

Five Networking Tips for Low Stress and High Success

Most of us view networking as a necessary but unpleasant chance to sell ourselves. Why unpleasant? Because we're focused on our elevator pitch. That is self-centered. A good elevator pitch is a great conversation starter, but connection doesn't come through simply discussing what we do. Remove the performance anxiety by taking the focus off yourself and focusing on the people you meet. Here are five research-backed tips to lower stress and maximize your success.

IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES

We like people who are like us. When researchers on Facebook sent out random friend requests, they were twice as likely to have their requests accepted when mentioning a similarity between themselves and the stranger.

Explore the background and interests of people you meet to identify areas of connection. Once you note a similarity, mention it. They will value you more and be significantly more willing to support you.

Similarities is one of many ways to build connection and influence others. Learn more in *Magnetic: How Great Leaders Persuade and Inspire*.

SEEK OUT NEEDS

Everyone attends networking events to meet their own needs. When you understand their needs, you can position yourself to meet those needs. At a career fair, one woman met with a Tesla recruiter. Instead of pitching herself, she asked the recruiter what they sought in an ideal candidate. After the event, she sent a follow-up email restating the recruiter's needs and positioning herself to meet those needs. She scored the interview.

Whether you're a job seeker or business owner, take time to seek out the needs of others and then position yourself or your business to meet those needs.

To learn the best approaches to positioning yourself to others' needs, read Chapter 3 of *Magnetic*.

OFFER A COMPLIMENT

Two Ivy-League PhD students approached the cofounder of YouTube at a networking event. The cofounder complimented the students' academic rigor. One student preened and talked about the hard work he was doing. The other student returned the compliment and said he admired those who worked in industry. Shortly after, each student asked the cofounder out to coffee. The cofounder said yes to one of them. Can you guess which one?

Compliment someone to make them feel positive about their interaction with you. Focus on their qualities over your own to make the strongest impression.

For more ways to create a positive impression, review the Visibility approach in Chapter 4 of *Magnetic*.

ASK PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Real connection doesn't result from fake conversation. Avoid the usual chit-chat on the weather and ask questions about where a person was raised or what inspired them on their current path.

At a networking event, I met an investor wearing a bracelet of Bodhi beads. When I inquired about it, he shared his deep interest in Buddhism. The conversation became fully authentic. Along the way, I discovered many similarities we shared. After a few short minutes, we parted with the feeling of a budding friendship that was more personal than the business of the moment.

Learn about the real person in front of you, not just their professional utility.

Explore Chapter 1 of *Magnetic* to connect effectively.

STAY CURIOUS

The most interesting person in the room is the most interested in others. Whether seeking similarities, understanding needs, or finding ways to compliment fellow networkers, stay curious. Everybody there wants to talk about themselves. Encourage them to speak! By showing interest in what they have to say, they enjoy the conversation more and become more interested in you.



"Five Networking Tips for Low Stress and High Success" is written by Chris Lipp, author of *Magnetic: How Great Leaders Persuade and Inspire*. Some of the material in this article comes from *Magnetic*.

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