



Networking for Introverts

Quick notes on the questions you submitted – thank you for asking them!

The two books are:

- Networking for People Who Hate Networking: A Field Guide for Introverts, the Overwhelmed, and the Underconnected, by Devora Zack
- The Introvert's Complete Career Guide: From Landing a Job, to Surviving, Thriving, and Moving On Up, by Jane Finkle

How do I say true to myself as an introvert while navigating the networking process?

Know your limitations for doing the "extroverted" things and pace yourself accordingly. It's better to have fewer contacts whom you trust and share mutual respect with than scoring a lot of contacts whom you'll likely never see/speak to again. Use introverts' superpowers – be curious, listen well, ask thoughtful questions. You might also consider preplanning what you are/aren't willing to share about yourself with strangers and come up with a soft "brush off" statement like, "Oh, that's a conversation for another time! I have another question for you/or – I'm curious to hear more about your...." – redirect back to that person.

What is the most valuable skill to have as someone who wants to further their networking skills?

Be consistent in keeping up with your contacts. Prepare before you meet/talk, and have some solid questions that show you've done your due diligence. It also demonstrates respect for their time.

What is the best next step after getting someone's contact info? Besides adding them on LinkedIn?

Spend time with their profile, get to know the contact as a person - your next contact will be less transactional if you can relate to them over some shared interest, experience, or shared contact. Like and comment on their posts. Let them get a feel for you and you for them before you ask for time/help.

How do you combat anxiety when you need to be in uncertain environments?

Be clear about what you want to learn/meet in the setting. Being an interested observer may be a perfectly fine goal. Prepare some small talk openers that feel genuine to you (ask CHAT gpt for a list of suggestions to riff off). Leave the setting for short periods when you feel the anxiety starting to build to regroup yourself.

How do you move from small talk to more meaningful conversations to really make professional connections?

"Would you mind if I ask you a few questions – I'm new to this field, and I would appreciate your insight...."

How can extroverts help make introverts feel more welcomed/comfortable in networking spaces?

Ask if there is someone they might like to meet and offer to help make the introduction. Encourage them to take breaks.

How do you reach out to someone through a cold email?

Do everything you can to take the chill off. Look to see if there are ANY shared connections, if you have anything in common. Watch for and like/comment on any posts. Never ask to connect without using the opportunity to add a short note.

How do you politely ask for networking help when you haven't kept in contact with someone for a while?

I suggest you "own" the gap between connections (even though it's likely mutual). Tell/remind them of commonalities, and ask how they are doing. Ask if they might give you some "advice." Have a soft touch, and remember it may take a few exchanges to catch up enough to relax enough to ask for help.

How do you leverage connections when looking for a new job without your current employer finding out?

Put the word out that you have decided to be more proactive about your long-term career plan. Don't tell anyone you intend to leave – downplay that as much as you can – plausible deniability!

How do you get out of a conversation in a non-rude way?

"I'm so glad I have the chance to meet you. I'm sure there are others here you'd like to speak with, and I don't want to keep you from them. Thanks again."

How do you maintain and foster professional relationships long-term?

Be systematic about touching base to see how they are doing. Like/comment on their posts. Offer to introduce them to someone you know who might have similar interests. I love that you use the word foster!

How to go about networking when you've relocated to a new city and don't have many connections yet?

Find other Scots living in the area and ask if they might meet for a beverage to brief you on what they like about the new city. Ask for suggestions for services, recreation, strong networking groups, etc.

What's your favorite part about networking? What makes it "worth it" for you other than an opportunity to learn from others?

After thinking about this, what makes it worth it for me is that I get to connect the people I meet with people that I already know and share their interests. It's almost like giving a gift but without the shopping and wrapping!

Is there a way to sound professional while simultaneously admitting that I'm brand new to this field and am looking for seemingly basic information?

Be yourself and 'fess up to your state of unknowing. Others typically like to offer advice and info – make sure your questions are genuine and that you've done the legwork so as not to ask questions so basic a simple Google search could answer.

All the best –

Anne