




# Effective Networking



*Tips for interactive  
communication without  
offending others.*

# What NOT to Say!

Many of us get nervous when we first meet other people. Our pulse speeds up, adrenaline flows and our mouth runs while the brain shuts off! Sound familiar?

- **Silence is golden.** Sometimes it's better to receive than give when it comes to meeting people and developing relationships. Try to remember names and other information when you first begin a conversation. Learning more about the other person gives your brain a chance to reengage and helps promote a rapport.
- **Avoid political or religious topics.** Even if you're just making small talk about current events, it's possible to offend someone or make them uncomfortable by discussing sensitive issues. People generally feel strongly about politics or religion, so they can sometimes respond emotionally, when the goal of a productive conversation should be to help everyone feel at ease.
- **It's not worth fussing about.** Those who are always right tend to be lonely. Stay out of arguments when others contradict you, especially if the other person feels strongly that they're right. Let someone else correct their information, unless your own reputation is at stake. Then, gently guide the conversation to avoid clashes.
- **Is it too personal?** How many times have you been in a conversation when someone begins discussing their personal life, health or future with the group? Yikes! The reaction usually stops the interaction immediately while people try to figure out how to respond. Good conversationalists can restart the conversation by switching subjects. For example, they a person might say, "Would anyone care for another beverage? Has anyone seen the great hors d'oeuvres?" or "I'd like to introduce someone to the group. Have you met so and so?"
- **Avoid the negative.** People generally do not want to hear about your recent traumatic layoff, crazy boss, divorce or other negative experiences, unless they already know you and need an update. Even then, state the facts and quickly move onto future goals or activities. This helps people understand where you're headed, not where you've been. They can often help you with your recovery or connect you to resources!



# Quick Tips

- **Eat sparingly.** Even though snacks are served, that doesn't mean strap on the feed bag. Eating too much, burping, food in teeth, bad breath and spitting are all potential pitfalls.
- **Drink water.** Just because you get 2 free drinks, doesn't mean you must oblige. Making a good first impression requires concentration, which can be markedly decreased by alcohol.
- **Honor personal space.** Arms length is ideal in America.
- **Allow others into the circle.** The group should move like an amoeba.
- **Look behind you before moving,** especially in crowded areas.
- **Have your business cards accessible,** but don't hand them to everyone you see. Wait for someone to ask you first or ask them for a card.
- **Offer to help the host/ess.** Then, thank them for the invitation or opportunity to attend.
- **Follow up regularly** with new acquaintances.