



Tips for Introverts

By:

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According to several studies, facing a room full of strangers is as stressful as public speaking. Coming into a room where you don't know anyone and where you feel awkward approaching others can be difficult. There is even a syndrome for it called "Inhibited Social Contact Initiation Syndrome."

The best news is that many excellent networkers are shy. They have learned the necessary skills. It is okay to feel uneasy about networking and you are definitely not alone.

By doing some planning ahead of the event, you can deal with anxieties you may be feeling.

1. Determine why you want to go to the event. What is the benefit to you professionally or personally? Is this even a good event to attend?
2. If possible, call a person in the organization to see if he/she is going or if the person will go with you. Arriving with a friend can help you get started.
3. Prepare some small talk questions to use when you meet someone new. Focus entirely on finding out about the person with whom you are talking.
4. Give yourself a goal such as seeking out one new person. Once you have spoken with that person, relax for the remainder of the event.
5. Treat networking like a game. Pretend you are about to host a party and concentrate on helping others have a good time.
6. Volunteer to help at the event. Arrive early and offer to be a greeter or to take reservations. Playing the host role gives you a "reason" to talk with others.
7. Introduce yourself to someone new as quickly as you can upon arriving. It will help you start meeting new people.

8. Make eye contact. When you are seeking out people to talk with, scan the reception area for eye contact and friendly smiles.
9. Your attitude is key to attracting people. Make sure it is positive even if you feel a bit anxious.
10. Remember that most people welcome conversation.
11. Don't think of the quantity of people at the event or you might feel overwhelmed. Concentrate on individuals whom you can meet one-on-one.
12. Decide to have fun. Have a laugh or two. It is relaxing and other people will be attracted to you.

Marcia Hall, the *Reputation Pro* with **Reputation COUNTS**, is a Certified **Contacts Count** Presenter, who helps you develop your most powerful asset - **your personal reputation**. To learn more about building your networking skills, please visit <http://www.reputationcounts.com/networking>