

The Fine Art of Small Talk

by Debra Fine

A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰¹ **Try the FORD method**

Family, Occupation, Recreation, Dreams - four topic areas that reliably open conversation. Have one FORD-ready question ready for your next social event.

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⁰² **Do a 'meaty opener' experiment**

Replace 'How are you?' with 'What's the best thing that happened to you this week?' Watch the difference in responses.

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⁰³ **Master the conversational bridge**

After someone shares something, use 'Tell me more about that' rather than pivoting. Most people have 5x more to say than they initially offer.

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⁰⁴ **Practice the 'observation opener'**

Open with something you both can see or hear right now. It's immediate, low-pressure, and infinitely more interesting than 'what do you do?'

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⁰⁵ **Give a genuine compliment every day**

Specific, behavioral compliments only. 'You made that really interesting point about X' beats 'nice outfit' every time.

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⁰⁶ **End every conversation with a forward-looking question**

Before you leave any conversation, ask: 'When can we do this again?' or 'Should we grab coffee sometime?' Never leave an end open.