Networking is Good

2 Little Words That Will Up Your Networking Game
Adrian Granzella Larssen | Smart Brief on Leadership | 06.22.14

Ever found yourself in a networking conversation that seems to be going nowhere? You ask what you think are great questions but get one-word answers bounced back, and pretty soon you have nothing left to say (and start downing your drink so you can excuse yourself to “go get a refill”).

But while you may get stuck with generally awkward conversationalists from time to time, there are a few ways you can change up what you’re doing and saying to ensure that almost any first-time chat is a great one.

Here’s a quick but effective tip that Jacqueline Whitmore, etiquette coach and founder of The Protocol School of Palm Beach, gives in a video for Entrepreneur: Ask open-ended questions, and start them with the phrase, “Tell me.”

It sounds simple, but those two words are a cue that you’re engaged in the conversation and fascinated by what you might learn, in turn making your networking partner excited to share and open up. “Anytime you start a sentence with ‘tell me,’ it launches into scintillating conversation,” she says.

Here are a few to try at your next networking event:

- **Instead of:** “What do you do?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what’s been keeping you busy lately?”

- **Instead of:** “Do you like working there?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what’s it like working there?”

- **Instead of:** “Are you enjoying the event?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what’s been the best part of the event for you?”

- **Instead of:** “How’s business?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what are you most focused on right now?”

- **Instead of:** “What were you doing before this job?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, how did you get to where you are now?”

- **Instead of:** “What do you do outside of work?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what are you excited about outside of work?”

- **Instead of:** “What are you doing this summer?”
  - **Try:** “Tell me, what are you looking forward to this summer?”
Why You Should Always Keep a Running List of Your Career Accomplishments
Jane Scudder | Brazen | 06.19.14

Every professional should keep an up-to-date list of his or her accomplishments, responsibilities and results.

This list acts as a repository that you can draw from whenever you need to. Don’t anticipate looking for a new job or updating your resume soon? You should still keep a list of your accomplishments. Here’s why:

1. Keep better track of your experiences
   It’s difficult to remember all the details of our experiences. Documenting them close to when they happen enables you to accurately keep track for the future. This will make it easier to weave relevant experiences into a resume or cover letter. It’ll also help you simply remember.

2. Have readily available phrases and statistics to draw from
   When you run into the VP you admire in the elevator and she asks, “So what have you been up to?” you’ll have articulate, meaningful responses to give her rather than saying, “Not much,” or giving her a generic, “Things are so crazy!” This also applies to when a recruiter reaches out to you on LinkedIn or when your uncle asks about your job over the holidays.

3. Give yourself choices
   You’ll likely never include everything you’ve ever done in a resume or a conversation, but keeping a list of your accomplishments gives you options. When you’re ready to apply to your dream job, you can pick and choose the most relevant, compelling items.

4. Observe your own trends
   Keeping stock of your accomplishments lets you observe your own trends. Are there any project areas you’ve really knocked out of the park? Do you post the best results when working on a team or alone? Maybe you’ve led multiple cross-functional teams and not even realized it. Documenting what you’re doing and how you spend your time helps you identify patterns that might influence what turn your career takes next.

Ready to start or update your list, but unsure how? Create a simple list. To save time and write in a professional tone, try to keep the list as a “master” version of your professional resume.

Don’t forget to apply well-known resume writing tips like including statistics to quantify your results, using strong action verbs and writing about work you’ve done in the past tense and current work in present tense.

It’s common to get caught up in our day-to-day and lose sight of our careers in a broad sense. The day-to-day is important, but it’s equally important to step back every now and then and take inventory of what we’ve been up to.