

## 9 Networking Tips for the Natural Introvert

Networking takes people skills, which can pose a challenge for the introverted among us. Like any other skill, however, it can be learned, if you follow a few practical tips.

### **1. Find a mentor.**

When you don't know where to start, it helps to get someone seasoned to show you the ropes and give you the push you need. A good mentor will give you the benefit of their experience, be genuinely interested in helping you and can get you out of your comfort zone more effectively than if you were to do it on your own.

### **2. Make that first move.**

It might be an email. It might be a social media message, or a five-minute chat at a conference. Whatever it is, you can't just wait for people to notice you. Be brave - show your interest.

### **3. Take it offline.**

It's easier to talk when you can hide behind your computer, but there's nothing like the connection of meeting face-to-face. Go to conferences, arrange meetups, invite someone for coffee. An acquaintance is in town? Go out of your way to meet them.

### **4. Create connection threads.**

Once you're actually talking to someone new, look for common ground. Do you have kids? Are you in the same industry? Are you both rabid Star Wars geeks? Small things can strengthen casual connections.

### **5. Leverage groups.**

Group meetups are a convenient way to interact with people. First of all, you already have something in common. Second, if you've been with the group for some time, you know people, and can bring someone else into a conversation when you're lost for words. Too, you can introduce newcomers to someone who might provide value to them, raising your own value in the process.

### **6. Make them your friend.**

When you encounter someone you'd like to connect with long-term, treat them as a friend first. A great way to do this is by asking questions, getting them to talk about themselves, making them feel valued. The next step is getting their phone number, because that's what friends do, right? They text each other.



### **7. Sustain the relationship.**

When you're waiting in line, or wherever, it's a great time to randomly text people. Perhaps you thought of someone, or an article reminded you of them. Let them know. This can prompt a text conversation or a phone call, letting you both catch up. Got friends overseas? Try Whatsapp or Messenger.

### **8. There's more than one way.**

When someone rejects you, you may just need a different approach. Look for something that will provide value for both of you - a guest post, perhaps, that would be of interest to their audience. If you have common connections, all the better.

### **9. Just do it.**

All of us fear rejection, but in the case of making human connections it's often better to risk a mistake than to do nothing. If you're moving forward you can make corrections; if you do nothing, you get nowhere.

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