How to Work a Room and Other Skills They Didn’t Teach You In College

The 3-Part Introduction

1. Your Name (first and last)
2. A linking piece of information pertinent to the function you are attending.
3. A point of interest

Keep it brief!
• 7-9 seconds is the target timeframe

Self-Introductions : Examples

Name
• Hi. I’m Donna Godfrey

Link to the venue
• I’m from North Carolina.

Point of interest
• So I’m really enjoying the fall weather up here.
Self-Introductions: Examples

**Name**

• Hi. I'm Donna Godfrey

**Link to the venue**

• I'm a training consultant from Raleigh, NC

**Point of interest**

• I'll be speaking at the conference tomorrow.

The First Hurdle: Entering the Room

Pst...It's awkward for everyone.
“Hello, Old Friend!”

• Before entering the room, imagine you are about to run in to an old friend.
• Let the warmth and pleasure of that encounter wash over you.
• Bring that warmth and enthusiasm to the people you are about to meet.

Laser-like Attention

• Warm smile
• Undivided attention
• An attitude that says:
  “I think you are special and deserve my attention.”

Conversation Starters: General Questions

• How was your trip in?
• Can you recommend a good restaurant in the area?
• How long have you been a member of ______?
• Which lectures are you planning to attend at the conference?
• How long have you been on the team?
• Where are you from?

Note the use of ‘You’ in all these questions.

Not: “So, where should I eat while I’m in town?”
Let’s take a minute to talk about handshakes
The Good, The Bad, and The Painful

The Handshake: Don’ts

 › The Jellyfish: A limp handshake is creepy.

 › The Knuckle Breaker: This is a power play.

 › The Finger Squeeze: This person doesn’t grab your hand, but instead grabs your fingers only.
   Done lightly, it is prissy. Done heavily, it becomes the intensely painful “ring squeeze.”

The Handshake: Don’ts

 • The Glove or Covered Handshake:
   o Makes people suspicious.
   o For pastors, funeral home directors, or when you know someone extremely well.

 • The Controller: Don’t grab anyone’s elbow or shoulder unless you are intimate.
The Solid Handshake

- Extend your hand and grip the other person’s hand so that the web of your thumbs meet.

- Shake three times from the elbow, not the shoulder.

- End the handshake cleanly before the introduction is over. (3-4 seconds)

- Always stand, unless it would be extremely awkward to do so. (Women, too.)

Moving In: Breaking Into a Conversation

- Avoid 2 people who appear to having an intense conversation

- To break in to a group:
  - Position yourself close to the group.
  - Give facial feedback to the comments being made.
  - When you feel yourself included, join in the conversation.

- Be open to others who “want in”.
  - When you see someone on the periphery of your conversational group, invite them in.

Moving On: Extricating Yourself

- Use the Plus-Arrow-Plus Method
  - Plus: "I’m really glad that I had a chance to talk to you about..."
  - Arrow: “I think I’m going to head over to the buffet.”
  - Plus: “I look forward to seeing you in the meeting tomorrow.”

- Visibly move to another part of the room to underscore the fact that you did have someone to see or something to do.
More examples...

• "I appreciate your advice on restaurants in the area. I just spotted a couple of new folks that I haven't met yet, so I'd better head over there. It was great meeting you."

• "It's always great to meet new volunteers. I haven't eaten yet, so I'm going to check out the buffet. I'm glad you are here."

Train Your Wingman

• If you will be circulating with a partner, train him or her as 'wingman.'
• The Agreement: If I don't introduce you within the first 30 seconds, it's because I don't remember this person. Your job is to step forward and introduce yourself.
• Example: "I'm David Simpson, Donna's husband. I don't think we've met."

Nametags

• Right shoulder/chest so that when someone is shaking your hand they can visually follow your arm up and find your name.
• Ladies...Beware the hanging name tag between your breasts. It's awkward for everyone.
Drinks and Food

• Wrap your drink in a napkin to prevent cold, damp palms.

• Carry your drink in your left hand to avoid awkwardness and cold damp palms when shaking hands.

• Get a drink or food...never both.

Thank You!
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