



Make contacts and develop business

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CONCLUDING A CONVERSATION: HOW TO DISENGAGE FROM PEOPLE

So you've made a good impression, identified some common interests and agreed on follow up. Great! Now it's time to conclude the conversation in a polite, effective way and move onto new opportunities. But how? What do you say?

First, let's look at some important issues.....

1. **Accept reality.** Conversations come to an end. Very few people seem to know how or be comfortable with finishing a networking conversation. You can greatly help others by managing this portion of the encounter and making it easy for them.
2. **Watch for signs.** Usually there will be a lack of conversation or a loss of interest in the topic being discussed. When this happens, it means that the energy and enthusiasm of the interaction is waning. Be aware of this and start thinking about moving on.
3. **Decide to act.** Recognising that there is no further value to the conversation can be a signal to re-ignite the conversation with a new topic or change conversation partners. Realising this issue and taking positive action is both beneficial and necessary.
4. **Consider your partner first.** It can be bad manners to simply end the conversation and leave the other person standing alone. Consider their feelings before extricating yourself. Is there someone else in the room to whom you can introduce them before excusing yourself?
5. **Create a follow-up opportunity.** If you see good reason to get to know the person better suggest a follow-up meeting and ask for a business card. As they hand you their card, reciprocate with yours.
6. **Thank the other person.** One of the most important and overlooked aspects of concluding a conversation is to take the time to thank the other person – for their time, their company, their advice, their referral to a potential client, etc. Saying thank you demonstrates integrity, respect and professionalism.
7. **Change locations.** If you don't want to abandon your networking partner but want to create some new enthusiasm in your conversation, perhaps you can ask him or her to come with you to another location such as the bar or food table, or to join another group.

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So let's take a look at some gracious ways to end a conversation and move on.

“Well (say the persons name), I’m glad we had the chance to talk. Thank you for sharing your ideas on (whatever). Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to say hello to some more people.”

“I must be going, but thank you. I’ve enjoyed talking with you and look forward to seeing you again.”

“I want to catch up with Alison before she leaves.”

“Charles, I have to run. It’s been great talking with you. Thank you.”

“Good luck with your exam on Friday. I’ll keep my fingers crossed for you.”

“There’s a few more people I have to see. Will you excuse me?”

“I’ll get Brian to call you. Please let me know how things work out.”

“I’ll call you with the name of that printer you asked about.”

“Have a great time in Bali. Give me a call when you return home.”

“Excuse me while I mingle.”

Keep in mind that most people want to move on as well, but they don't know what to say. Make it easy for them.

“John, this is a networking event, so I’ll let you move along.”

“I don’t want to monopolise you any longer. It’s been a pleasure speaking with you.”

Occasionally you'll meet someone who has decided that you're going to be his or her new best friend. Getting away from such people can be difficult and may require guile and deceit. For example, you might glance over your shoulder at an imaginary acquaintance, smile brightly, raise your glass in a salute, and next time your captor takes a breath, say, ***“There’s a person over there who I’ve been trading phone calls with for a week, and I’d better go and say hello. It’s been a pleasure meeting you.”*** Shake hands and then take off. If they try to tag along, get about a 3-step lead on them, stop abruptly, wheel around, point sternly at a spot on the floor where they're standing, and say in a sharp voice ***“STAY!”*** If you have a rolled up newspaper, use it. This tactic never fails.

Here are two lines that don't work.....

“I’m off to the toilet.” The next thing you know, so are they.

“I’m going to the bar.” Now they'll want you to buy them a drink.

For more tips and advice on making the most of networking events read ***“HOW TO WORK A ROOM – Smart Socialising For Business Success”***

Effective networking skills do ***not*** come naturally, but they're easily learned. To find out about my networking and working the room courses, call me, Ron Gibson, on **0413 420 538** or visit my website at www.gonetworking.com.au