

Keane Komments©

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Great Bargain – Conversation



Here it is, a month after Valentines Day, and chances are – we’re still finding those little conversation candy hearts populating

candy aisles, backpacks, purses, pockets and briefcases.

The Art of Conversation

Fun as they may be – they are not the best conversation starters. And neither are these; So, how’s the weather? How about those Bears? How are you? How was your weekend?

These are a little too common (boring?) to start an engaging conversation. Sometimes referred to as “small talk”, but it’s actually quite more. It is Important Talk, and it is a valuable skill (being a conversationalist!) that can help us be more effective communicators and to establish more meaningful relationships.

Why should we have effective conversations with people? Because it makes everyone feel comfortable and less awkward. It draws people towards us. And it can help us be more successful at home, at work and at play.

I have been teaching at the university level for twenty years, and I have definitely observed a decline in the ability of students to engage in conversation. Recently, I put students into small groups, and gave them an assignment to discuss for 20 minutes. Some of them were unable to interact with each other beyond four minutes. Instead of talking, they were checking their cell phones.

Do our digital devices affect our ability to communicate? Absolutely. Now, I certainly

embrace technology and in fact, I believe it provides another option / channel to increase our communication with each other. But it should not be at the expense of losing important interpersonal skills.

And if we don’t practice our interpersonal skills, we will lose that ability to communicate – i.e., f2f (face-to-face).

Recently, someone told me a story of how her daughter, a recent college graduate, applied for a competitive position as a nurse. Her mom coached and practiced interview questions with her for weeks. The young woman interviewed, and was offered the job on the spot. Why? The interviewer commented that she had the best interpersonal communication, including eye contact, than any previous candidate.

Read the article in Psychology Today on The Effect of Technology on Relationships.



<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201006/the-effect-technology-relationships>

Read Emily Post and several Etiquette articles on communication, conversation and technology. <http://www.emilypost.com/communication-and-technology>

*People who can maintain an **intelligent Conversation** will be promoted before others and also have no problem in getting hired - they develop better working relationships with colleagues and superiors alike*

<http://EzineArticles.com/3152894>

Our ability to initiate and carry on a conversation contributes to building rapport and establishing relationships. Thus, we should always be prepared with a repertoire of topics that we know something about, and topics that are potentially interesting for the people we will be talking to.

Conversation Starters:

Some ideas - potentially interesting topics:

- **Apps**
- **Books**
Best book you ever read? Or check out the New York Times Best Seller list.
<http://www.nytimes.com/best-sellers-books/overview.html>
- **Bucket List**
- **Business**
- **College**
Where did you go? What was your major? If you could go back and change your major, what would it be?
- **Dating (for the Singles!)**
Would you do on-line dating?
- **Food & Wine**
Everyone is interested in food – cooking, baking, best restaurants & Food shows. Red wine or white?
- **Gardening**
- **Health; Pains, Aches & Cures**
- **Hobbies**
People are interested and involved in all sorts of activities;
 - Biking! 20 Million bikes are sold each year. Wow
 - Bowling! 50 Million people hobby this each year.
 - Collecting - Big. Collectors collect all sorts of clever things (different from hoarding!) stamps, coins, gold, cars, dolls, books, Disney, art, wine, & more.
 - Fishing - because \$46 BILLION is spent each year on fishing things.

- Scrapbooking
- **Movies**
Current movies, or certain genres or best movies of all time. This is a great conversation-starter: *What is your favorite all-time movie?* (I bet these will come up – Green Mile, Shawshank Redemption, Godfather, Vertigo, Rear Window, Titanic, Star Wars, P.S. I Love You, The Notebook.
- **Music**
Favorite band, performer
- **Shopping & Fashion**
Even if you don't like to shop – many people do.
- **Travel**
- **Trends & Timely Topics**
 - Creativity
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Mindfulness
 - More important to live a life of significance or success?
 - Obamacare
 - Oscars
 - Social Media (gchat, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr)
 - What is a Word you think is funny to say?
- **Working Out & Sports**
Beyond football and baseball, please! How about golf, college basketball, running, Happiness yoga, Zombie & Warrior Runs and Crossfit

Some tips on how to be an expert Conversationalist.

- ◆ Be Caring
- ◆ Be Curious
- ◆ Be Clever
- ◆ Be Credible
- ◆ Be Candid
- ◆ Be Connected
- ◆ And if you're up to it...be Charismatic!
- ◆ Importantly, Listen!