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Tips for Making Small Talk and Breaking the Ice

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When you are new in an office, breaking the ice with your colleagues can be quite an intimidating task. Especially, when language is not one of your strongest skills. Even confident and fluent English speakers can fumble and be left hunting for comeback replies, when amongst a group of strangers! The situation is even more delicate, since, you are in a corporate set-up and anything you say should be apt and present you to be a thorough professional.

Once the official introduction and briefing is over, you are on your own to bond with your colleagues, make friends and acquaintances. This is where you will need to employ your most essential soft skill – the ability to make small talk.

Being a small talker is beneficial, not just to be acquainted with your colleagues, but in other social situations as well. A person who can make a small talk and smiles a lot comes across as a warm and friendly person, as opposed to someone who stays rather quiet or sticks to a selective group. The key to being an expert small talker is to do it in moderation. If you overdo it, you can come across as annoying and irritating.

Mastering the art of small talk takes practice, but it boosts your confidence tremendously! The best way to learn small talk is by practicing it.

• **Make a promise to yourself that you will not shy away from any opportunity of making small talk.** Whether it is a cashier, a waiter, a person you meet every day on the train or just about anyone. The more vibrant your interaction will be, the more you will learn and use in your next small-talk encounter! From teens to senior citizens, everyone is full of ideas and information and when you chat up with people from different age groups and walks of life, you have a chance to benefit from their share of knowledge.

• **Make sure that you read a lot and stay updated with news and recent events.** Every piece of printed paper is a source of information. Whether it is a cookbook, newspaper, fashion magazine, tips on décor, movie reviews or a simple catalogue – everything tells you something new. When you encounter new people, try to gauge their likes and then you can make small talk based on the movie they wish to watch or a cuisine they love! Information, as someone has rightly put, never goes waste.

• **Remember and file interesting anecdotes that you come across.** Nothing is more interesting than conversation filled with funny and amusing anecdotes. Whenever you come across one, or when you experience something humorous, file it in your mind to use in future. Maintaining a journal helps in remembering incidents.

• **There is nothing better than self-practice.** Have you seen little kids playing and how they act as if they are teachers, doctors, models, etc.? The way they behave, talk, act, everything resembles the person they are imitating. This is one of the best exercises that enhance the communication skills in a child. You should do the same – stand in front of a mirror and talk about varied topics. Try to express varied views. Pick a myriad number of topics to give yourself a good exercise.

If you wish to become a successful small talker, the first stepping-stone is to improve your English. With a number of English speaking courses available online, you can easily improve your English and speak with confidence.



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