

## How to make the best social connections when you network

There seems to be a trick to making interesting conversation at events.

Some people are born with it. Their outgoing personalities naturally uncover the secret of winning friends and influencing people.

Others need a plan.

Social anxiety affects five out of every 100 people. Half of the population are introverts who find social events draining. This means, for some of us, networking can be a nightmare of awkward, aimless conversations.

Author and speaker, Vanessa Van Edwards offers the following advice for networking events.

### Have a social goal for each event

Decide what you want out of an event ahead of time. Are you attending to get more business or to make friends? Nudge conversations towards topics aligned with this goal.

### Position yourself so people come to you

Don't stand next to doors or food. A better position is facing the bar so that people approach you after they've gotten drinks. Try to stay in the eye-line of the event host. They are the best source of introductions.

### Use what's around you to ask interesting questions

Don't use questions you've heard dozens of times before. These tired social scripts discourage deeper conversations. Instead, use context cues from the event to start safe but stimulating conversations. Have you been here before? How do you know the host? What brings you here?

### Pay attention to non-verbal cues of interest

While some may give verbal clues of their interest in a subject, a more reliable cue is the raised eyebrow. Watch for this cue as a signal to dive deeper into a topic. This will make you more memorable to your new social connection.

### Need more connection strategies?

Vanessa Van Edwards is the lead investigator at Science of People, a human behaviour research lab. Visit [scienceofpeople.com](https://scienceofpeople.com) for science-backed tips and masterclasses on captivating conversations.