



MindTeam Solutions

Tips for Conversations and “Small Talk”

Words You Use To Create Your Success

A key component of your success journey is continually learning, developing your skills, and gathering the tools you need to achieve your goals. Use these tips to help you start, continue, and end conversations. Being a skilled and interesting conversationalist helps your personal and professional stature soar.

1. **Pay attention to other people’s interests and activities.** Ask about the other person's day, future plans, or any subject that you know is of interest to them.
2. **Keep up to date on the latest developments in your professional field.** Read trade magazines, company literature, and search websites. The ability to hold an intelligent conversation about your line of work will make you the person other people seek for counsel your organization.
3. **Find something to admire in the other person.** Give an honest complement, and be specific.
4. If you're **meeting someone for the second time** and you still don't know them very well, try remembering something they said about themselves at your first meeting. Use what they said to kick-start your second conversation.
5. The best argument is **no argument!** Someone has to lose an argument. In conversation, you both lose.
6. **State your reason for wanting to talk to the other person.** For example, “I am new to the area and would like to get to know the people here”; “I want to know about mechanical engineering and heard that you in the field”; “I see you here regularly and was wondering who you are”. Know what you want to talk about to avoid awkward silences.



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Great things happen when groups get together!

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Tips from “Stuff for Busy People”
pocket reference book series

7. **Help the other person feel comfortable about talking with you.** Smile, and appear friendly and approachable.

8. **Give the other person time to think.** It may take a few moments for the other person to process what you just said and think about their response. Give them the chance to do so. A few moments' silence is a welcome relief in a conversation.

9. **Associate with confident people.** First just join them when they engage in conversation with others. Then join in on the conversation where you feel you can contribute.

10. **Paraphrase back what you have heard, using your own words.**

Conversation happens in turns, each person taking a turn to listen and a turn to speak or to respond. It shows respect for the other person when you use your "speaking turn" to show you have been listening and not just to say something new. They then have a chance to correct your understanding, affirm it, or embellish on it.

11. **If the topic seems to have run out,** use the pause to think and **move to another conversation topic or ask a question.** Something they said may remind you of something else you heard, that happened to you, or brings up a question or topic in your mind. Mention it to transition to further conversation.

12. **Know when the conversation is over.** Even the best conversationalists run out of steam or are interrupted. Smile when you leave. Tell your conversation partner that it was nice talking to them, and say goodbye. End on a positive note to leave a positive impression.

13. It's okay to **talk about yourself** as long as your conversation partner is listening and is interested in getting new information about you or your topic.

14. **Avoid cutting your conversation partner off in mid-sentence,** or when they naturally pause between sentences. It feels disrespectful and makes it seem like you think that what you have to say is more important than what they have to say.



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