



# THE ART OF AMERICAN SMALL TALK

The must-have skill when networking and socializing

Led by Michael Miller



# BY THE END OF THIS CLASS YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO

- **Build your confidence and talk to anyone**
- **Spontaneously start conversations**
- **Build a personal connection in 5 minutes**
- **Maintain stimulating conversations**
- **Turn your conversations into job offers**
- **End conversations tactfully**



# MY SECRET TIPS: HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR BIGGEST FEARS



**“See the good in people and  
help them.”**

**– Gandhi**



# MY MOVE TO KATHLEEN, GEORGIA



# TALKING TO STRANGERS IS SCARY





# TWO OPTIONS – FIGHT OR FLIGHT

OVERCOME FEARS  
AND TALK TO PEOPLE



BE SCARED AND  
WASTE MY LIFE



# TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE





# I CONTINUED TO BUILD MY CONFIDENCE

- **Practice**
- **Meditation**
- **Reading**
- **Exercising**
- **Changing Appearance**
- **Posture**



# REJECTION THERAPY

- **Rejected daily for 30 days**
- **Develop “who cares” attitude and stay focused on original goal**
- **Do not be defensive**



# NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO SAY "GOODBYE" TO SHYNESS!

**You will feel uncomfortable at first.**

**It's time to change your normal behavior and increase your confidence!**



# WORKSHOP INTRODUCTIONS

- 1. What is your name?**
- 2. What country are you from?**
- 3. What is your major?**
- 4. What is small talk like in your country?**

# WHY DO PEOPLE SMALL TALK?

**Builds a bridge**

**Informal exchange of  
basic information**

**Starts light and casual  
conversation while  
avoiding hot topics**



# WHY IS SMALL TALK IMPORTANT?

**Displays communication skills**

**Enables you to learn a lot about someone  
in a short amount of time**

**Demonstrates value**

**Opportunities to meet new business  
connections and friends**

**Personal development**





# SMALL TALK TOPICS

Travel

Movies

Music

Theater

Books

Food

Entertainment



# TOPICS TO AVOID

Money

Sex

Politics

Religion

Family Problems

Divorce

Death

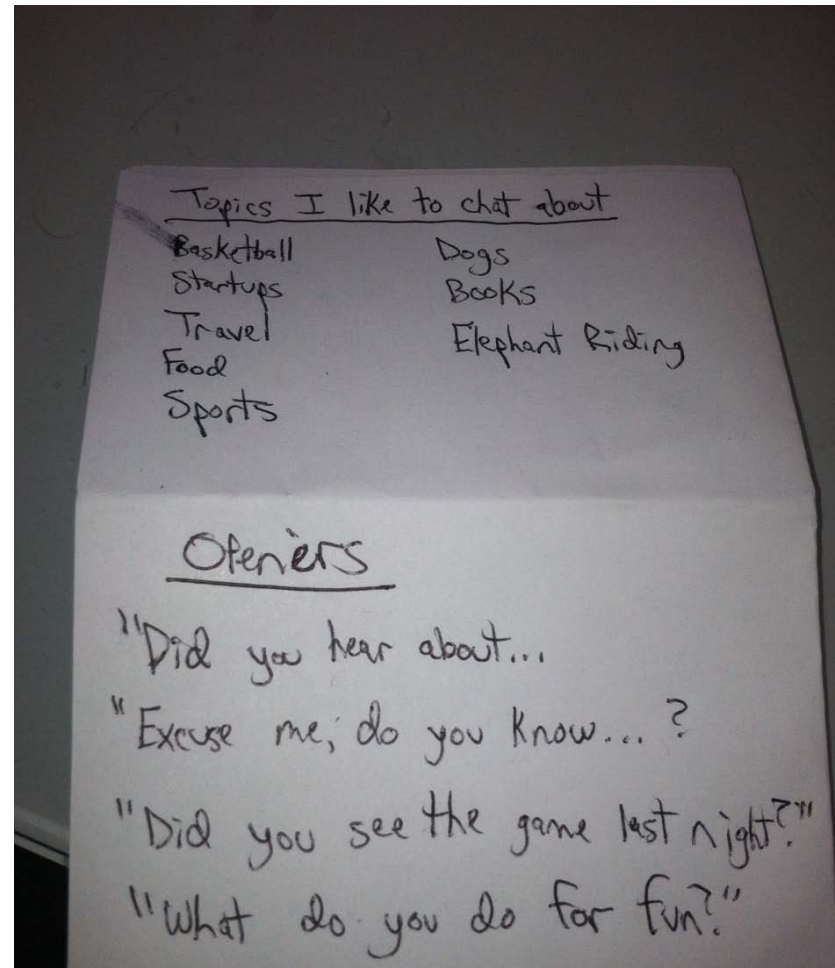
Economic Problems

Terrorism & War



# EXERCISE- CREATE SMALL TALK CHEAT SHEET

- **5 things you enjoy talking about**
- **5 things you'd like to learn about others**
- **5 "openers"**
- **5 current events**



# ENTERING THE CONVERSATION



# HOW TO ENTER THE CONVERSATION

- 1. Look for people already talking**
- 2. Establish eye contact and smile**
- 3. Be the first to introduce yourself**
- 4. Ask open ended questions**
- 5. Listen to and REMEMBER other people's names**



# EXERCISE- ENTER CONVERSATION

**Introduce yourself  
(eye contact, firm  
handshake, smile)**

**Ask open ended  
questions**





# CREATE PERSONAL ELEVATOR PITCH

- **Who you are in 30-60 seconds**
- **Background**
- **Interesting facts**
- **Make it memorable**



# 5 TIPS TO REMEMBERING NAMES

1. At moment of introduction focus on his or her name and face
2. Immediately repeat the name
3. Think of someone you know with same name
4. Say name periodically in the conversation
5. Always use the person's name when closing conversation



# ACTIVE LISTENING

**Ask follow up questions**

**Listen for facts, feelings,  
key words**

**Listen “between the  
lines”**

- “After I stopped working for those jerks...”



# PERSONAL STORYTELLING

**YOU ARE ALL VERY INTERESTING!**

**Homework- write down 10 stories about your**

- 1. Background**
- 2. Interests**
- 3. Experiences**



# BUILDING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

**Explore other person's interests by encouraging him/her to talk.**

- People love talking about themselves

**Find a similarity**

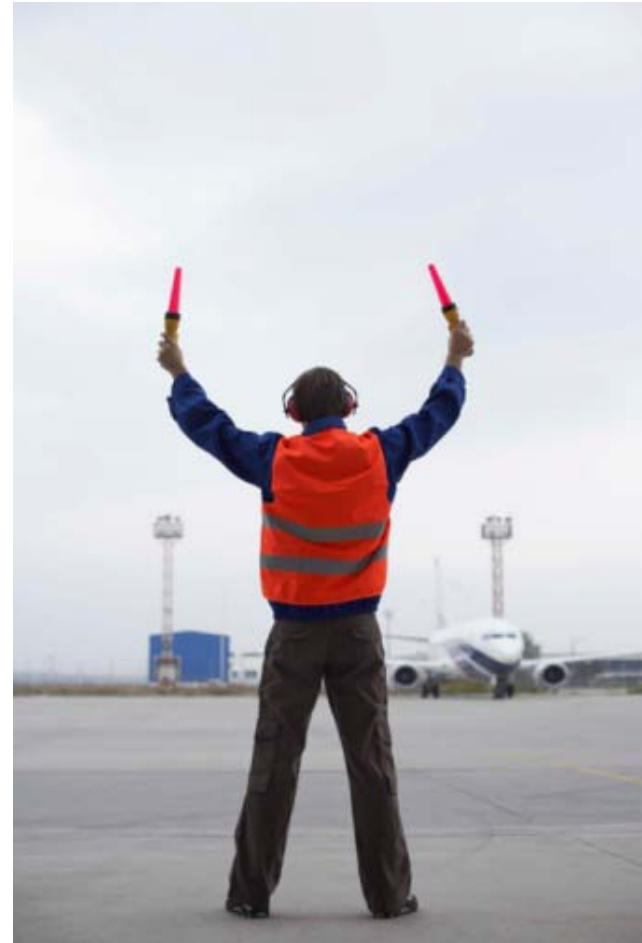
**Highlight mutual interests**

- Best way to spend more time talking



# DIRECTING THE CONVERSATION TOWARDS JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- **Bring up professional topics casually**
- **Ask some of the most interesting problems they're facing at work**
- **Ask how they got their position and became successful**





# KNOWING WHEN TO EXIT CONVERSATION

- **Maximize your time**
- **Know how valuable this connection is**
- **You can always speak with them again**
- **Make sure you've helped them**



# EXITING CONVERSATION

1. **Restate something you found interesting**
2. **Invite to speak again**
3. **Exchange contact information**
4. **Establish eye contact and smile**
5. **“Nice meeting you (name)”**



# SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW UP

- **Focus on helping them**
- **Email**
- **Call**
- **Video Email (Vsnap.com)**
- **LinkedIn Message**



# FOLLOW UP SCRIPT

**Hi (Name)**

**Nice to meet you the other (day, night, event, etc.)**

**Sentence 1. Sentence 2. Sentence 3.**

**Regards,  
Michael**

**Sentence 1 – The memory**

**Sentence 2 – The help**

**Sentence 3 – The ask**



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



# TIPS – HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR BIGGEST FEARS

- **Make it impossible not to follow-through**
- **Get others to hold you accountable**
- **Act when adrenaline is high**



# PERSONAL CHALLENGE

**Talk to three random people in  
the next 24 hours**





# 16 WEBSITES TO FIND PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

- **Eventbrite.com**
- **Allconfernces.com**
- **Google**
- **Yelp.com**
- **Craigslist**
- **Lanyrd.com**
- **Internations.org**
- **Nationalcareerfairs.com**
- **Twitter**
- **Facebook**
- **Meetup.com**
- **LinkedIn Groups**
- **Eventful.com**
- **Zvents.com**
- **Netparty.com**
- **Asmallworld.net**





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