



The Reluctant Networker's 52 Networking Tips

Making Connections...
...with Confidence



Breaking In

We've spoken before about the challenges of getting *out* of a conversation, but what about getting *in* in the first place? Let's look at different possible groupings that we might see at an event and talk about how we might approach each one.

- **One person.** This is an easy one. If you see one person standing off by himself, then you can just pretend you're the host of the party, walk up and say hello. A lot of times, if they're alone, it means they're painfully uncomfortable with the situation, so you approaching them makes you the hero.
- **Two people.** This one is a little more challenging. If they are shoulder to shoulder, facing the room, then feel free to walk up and say hello. If they're squared off to each other (face-to-face) or shoulder to shoulder facing away from the rest of the room, then they're usually having a private conversation which would be rude to interrupt.
- **Two people -- one who's a friend.** This is a special case. The nice thing here is if you can catch your friend's eye, then they are likely to invite you to join and will probably make the necessary introductions. Of course, still keep an eye on the body language. Even your friends have a right to a private conversation.
- **Three people.** I think my only concern here is that it's harder to make a connection with three people than it is for only one or two. We might also tend to focus on talking about ourselves instead of finding out about them. Still, if you



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can make it work, walk up, wait for a break, and ask permission to join.

- **Four or more people.** The good thing about larger groups is that as the number increases, it actually becomes easier to join. The downside is that it becomes almost impossible to make connections with individuals. On the other hand, larger groups often break down into smaller ones.

Once you're in the conversation, whether it's a group of two or twenty, remember that your goal is to find out about the other people and then decide if you would enjoy meeting them again. Chat, get their card, if it makes sense, and then move on. Save the long conversations for when you are seated over coffee at a later date.



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Recommended Resources

The website: <http://www.thereluctantnetworker.com>

The blog: <http://thereluctantnetworker.blogspot.com>

Our workshops: <http://thereluctantnetworker.com/content/workshops-and-training>

Background and Testimonials

Originally a computer programmer, Greg Peters understands the challenges facing every reluctant networker. He also knows, however, that networking is a learnable skill. In 2009 he founded The Reluctant Networker, LLC and has since worked with clients in technology, finance, and sales to help them build networks of powerful connections. He is the author of the blog "The Reluctant Networker" and contributes weekly networking advice to local radio and news outlets. He also presents to larger groups to spread the word that, performed properly, networking is the most powerful way to achieve success and significance in our lives.

"Just wanted to say THANK YOU for being our speaker for our January Grow Your Business Workshop. The time, energy, and effort that you provided was greatly appreciated. We have received some tremendous feedback from those who came (and even those who wish they would have). Thank you for helping us in our efforts to build a strong Downriver community! We would love to have you come back to speak for us again anytime!"



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~ Mark Tremper, Downriver Community Federal Credit Union

“Greg opens doors. By inviting me to a special networking event, Greg enabled me to make a crucial connection leading to a new position. Thank you, Greg! You are a powerful speaker, and an even better networker.”

~ John Arenz, Trust Officer, Wealth Management Group, United Bank & Trust, Ann Arbor, MI

“For a self-proclaimed 'nerd', Greg is a sensational person who happens to have a knack for putting others at ease with their fears and provides a steady approach for networking. I recommend seeking Greg's expertise if you have any hesitation at all regarding networking and speaking in public; his methods have greatly helped me get out of my own way.”

~ Rich Austin, Associate, Sandler Training Center - Ann Arbor