**Learning Conversation Skills**

Are you one of those who consider it an ordeal to orally present reports, preside in meetings with new clients, coordinate activities that require making arrangements with your counterparts in your sister companies? Would you rather read than go to parties? Do you find it difficult to start a conversation with anyone you meet for the first time?

If the answer is NO, then you are one of the lucky ones who was born with the talent for connecting with other people or who has conversational skills. But this ability to talk with anyone is a learned skill. If you really want to, you can learn the skill. Why is it important to have good conversational skill, anyway?

Good conversation could promote friendships because sharing some things about you will make other people feel close and trust you. Another positive effect of being a good conversationalist is popularity and being liked because people have the impression that you are approachable. Other people will feel at ease in your company such that you shall be invited in many of their activities and this could widen your network of friends and business associates. Good conversation also gives one an image of being witty, intelligent, and self-confident.

The type or mood of conversation depends greatly on who the participants are, the topic being discussed, the relationship between or among the participants (are they old or new friends?), or their respective ages. In this regard, it is important to always put in mind to whom one is having a conversation with and you should not fail to adjust the conversation accordingly.

If conversation skills can be learned, then how does one start? Here are some tips.

* Learn to be interested in your fellow human beings. If this trait is well developed, you will have learned that there is no problem with striking a conversation with a newcomer. They are just waiting for you to make the first move.
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* If the host is busy, introduce yourself at social gatherings and say Hello and smile first.
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* Be polite and maintain this trait. Ask in a pleasant way, not as if you are investigating.
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* Ask the proper questions. Questions and replies should be related to the topic. You will be wasting the other person’s time you keep on changing topics without proper warning. .
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* Keep the conversation short. This shall give the other person the time to converse with other people too.
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* Maintain eye contact during the conversation. If you are sincere, the person you are talking with will see it in your eyes.
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* Listen and do not monopolize the conversation. Show your partner that you are also interested on his opinion abut the topic of conversation.
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* Be knowledgeable. How could one participate in a conversation if he or she has no idea about the topic? A lot of information is now available. One should take advantage of available information through the internet.
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* Learn to read or interpret body language. Act confident.
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* If you need to move around to meet other people, be prepared to say some gracious exit lines.

The above tips are general. One should add the following if the conversation is with the higher ups or somebody older than you are.

* Always remember to show respect.
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* See how you can have a conversation with the bosses in the office. You may ask your immediate superior for help. This is important because any recommendation from your immediate superior would need the approval of his or her superior for it to take effect. The approval would be easy if they have had some favourable conversation with you.
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* If the conversation is in the work place, between a superior and a subordinate, always remember to be polite. Do not contradict the superior in public or in the presence of other employees.
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* Remember to use the correct address or title in naming the superior or higher ups you are talking with. Do a little research on what to say in case you are invited to their parties.

Conversations are very important because they could make or break one’s career or relationships. With practice and determination, one can develop the skill.