

The Flourishing Introvert

Guide to Networking

Reframe Your Perception

Networking doesn't have to be about small-talk, which we know is most introverts' worst nightmare!

Great networkers ask powerful questions that get the other person talking. Lots of people are happy talking about themselves and their pet topics. With your listening skills, they'll feel significant and you'll be able to ask relevant follow-up questions.

Know Your Why

What is your reason for attending? Identify a couple of people you want to connect with, from a personal or professional angle. Do some preparation so you know a bit about the people you have in mind.

Prep Conversation Starters

Have a few questions, observations or comments that will help get a meaningful conversations started. It might be something topical, controversial or novel. Remember to have your opinion prepped too as you may well get asked!

Including Others

If you see someone on the edge of the room, they may appreciate you joining them. Ask how they are finding the event. You'll soon pick up the vibe if they want/need to be left alone to recharge. It can be helpful to start with "I find this part of the conference a bit awkward - how about you?". Self-disclosure can be a powerful thing.

Joining Conversations

Look for a group with an obvious space in the formation. A closed circle is hard to enter whilst an open formation says 'join us'. Experienced networkers will often create an opening for this very reason. Observe for a while and pick your group to join.

Leaving Conversations

When you want to move on, there are a number of good ways to excuse yourself (without reverting to the 'bathroom' excuse.

- "I've just seen someone I must catch, so do excuse me."
- "Who are you looking forward to speaking with next?" as a nudge for them to think about moving on.
- If you're at a conference, "Excuse me I'd like to get ready for the next session."

Objective Met!

It's called networking, not 'netlurking', so when you've achieved your objective, leave. You do not have to stay to the bitter end.

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