

The Other Side of the Elevator Speech

by Sally Strackbein

Want to be known as a great conversationalist? Then stop talking. The more you listen, the smarter you sound, because when you do talk, your comments will be on target. The more you focus on other people and make them comfortable, the more comfortable you will be.

Plan your strategy before you attend an event. What is your purpose for attending? Do you want to meet an important person? Ask to be introduced to them. Do you want to get involved in an organization? Do you want to be more visible?

Have a plan. Be ready to deviate from your plan. Open yourself to possibilities.

- Networking is for relationship building, not selling
- Be polite to everyone — you never know who they know
- Have a collection of succinct success stories ready to tell

Don't	Do
Frown or scowl	Smile or be neutral
Leave your zipper down, your skirt caught in your panty hose or spinach in your teeth	Check your clothing and teeth
Crossed arms	Open body language
Say whatever comes to mind	Know your elevator speech and story
Act like people are bothering you	Be approachable
Glance around the room	Look at people's eyes
Avoid people	Shake hands
Be intrusive	Ask questions
Answer with "yes" or "no" and stop	Answer questions and add value
Interrupt	Allow others to talk
Correct others and embarrass them	Allow yourself to be "OK"
Pretend you are a piece of furniture	Introduce yourself
Make them feel like an outcast	Introduce others
Point out someone's socks don't match	Find positive things to compliment
Find something wrong to gripe about	Comment on what you like about the event
Act like you know everything	Ask questions about the organization
Plan what you are going to say next	Listen attentively and actively
Write your name on a napkin	Carry business cards
Wear a t-shirt and sandals	Dress appropriately for the event
Hang back and don't meet anyone	Just do it
Wing it	Know your goals
Forget names	Use people's names as you chat
Put the cards you collected in a drawer	Follow Up

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