

# BE A BETTER SMALL-TALKER

A good conversation between strangers has five stages, says Bernardo J. Carducci, director of the Shyness Research Institute at Indiana University Southeast.



## 1 Get Started

Signal a desire to talk, with an opening comment about the shared environment. The weather, while overused, is reliable.

*A compliment is a welcome ice breaker.*



**TIP**



## 2

### Introduction

Give your name or some information about yourself, and offer hints about topics you'd like to discuss. Make it easy for the other person to do the same.



**TIP**

*Avoid your favorite topic—whether it's opera or your Shih Tzu—or else you'll probably talk too much.*



**TIP**

*If you forget the other person's name, it is fine to say so. He or she has probably done the same.*



## 3

### Topic Finder

Ask questions and build on earlier comments. If the other person raises a topic you don't like, be ready with an alternative. A little silence isn't a sign of boredom.



## 4

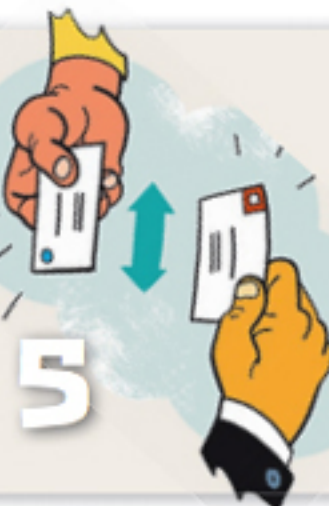
### Proceed With Caution

With the dialogue chugging along, you can be expansive. But be careful. If the other person is talking too much, offer information about yourself. If you pause and the other person changes the subject, you were dominating.



**TIP**

*Alcohol doesn't make you a better conversationalist. It only makes you feel that way.*



## 5

### Graceful Exit

When it's time to go, signal that the end is near. Offer a business card, your Facebook info or other way to stay in touch, and ask for the other person's too.

*If at any point you want the conversation to stop, move to this final phase.*



**TIP**