

Let's Talk: Meeting new people

Presenter – Julie Spears, Clinical Counselor

Hi, I'm Julie. Let's talk about meeting new people and making a connection.

Social Anxiety?

Have you ever felt stressed because you were going to a social event where you knew you weren't going to know anyone? Or maybe you're okay at social events but you just aren't making a connection. Hopefully these tips will leave you worry-free.

Feel comfortable

First you wanna look the part. Make sure you feel comfortable in what you're wearing. You don't wanna wear the new pair of shoes you haven't broken in yet. Make sure you wear something you feel comfortable but also confident in. Make sure you take care of your personal needs. Get something to eat before you show up. Also check your posture and your body language. Think about what it's telling other people. You wanna make eye contact and smile.

A tip for remembering names

Next you wanna remember names. So when you meet someone, do you ever immediately forget their name? I do it all the time. I realized I was so busy thinking about what I wanted to say next that I wasn't even listening. I read somewhere that if you use the person's name three times during that first conversation you will always remember it. Let's try it.

Making an introduction

Visual cue: Julie sitting next a woman.

Julie: Hi, I'm Julie.

Angee: Hey, I'm Angee.

Julie: Hi, Angee, how do you know the bride?

Angee: Oh, she's my cousin; we grew up together.

Julie: Oh, are you the Angee that lives by the lake?

Angee: Yeah, that's me.

Julie: Oh, I've heard so many stories. It is so nice to put a name with a face. Nice to meet you, Angee.

Things to talk about

So now you've met the person, what do you say? Do you ever get tired of hearing, "So what do you do?" It can get old. It can also cause discomfort for people who are maybe out of work or stay-at-home parents. So what else do you say? You could ask, "Have you seen any good movies lately?" "Do you have any vacation plans coming up?" "What do you like to do for fun?" And if someone does ask "What do you do?" Try not to say "just." "I'm just a paralegal; I'm just a stay-at-home mom." Show confidence.

Having a conversation

Visual cue: Julie sitting next a woman.

Julie: Do you have any vacation plans coming up?

Angee: Yeah, I do actually. Me and my family are going to the Smoky Mountains.

Julie: Oh, that's such a beautiful area. Do you enjoy the outdoors?

Angee: I do actually. I work in an office all day and so it's really stressful not to get outside, and connecting with nature helps me de-stress. Last year actually me and my son climbed the peak of a mountain. It was such an amazing experience.

Julie: Wow, it sounds like it.

Angee: Yeah, do you like the mountains?

Julie: I do; my family and I just went to Vancouver. It was so gorgeous there.

Angee: Wow, that's on my bucket list; tell me more.

Julie (*looking toward camera*): You see, a connection was made.

Listening is part of communication

My next tip is remember to listen. So you've got this person talking, you wanna listen. Smile, nod, use encouraging words, ask follow-up questions. Avoid checking your watch or your device. So maybe this person isn't the most interesting person in the world, you still wanna be respectful. And who knows where this conversation may take you?

Be attentive

Visual cue: Angee sitting in chair and Julie off screen describing Angee's actions.

Which one is more inviting? Option one? Notice her arms are crossed. She has a grimace on her face. She's checking her device. Or option two? She's smiling; she's sitting forward, which means she's attentive and interested. I'll go with option two, how about you?

Stay connected

My last tip is follow up. So you made that connection, what's next? Well, go ahead and get that person's contact information. Put it directly into your device. Maybe it was a more casual acquaintance. You could ask, "Can I connect with you "through social networking or LinkedIn?" You may find you already have contacts or friends in common with that person.

Try these tips to meet new people

I have personally found great success using these tips and have gained some meaningful relationships. I hope you, too, find success. And here's a hint, you can always try it out at the grocery store. Good luck out there.

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