THE ART OF AMERICAN SMALL TALK

The must-have skill when networking and socializing

Led by Michael Miller
BY THE END OF THIS CLASS YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO

• Build your confidence and talk to anyone
• Spontaneously start conversations
• Build a personal connection in 5 minutes
• Maintain stimulating conversations
• Turn your conversations into job offers
• End conversations tactfully
MY SECRET TIPS: HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR BIGGEST FEARS
“See the good in people and help them.”

– Gandhi
MY MOVE TO KATHLEEN, GEORGIA
TALKING TO STRANGERS IS SCARY
TWO OPTIONS – FIGHT OR FLIGHT

OVERCOME FEARS AND TALK TO PEOPLE

BE SCARED AND WASTE MY LIFE
TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE
I CONTINUED TO BUILD MY CONFIDENCE

- Practice
- Meditation
- Reading
- Exercising
- Changing Appearance
- Posture
REJECTION THERAPY

• Rejected daily for 30 days
• Develop “who cares” attitude and stay focused on original goal
• Do not be defensive
NOW IT’S YOUR TURN TO SAY “GOODBYE” TO SHYNESS!

You will feel uncomfortable at first.

It’s time to change your normal behavior and increase your confidence!
WORKSHOP
INTRODUCTIONS

1. What is your name?
2. What country are you from?
3. What is your major?
4. What is small talk like in your country?
WHY DO PEOPLE SMALL TALK?

Builds a bridge

Informal exchange of basic information

Starts light and casual conversation while avoiding hot topics
WHY IS SMALL TALK IMPORTANT?

Displays communication skills
Enables you to learn a lot about someone in a short amount of time
Demonstrates value
Opportunities to meet new business connections and friends
Personal development
SMALL TALK TOPICS

Travel
Movies
Music
Theater
Books
Food
Entertainment
TOPICS TO AVOID

Money
Sex
Politics
Religion
Family Problems
Divorce
Death
Economic Problems
Terrorism & War
EXERCISE- CREATE SMALL TALK CHEAT SHEET

• 5 things you enjoy talking about

• 5 things you’d like to learn about others

• 5 “openers”

• 5 current events

Topics I like to chat about
Basketball
Startups
Travel
Food
Sports

Openers
“Did you hear about...
“Excuse me, do you know...
“Did you see the game last night?
“What do you do for fun?”
ENTERING THE CONVERSATION
HOW TO ENTER THE CONVERSATION

1. Look for people already talking
2. Establish eye contact and smile
3. Be the first to introduce yourself
4. Ask open ended questions
5. Listen to and REMEMBER other people’s names
EXERCISE- ENTER CONVERSATION

Introduce yourself (eye contact, firm handshake, smile)

Ask open ended questions
CREATE PERSONAL ELEVATOR PITCH

• Who you are in 30-60 seconds
• Background
• Interesting facts
• Make it memorable
5 TIPS TO REMEMBERING NAMES

1. At moment of introduction, focus on his or her name and face.
2. Immediately repeat the name.
3. Think of someone you know with the same name.
4. Say name periodically in the conversation.
5. Always use the person’s name when closing the conversation.
ACTIVE LISTENING

Ask follow up questions
Listen for facts, feelings, key words
Listen “between the lines”

• “After I stopped working for those jerks…”
PERSONAL STORYTELLING

YOU ARE ALL VERY INTERESTING!

Homework - write down 10 stories about your
1. Background
2. Interests
3. Experiences
BUILDING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Explore other person’s interests by encouraging him/her to talk.
  • People love talking about themselves

Find a similarity

Highlight mutual interests
  • Best way to spend more time talking
DIRECTING THE CONVERSATION TOWARDS JOB OPPORTUNITIES

• Bring up professional topics casually

• Ask some of the most interesting problems they’re facing at work

• Ask how they got their position and became successful
KNOWING WHEN TO EXIT CONVERSATION

• Maximize your time
• Know how valuable this connection is
• You can always speak with them again
• Make sure you’ve helped them
EXITING CONVERSATION

1. Restate something you found interesting
2. Invite to speak again
3. Exchange contact information
4. Establish eye contact and smile
5. “Nice meeting you (name)”
SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW UP

• Focus on helping them
• Email
• Call
• Video Email (Vsnap.com)
• LinkedIn Message
Hi (Name)

Nice to meet you the other (day, night, event, etc.)
Sentence 1. Sentence 2. Sentence 3.

Regards,
Michael

Sentence 1 – The memory
Sentence 2 – The help
Sentence 3 – The ask
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
TIPS – HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR BIGGEST FEARS

- Make it impossible not to follow-through
- Get others to hold you accountable
- Act when adrenaline is high
PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Talk to three random people in the next 24 hours
16 WEBSITES TO FIND PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

- Eventbrite.com
- Allconferences.com
- Google
- Yelp.com
- Craigslist
- Lanyrd.com
- Internations.org
- Nationalcareerfairs.com
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Meetup.com
- LinkedIn Groups
- Eventful.com
- Zvents.com
- Netparty.com
- Asmallworld.net
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