

How to Talk To Anybody, Anytime

Having something in common with someone is the start to a long and mutually beneficial relationship - one of the foundations of success!

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You know the situation: There you are at a business or social function and you end up with someone who you have never met before. Some people get amazingly uncomfortable with this situation because they simply don't know how to start or carry on a conversation. Yet successful people are always going to find themselves in these kinds of situations because they are always stretching themselves and putting themselves into situations to help them and their businesses grow and that means meeting new people. So if you are going to be successful, one thing you have to get down is how to talk to anybody, anytime. Good news: It is easier than you think!

First, a couple of things not to do. One, don't get flustered and excuse yourself. That is the easy way out, and you never know if you didn't just leave who would have become your best friend or closest business associate. Stick around! Secondly, don't start talking about yourself. Sure, introduce yourself, but don't launch into a half-hour monologue about your accomplishments. The other person will either roll their eyes back into their head or simply give you a new nickname: Joe "let me tell you a story about myself" Schmoe. This leads me to the key.

Talk about the person you have just met. Don't talk about yourself - talk about them!

And the key is to ask questions. Now, there are obviously some people you just will not be able to talk to because they are absolute bores or they are angry or upset or something, but I have found that that is only about

1% of the people, if even that. For the most part, if you persist in asking questions, you will be able to talk to anybody, anytime.

There are three segments to this process:

Ask questions.
Find connections.
Go in those directions.

What you are trying to do is to find common ground. What makes people afraid to talk to others is that they are afraid they won't have anything in common. I have found that usually, if you ask questions for a minute or two, you can always find a connection with someone, and then you're set. The worst that could happen is that you ask the person questions for a few minutes and find nothing. But what will that person tell others? That you seem to have a genuine interest in others. That is a great reputation to have!

That is another key here. You can't be a selfish, arrogant person and be successful. I am talking true well-rounded success, not just collecting a pot full of money.

The best way to describe this process is to write out a mock conversation. You will notice the kinds of questions I would ask, when I find a connection, and how I would go in that direction.

"Hi, I'm Chris Widener. What is your name?"

"Joe Schmoe."

"Well, Joe, what do you do for a living?"

"I sell insurance." (Possible connection here. Everybody has insurance)

"Oh yeah? What kind of insurance?"

"I insure Oil rigs in the Adriatic Sea." (Whoops. Lost connection)

"Wow. That's must be fascinating. Married or kids, Joe?" (I have a wife and kids, maybe we can show pictures)

"No, actually, I'm single." (It isn't looking good yet)

"So, who do you know here at the party?"

"Well, nobody. I am the brother of the host's accountant. I'm in town for a week and my brother had to make an appearance." (It is going in the wrong direction here)

"So where are you from?"

"Nebraska." (Bingo, there it is. The connection! Now let's go in that direction)

"Really? My dad was from Nebraska. Even though he died when I was four, my grandmother used to take me back to visit my relatives every summer growing up. It sure was a lot of fun. Were you city folk, or did you live on a farm?"

"I grew up on a pig farm."

"That's what my relatives did! As a kid I always wanted to ride one of those sows. Luckily my uncles never let me attempt it."

There you are. Now just start asking questions about what they did growing up, how they liked it etc.

If you get adept enough at asking questions of others, you will inevitably find a connection to talk about. And having something in common with someone is the start to a long and mutually beneficial relationship - one of the foundations of success!

I am in a career where I meet new people all the time and this is exactly what I do. I am no better conversationalist than most of you. It is just a proven way of getting a relationship off the ground with someone you have just met.

Here it is again:

Ask questions, find connections, go in those directions.



Chris Widener is an example of how anyone can overcome any odds to achieve a successful life and help others achieve the same. Chris has overcome many obstacles... living through his father dying suddenly when he was four, being sent away from his family to live with relatives at age nine and becoming involved with drugs and alcohol by the age of twelve. Chris overcame those obstacles and

has for the last ten years worked with some of the most financially successful families in America, helping them to achieve both personally and professionally. Now he can do the same for you!