

BIG Help for



Small Talk:

Polite conversation about unimportant or uncontroversial matters, especially as engaged in on **social occasions**

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**Which one are
you in a room of
strangers?**



Social Conversation

- Helps people get to know you
- Helps you get to know them
- Meet interesting characters



Networking Receptions

- **Events with food are not for eating**
- *Eat first, then get drink (leaves hand free for shaking hands)*
- **Dress appropriately**
- *Carry a pen, if possible*



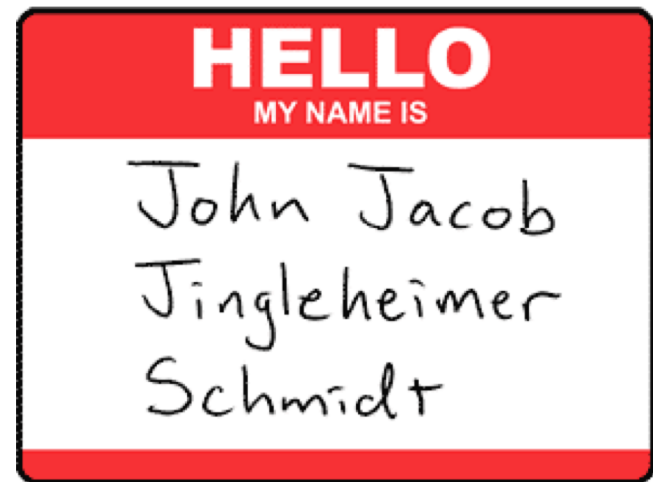


Wine at a Reception

- *Leave a hand free for shaking.*
- **Grab by the stem for white wine and champagne.**
- *Sip: one glass should last at least 20 minutes. One drink rule.*

Nametag

- Write your full name
- *Opposite from your heart*
- Move your hair!



Introductions

- **Make eye contact; shake hands**
 - Increases trust; shows confidence
- ***Keep the introduction basic***
 - *SAY YOUR NAME...clearly*
- **Never ask, “Remember me?”**
 - Instead: “We met last October at the Provost’s dinner. It’s good to see you again.”
- ***ALWAYS assume higher status (e.g., professor, not student)***

Practice Your Handshake



- **NO: limp fish**



- **NO: half-handed**



- **NO: knuckle-crusher**

Practice Your Handshake



- **YES! web-to-web**
- **YES! firm, confident**
- **YES! same for all genders**



How do I get in the conversation?



- Slowly join the group.
- Approach someone who is standing alone.

Exit Gracefully

- 5-10 minute chat
- ***Don't monopolize.***
- Lead out:
 - ***"I don't want to take all your time, but it has been nice to visit with you."***
 - ***"Oh, there's Dr. XX; I must catch her before she leaves this evening. It's been great to visit with you."***

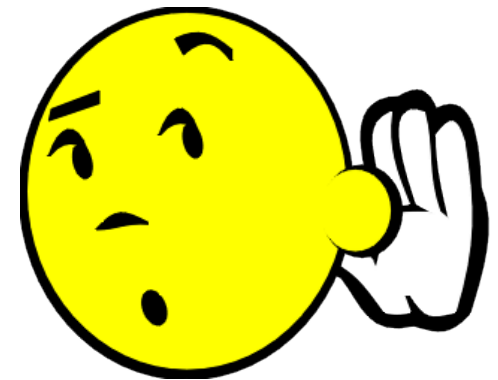


Talking

- Be authentic/real.
-
- *Ask for information/advice.*
-
- Think you're too inexperienced to offer anything? You provide spark, energy, and new talent.

Listening

- ***MORE IMPORTANT THAN TALKING***
- Ask about them—their work, their travel, their hobbies
- ***Takes spotlight off of you***
- People think you're a brilliant conversationalist!





BEST Question Ever

- “What kind of work do you do? That sounds really hard.”

OR

- *“What is the most challenging part of what you do?”*

More Small Talk Starters

- “Hi, I’m Ruth.” Don’t overthink it.
- *“This weather has been so (cold, hot, rainy, dry)!”*
- “Did you have a good flight?”
- *“Where did you attend college/graduate school?”*
- “You seem so familiar. Have we met before?”

Time to Practice

- Stand up! Find someone you don't know.
 - *Shake hands; introduce yourself*
- Person A asks a question, Person B answers; switch roles.
 - *Sample question: What is the hardest of your work?*



Nope, never

- **NO CELL PHONES!**
- *Only 1-2 drinks, switch to water*
- **No smoking**
- *No being late*
- **No gum**
- *No crossed arms*



No grumpy cats!

Final Thoughts

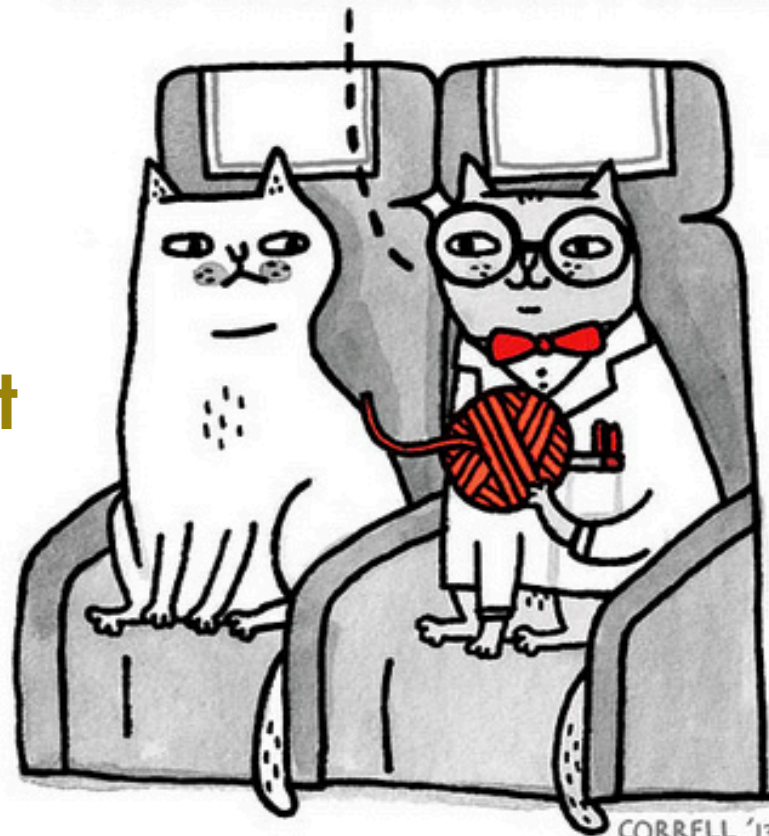
- **BEWARE** the effects of alcohol!
- **Eat a snack before you go**
- **Set realistic goals (e.g., talk to 2 people)**
- **Avoid topics of politics & religion**
- **Networking is the lit review for your career**



Elevator Speech

- 30 seconds
- **What you do—
the grandma test**
- Why you want to talk to them
- **Practice until it
feels natural**

MY MAIN AREA OF EXPERTISE
IS, OF COURSE, STRING THEORY.





Questions?

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