

Networking 202 x Gillian Mueller

How to approach someone you know, but don't really know, but like, want to know better:

How to approach someone you know, but don't really know, but like, want to know better: I get it, you see the same faces at every event, you met a couple of times before and you never talk, but like maybe you walk in the same circles but you haven't sealed the networking deal?

The same rules and actions apply as talking to strangers, but here you already have your in, you're a familiar face, you're locals so there is a lot less pressure to make an amazing second, third or fourth impression.

Before you walk up to them: Same as with strangers - have something to say. This time the pressure is on! If you've met before you should have more than just chitty chat. Take it to the next level.

Show Biz is a social game. If chatting with people you hardly know is hard for you, I understand, we all understand, stick to what you feel comfortable with.

But here's the good news, everyone has a certain amount of social anxiety and your new friend might even be thrilled to see a familiar face.

Re-introducing yourself without the Awkwardness (AKA the importance of small talk): 1. Shake hands and remind them of your name. 2. If they are unsure, also remind them of where you met before, but this isn't necessary. 3. Conversation openers: - Ask them how they've been before asking them what they are working on. They are humans before they are members of the industry. - TIFF provides a great context for conversation starters: What have you seen, what are you excited about seeing, WHO have you seen? - If you have something to promote, invite them. And if they have something, reiterate that you are going to be there -- AND THEN SHOW UP. - No shit talk, no shop talk, no backtalk - everyone loves a good tidbit, but no gossip. Keep it positive, keep it funny, keep it personal. If you're going to share some news, keep it as anonymous as you can. (I am terrible at not gossiping, I'm tagging myself like 80 times on this point) - No politics, no religion, no complaining. 4. If it's too busy and loud and you want to keep chatting with them but they are getting pulled away from the conversation, you always have Social Media. Facebook is the way to keep things going, just remember to follow-up. 5. If you are introducing someone to them, give everyone as much context as possible. You're the middle ground, so explain the how and why of the introduction - This is BLANK, I know them from BLANK, I wanted to introduce you because of BLANK. 6. The most important one: Listen, don't wait to speak. Ask questions, don't talk about yourself. And notice if they are granting you the same respect. If they aren't, maybe they are just someone you need to know, and not a new friend.

Like with strangers, anyone you want to talk to is a human being with thoughts and feelings and you have every right to connect with them. And like with strangers, keep up your end of the deal, read the body language. When it's time to go say your goodbyes and hope to see them later. If you're the uncomfortable one, excuse yourself.

Who else has some Hot Tips of making Small Talk?