you, did not plan their career based on fame but received a level of visibility because of their authenticity, approachability, and dedication to their work that lights a fire in their souls.”

Thank you



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Building & Analyzing Your Network and Engaging Circles of Influence

Michelle Fenton
Director, Organizational Development
El Paso Electric

April 23, 2025



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Welcome!

Tell me a little bit about you in the chat.

Where are you from? Where do you live now?

Do you like to network?

Who is your favorite strong female character from a movie?



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Networking... Why?



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Networking... Why?



Career Advancement

Knowledge Sharing

Support System

Collaboration Opportunities

Mentorship

Visibility and Reputation

Resource Access

Personal

“

Networking is not about just connecting people. It's about connecting people with people, people with ideas, and people with opportunities.

— Michele Jennae

MR



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The power of Women's networks in history

- **Women's Suffrage Movement**
- **Civil Rights Movement**
- **World War II Efforts**
- **Global Women's Rights**
- **Environmental & Climate Change Activism**
- **Healthcare and Nursing**
- **Education and Literacy**
- **#MeToo Movement**
- **Women's March**
- **Equal Pay Advocacy**



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Polling Question



How many of you had lunch at your desk x times over the past week?

1-2 Times

3-4 Times

5 Times



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Where do you grow your network?



Let's connect. Let's network. Put your answers in the chat.



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Where do you grow your network?



- **Education based**
- **Association based**
- **Community involvement**
- **Workplace**
- **Mentorship**
- **Industry**
- **Faith based**
- **Social media**
- **Other**



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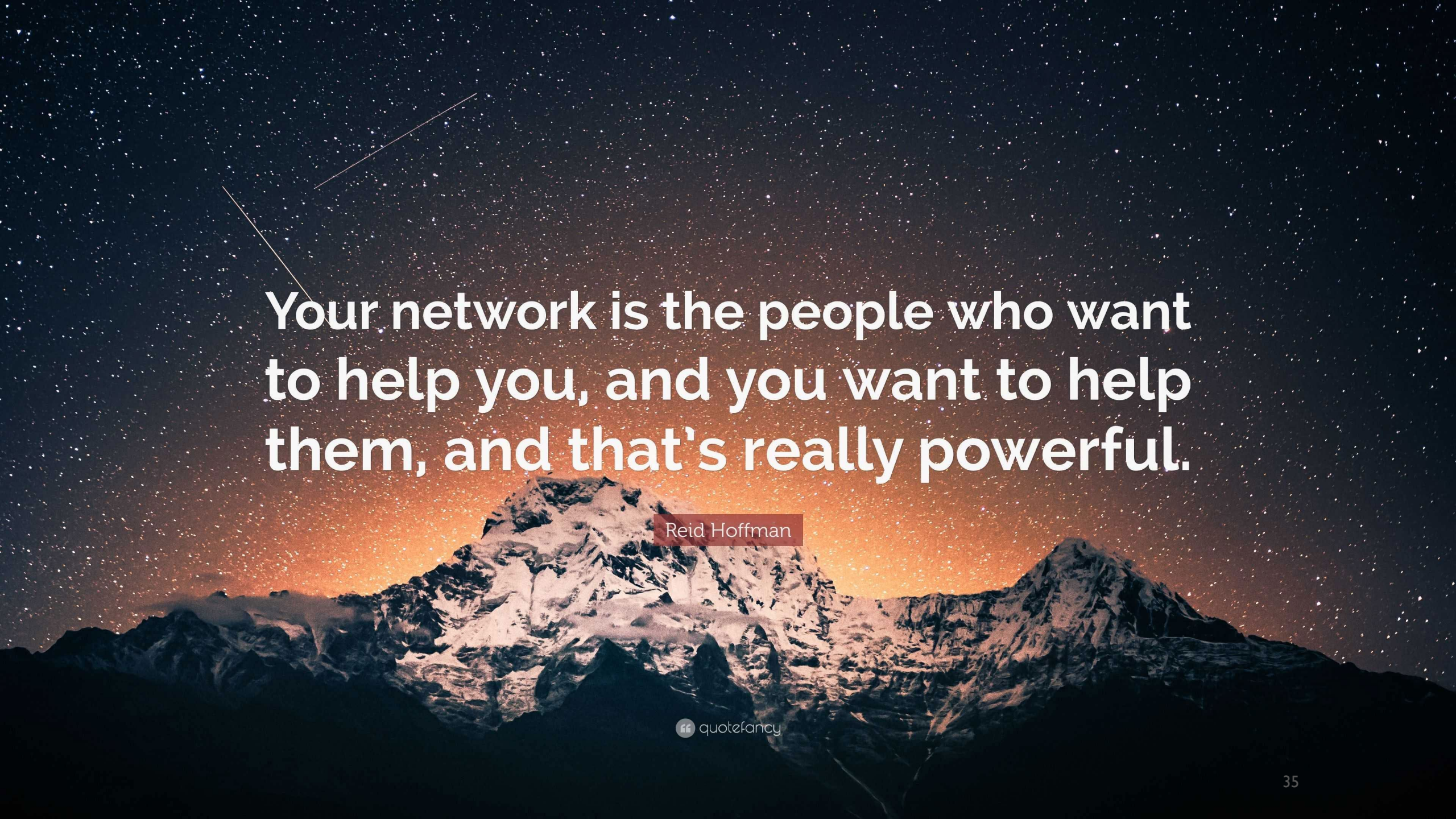
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Polling Question



Where are you plugged-in to a network? Select all that apply.

- **Education based**
- **Association based**
- **Community involvement**
- **Workplace**
- **Mentorship**
- **Industry**
- **Faith based**
- **Social media**
- **Other**



Your network is the people who want to help you, and you want to help them, and that's really powerful.

Reid Hoffman



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Polling Question



How many of you are active members of an employee resource group?

Yes

No



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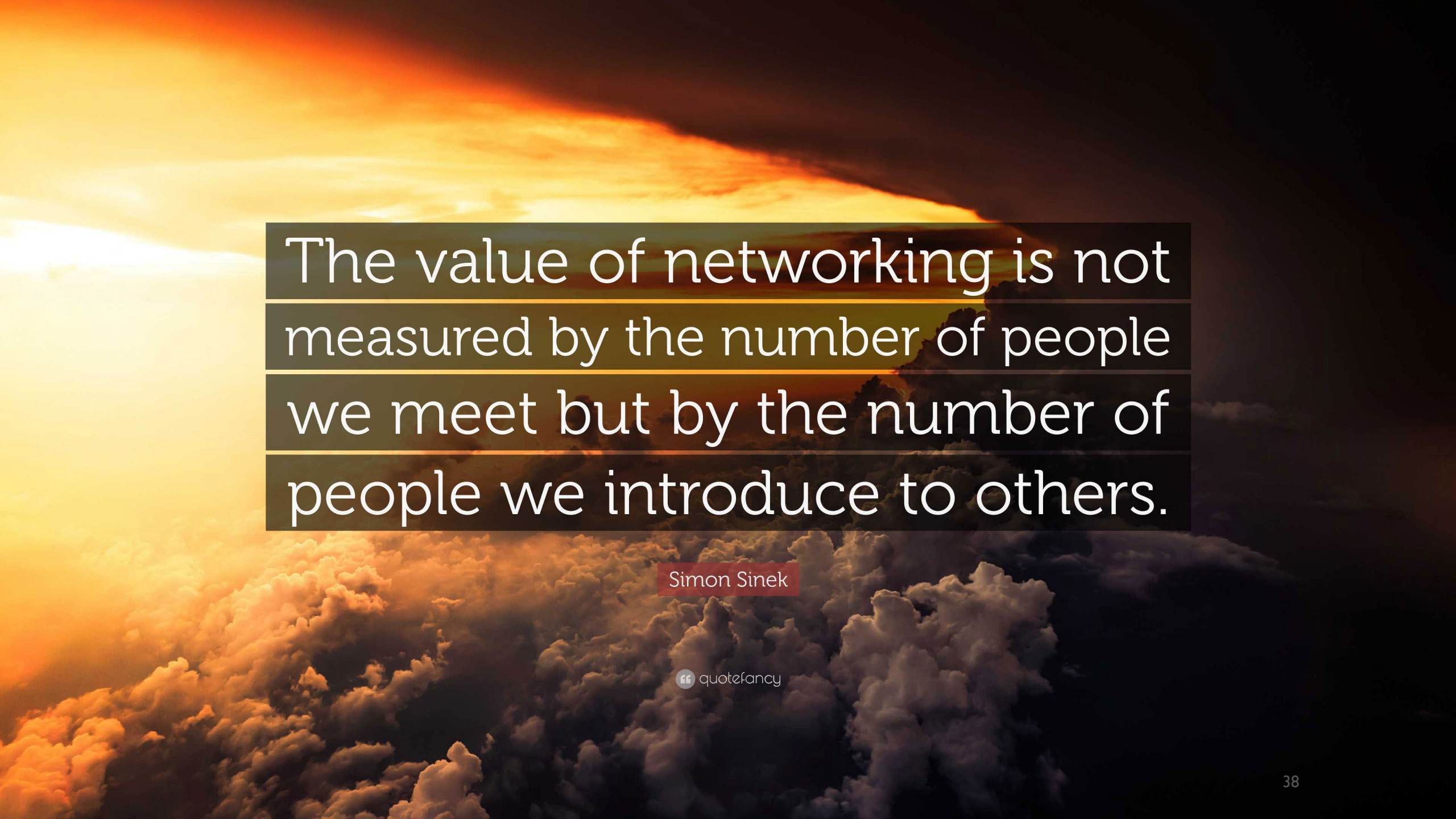


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How can we make a difference today to women in energy through your network?



Let's connect. Let's network. Put your answers in the chat.



The value of networking is not measured by the number of people we meet but by the number of people we introduce to others.

Simon Sinek

quote fancy



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How can we make a difference today to women in energy through your network?

Support and Advocate for

- Representation of women & diversity in energy and in leadership roles
- STEM education for young women
- Participation in mentorship and sponsorship programs
- Work-life balance initiatives
- Pay transparency to close pay gaps
- Diversity and inclusion policies
- Networking opportunities



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Questions?

Use the Q&A Function!





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Thank you for joining!

Slides & recording will be disseminated to those who registered in advance.

