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— YOUR PLACE TO CONNECT —

10+ Tips to Make Networking Pay Off!

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This document contains information that builds on that in the video, "10+ Tips to Make Networking Pay Off!" The video is available upon request. Please ask library staff for the link to the video.

Networking objective: create a connection – first step to developing a relationship.

Q: How do you create a connection?

A: Make others feel valued, understood, and heard.

1. Prepare: Are there people with whom you want to network?

- Develop 3 conversation starters (details covered in point 2)
- Enter the room, stop, and look over the crowd. Do you see anyone with whom you want to network? (Maybe someone you know, if you need to ground yourself.) When entering the room throw your shoulders back and stand straight. Standing straight sends a message of confidence to the brain.
- Walk in with the mindset of a host: make others feel welcome. By doing this, you are taking the focus off of your nervousness.

2. Starting a conversation

- Begin with small talk: easy, light conversation. This puts everyone at ease. You can gradually transition into more meaningful conversation.

Topics: **NORM**

News – noncontroversial; generally known pieces of news

Occupation—avoid “What do you do? This is awkward for some people to respond. Instead ask, “What brings you here?”

Recreation: hobby, movie, sports, music, etc. If person is not interested, ask what they like to do in their spare time.

Money—such as the price of gas, homes, holiday sale, the venue, food, traffic, weather.

- Avoid asking, “How are you”? So broad, it is difficult to answer

3. Listen: take in to words, facial expressions, gestures, and emotion/s. Enables you to offer response that creates a connection

- Wait until person finishes speaking to develop your response. Listening offers fodder for conversation –makes it easy for you to respond.

4. Maintaining a conversation

- Be curious about the person’s topic: ask open-ended questions and avoid replying with a single word. (Each helps keep continuing conversation flowing)

5. Wrapping up a conversation:

- Extend hand or slightly raise to indicate end of conversation) and reference something the person said.
- “It was fascinating to learn about jewelry appraising. I never knew that a tarnished silver platter has a higher resale value than a polished one!
- “I hope our paths cross again soon.”

6. Virtual networking:

- It’s easy to interrupt b/c of the lag between the time someone speaks and you hear them. As such, when they pause, you (mistakenly) think they have finished; you speak and interrupt them
 - Remedy: allow 2-3 seconds of silence before responding
- The computer mic picks up errant sounds and the camera follows; mute and /or go off video if you must cough, sneeze, blow your nose.
- Eat only if others are to avoid being a distraction
- To make eye contact, look into the computer camera

7-12: Dilemmas you may encounter at a networking event

7. Nobody to speak with so you're standing alone

- Find someone else in the same boat and rescue them with "Hello"
- Break into a group: stand outside a group of 3 or more and try to catch someone's eye. They will likely welcome you to join.
- Go the food table; people there are often alone

8. You run out of conversation

- Revert to small talk to restart conversation
- Prevent by listening: take note of a couple of points if they make and treat them as arrows to put into your quiver. Use them to ask a question.
- "Jack, you mentioned living in Nashville for a year. What did you like about the city?"

You want to ask a question but cannot come up with a specific one.

- Try "Tell me more about..."

9. You forget a name

- Ask (use humor if you can): "Sometimes my computer freezes, sometimes it's my brain. Could you please remind me of your name"?

Why? Our brain is an important part of our identity. Saying someone's name is an effective way to make them feel acknowledged.

10. The person rambles

- When they take a breath, ask a question to bring them back on track. Interrupt if you must. For example, you say, "You asked an expert about the benefits and negatives of shared office space. She responds briefly but then rambles on about traffic patterns. You bring her back on point by saying, "I don't want to lose our discussion on shared office space. Can you tell me more?"

11. Finally-a Common Trap

When someone speaks refrain from talking about yourself until you've allowed them their time in the spotlight. For example, if they talk about a trip to Cape Cod don't respond by talking about your trip to Cape Cod. Ask about their trip. Once they've had time to share, you can talk about yourself. Give them time in the spotlight.

If you have questions about anything in this document or the video, please do not hesitate to email me at: janet@EtiquetteForToday.com

I hope this information serves you in securing a job and career in which you flourish!

With my best regards,

Janet

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