

[Sample Article - 600+ words].

The Art of Small Talk...

I am sure we have all been to a gathering where the only person you knew, was you!

Getting through a night like that, having conversations with a number of people and keeping it interesting for all concerned, may be easier than you think.

If the get together is with work colleagues, the topics usually revolve around work. However, unless it is a working dinner, where the idea is to sell something or simply build your networks, the last thing anyone wants to talk about is work.

Similarly, if it is a sporting club party then the talk is usually around the sport and, unless it is a presentation night or a committee meeting, sports topics soon become a bit boring.

So, what if the other person/s want to talk about the news, the weather, the latest in fashion, or national affairs, are you ready to join in the conversation?

What about the pregnant pauses when no-one knows what to say next?

Be Prepared for the Small Talk

The best way to be ready for any occasion is to be alert to what is going on around you in the world today, take an interest in what you hear and what others say. Read the newspapers, watch the news on telly, listen to news and talk-back on the car radio. It is very difficult to have an opinion on any subject if you are unaware of the facts of the opinion being given.

Don't always expect that the position being espoused by the speaker is the truth, join in and ask questions if the subject is unknown to you. Give your opinion if you have one and expect it to be questioned by those who are seeking to find a position.

There can be a number of ways to fill the pregnant pause, starting with the weather which everyone has an opinion on. However, there are a number of other conversation starters which will come quite naturally to you.

What Can You Talk About?

Let's talk small talk, about the last movie you watched, the last book you read or the last holiday you took [or the one you are about to take]. You could also speak about your favourite anything to get the conversation going.

It's really not difficult to speak to a stranger if you had to ask the time, or for directions, or the public transport schedule, we have all done one of those things in our life. That, though, is a simple question and answer scenario, not the start of a deep and meaningful, or even a light and frivolous conversation.

Whatever circles you move in, speaking to people will play some part in it. So, in business and at play it's important to be part of the conversation. The key, as I intimated earlier, is to keep yourself informed and ready to share your busy life experiences, which in almost every case will get the other party to reciprocate with their own personal anecdotes. Then, you have a conversation!