

Conversational Mind Control



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Introduction

The Importance Of Conversations Every Day Life

Whether you choose to realize it or not, human beings were designed to communicate and socialize with others from day one. It's hardwired into us naturally. In fact, communication restriction is part of the punishment process for people who are incarcerated.

You see, the people on the other side of the law know very well how much the human mind craves interaction with others and as a measure of punishment for crimes committed, they often restrict criminals from having the ability to nurture the soul through human communication.

Now aside from that, there's the reality that your ability to succeed in life is in direct proportion to your relationships.

Why?

Because regardless of what it is that you desire to have or achieve in life, chances are you're going to need the help of someone else to attain it.

So if your relationships are the key to your happiness, we must look at how relationships begin.

What is at the forefront of every relationship?

The answer is a conversation.

Regardless of the subject matter, be it a job interview, a date or a negotiation; the interaction requires some kind of exchange between two people. And the

better you become at mastering this exchange, the more of an advantage you have in life.

I've seen doors open with almost magical like opportunities for people who may not have necessarily been qualified to have them simply because of their ability to capture the interest and emotion of the person they were talking to.

I've also seen instances where people who were in essence "over qualified" to have access to certain opportunities be shut down and not even considered simply because they're incapable of making that connection that sets the stage for success.

When two people converse and things go well, they generate ideas which neither one of them could have come up with

individually and a true synergy is created.

The reason why I titled this book “Covert Conversations” is not because you’re going to be practicing any kind of black magic or coercion tactics on people but because you’ll be taking a proactive, focused approach to mastering a set of techniques that most people never even think about.

This will set you apart and equip you with a hidden advantage that the majority of other people simply do not have.

Overview of the Book

Let’s talk about what you’re going to learn in this book.

Conversational Building Blocks

We will start off with the building blocks of great conversations:

- Guiding Principles - Here you'll learn about the rules of the game that never change and must never be deviated from.
- Skill-set - Here you'll begin to learn about the different tools involved in covert conversations.
- Paradigm Shift - I'll also introduce you to a completely new way of looking at conversations just like true influence masters.

Conversation Ignition

Here you'll learn 5 dangerously effective ways to start a conversation with anyone, anywhere at any time.

Ice Breaking

After igniting a conversation you'll learn how to easily break the ice so you can change the direction of awkward or undesirable conversations to where you want them to be.

Conversational Movement

Here you'll learn about what it really takes to keep a conversation moving and

out of unwanted territory such as arguments, boring topics and awkward silence.

Conversational Exits

Last but not least, you'll learn how to end a conversation without offending anyone.

Conversational Building Blocks

Let's talk a little bit about the conversational building blocks. Just as a good house begins with a strong foundation, so will your conversations. Without these in place, your conversations can wind up moving in undesirable directions. You have to make sure your conversations are natural and they come from within organically otherwise you are creating something

that is not real and people will pick up on it.

Building Block 1 - Smile

When you smile, you project a sense of friendliness and warmth and people will become naturally attracted to and open to you.

Building Block 2 - Inviting Eye Contact

Next on the list is invitational eye contact which basically means having a set of “friendly eyes”.

The key to the right kind of eye contact is to maintain a friendly eye contact, hold it for a few seconds and then look away casually and then come back again.

You don't want to look away when you're saying something important though, as this will

subconsciously send a signal to your subject which says you're dishonest. Not a good thing.

Building Block # 3 - Warm Mannerisms

Always make sure you're exuding a friendly energy. This is something that's a little hard to put into words but I'm sure you've experienced it before when you're around people you trust and admire.

Building Block # 4 - Remain Reserved

Don't try too hard or overdue anything as this will project an image of desperation which repels rather than attracts.

Now we're going to talk about some covert concepts.

The reason I call them covert is because they are very much alive in the world of

human interaction but few people choose to recognize, respect and use them advantageously.

Luckily you won't be one of them :)

Covert Concept # 1 Value

Here are some of the foundational concepts or ideas that could be running in the background of any conversation or any human interaction at any given time.

Value

Whenever two human beings engage, an exchange of value takes place. That exchange is either equal among both parties or slightly pointing to one person more than the other.

Growing up in NYC, I've seen my share of hustlers in the street trying to give away stuff. In fact, I'd go as far as to say

that you probably can't walk 10 city blocks without someone trying to get you to take a flyer or coupon of some sort.

The theory is that if they give you something for free, you'll come into their store and buy something.

But guess what?

The majority of people walking down won't even acknowledge the people handing out the flyers much less take one.

Now, this isn't because people are mean, cruel and heartless.

It's simply a automatic response which has to do with an unconscious placement of value. Most New Yorkers feel that what is being offered has no real value

otherwise it wouldn't be given away for free on a street corner.

Therefore, they choose not to engage in the exchange as they don't want to waste their time on matters which provide no value.

So, where am I going with all of this?

Simple. You must always be aware of the value exchange that takes place between you and another person when conversing with them and always make sure you have something of value to contribute.

That value can be anything including your knowledge, experience, ability or even just your demeanor.

Sometimes people just like being around others because of the energy they give off.

Covert Concept # 2 - Status

Human beings are very driven by this idea of status or hierarchy. In fact every mammal is. I just recently purchased a puppy for my wife and daughter. He's a cute little guy but he's at that point where he's mouthing and biting everything.

This is actually very normal behavior for a 3 month old puppy. They are simply exploring the world with their mouths. The problem comes later on when they start biting people if you don't correct it now.

And part of the correction process is letting the dog understand that you are the pack leader. You are the one in control. One way to do this is to gently put the dog on his back and hold him down while you look into eyes. There are

2 important parts here. First, you must keep the hold for as long as it takes for the dog to give up and stop moving (eventually he will no matter what). Keep in mind, you're not applying any pressure that would hurt the dog, you're just simply holding him in place much like an invisible cast for lack of a better term.

Ok now for the second part, it's extremely important that you maintain eye contact and not look away first.

If you deviate from either of these 2 steps, the dog will feel as though he has dominated you and he is your leader rather than the opposite.

Now obviously, we can't do this to other human beings (and I'm not suggesting that human beings are animals) but what

I am saying is that this element of hierarchy exists among all living things and there are ways to work it in your favor.

When I say “in your favor” I mean that - in human social situations - there are advantages to being the pack leader or Alpha male as well as being a little lower down on the pecking order.

You see, where you are in the pecking order isn't as important as what position you take in accordance with what the interaction requires.

Deliberately taking a lower status position reduces the defenses of your subject and makes him more receptive to being influenced.

Once again, this really depends on the situation at hand.

There will be times where being the pack leader is absolutely the role you need to take on.

But in instances where that is not possible, you must adopt a more submissive role. The key is consciously knowing that you're doing so with the big picture of getting what you want in mind.

Covert Concept # 3 - Emotional Awareness

The emotional exchange that takes place between people during a conversation is perhaps the most important element. Unfortunately, it's probably the most misunderstood as well.

You see most people lose sight of the fact that a conversation is very much an emotional exchange among people and because of that, you have to make sure people are in a positive emotional state at all times to keep them in the conversation to begin with.

I can't tell you how many times I've seen people completely lose the pulse on how their statements and actions are affecting their subjects.

Often times, the subject may be wrong and the influencer is doing nothing more than repeatedly try to shove the same message down the throat of the subject just to prove that he's "right".

This is a big mistake.

It doesn't matter who's right.

What matters is whether or not you attained the desired result and if something isn't working, it's time to switch things up.

And the first step is to bring the subject back to a positive emotional state.

This will all depend on the subject, the environment and the matter at hand.

The key is being aware that you have to do this rather than doing what the majority of others (who are not masters of influence) do like arguing and using fear tactics.

With awareness comes answers.

Ask yourself "How is the subject being affected by what I'm saying?"

If they are being affected in a negative way, think about how you can change the way you present the message so that it get's absorbed in a positive manner.

After all, that's when the message truly sticks.

Conversational Art-form

There are things that can be tuned-up and improved, like in any other form of art.

A great painter will improve his strokes constantly, and a good sculptor will sharpen his tools every day. Well, a good conversation will require that you hone your emotional language and that you keep your body language and voice in tune with what you want to convey.

Art always brings great rewards. For painters fame, for writers immortality

and for the storyteller – great conversations

Improve your voice

The most vital of things when you are improving your conversation techniques on a functional standard is this: improving your voice.

Remember, your voice is your tool. With it, you can transmit emotions, through the tone of your voice, for example. You can also ask a question or imply a doubt – you can show conviction and different emotional degrees.

The voice rhythms are also important to keep your speech engaging. If you become monotonic, your listeners will

easily get bored and stop paying attention. Instead of doing this, make sure you get to use different voice rhythms.

Last but not least – projection. If your listeners fail to listen – then they will not possibly be capable of understanding you, so they won't engage in a conversation with you. It is a pretty clear rule.

Back when I was a youngster, I used to murmur. Even today, I “eat up” my words or end up speaking very fast. It is a variable I am still training to improve.

Now, from someone who experienced how bad it can be to have no control over your voice, I can make it clear to you that my conversations with people have been improving as I have been training my

voice skills – this happens because people now understand me better, so they actually start to talk back more often. The orators of another age – the prestigious Romans and Greeks – spent their lives training their voice. One of the notorious orators, named Cicero, was one of the most distinguished speakers ever. When he was a kid, he murmured a lot — so he placed tiny stones on his mouth and practiced that way, so that he could improve his diction and projection.

Just remember – time spent working on these aspects is a good investment.

Consciousness Linked-Thinking

There are other traits you can put to good use – developing consciousness linked-thinking, for instance. This is when you get your sub-conscious to get you new info constantly. It is answering to the current happenings – it always gets you something that fits the conversation you are having. This is called linked-thinking. Upgrade this skill by constant training.

Empathy

You will need to learn how to generate empathy too. The skill to take off the red flags of alert from others, especially when you first meet them, is a vital factor towards a successful “ice breaker” conversation. Let us look at these basic factors later on in this introduction.

Storytelling with emotional charge

You have to make sure your ability to tell stories is top notch, because this and the emotion you place into these stories can make or break a great conversation.

In the U.S. of America, old southern men – like Mark Twain, for example – were known as awesome storytellers. This was one of the reasons that they were great speakers as well. The old south always had a great storytelling tradition. One of the reasons this happened was because of all the slaves that were here – these African men and women had a strong oral tradition that influenced the natives.

So, as I unlock the secrets of becoming an epic storyteller, I also need you to put

some time aside and dedicate it to practicing these skills. It is one of the most vital things you can learn to master conversation as a form of art.

How to Start Talking

Now, let us see how to ignite a conversation

Objective: Being heard!

Well, the reason people fear starting a conversation is kind of sad – they fear they might not know what to say – because starting a conversation is one of the easiest parts. Breaking the ice is what needs more thought and practice.

Let us take a look at the start of a conversation. The objective you must

have is getting the listener's attention – getting him/her to listen.

It is that simple!

Focus on getting the listener's attention and you started it!

Once you begin chatting, you have to do the right thing – or you will stall. It is quite easy. Focus on some of the variables involved in beginning a conversation and I will disclose to you some conversation starters that will get you a conversation every single time in any part of the world with...well, virtually anyone!

Conversational Ignition

The 90/10 rule

There is a variable called the 90/10 rule. Let us take a look at this.

There is a thing called conversational ratios that you need to have in mind – and this is why most conversations stall.

When someone does not know you, and you start chatting with that person, you have to understand that the person is as cold as you were before you gave yourself the pep talk to go and start that conversation.

As they are not ready, they will just think “This is unexpected, I don’t know what I am expected to say now.”

So, the key here is to give them some time to get ready to talk, but how exactly do you do that?

Simple, you carry the conversation yourself. Do it in the first minutes by monopolizing it with 90% or 100% of the content – this will make your listener warm up a bit.

Do not shut up!

Speak for both of you – this is the rule. Feel free to ask a tiny question from time to time, but make it an easy one.

We will analyze the questions later on, but right now you have to wrap your listener around the conversation, and make them feel at ease by providing the

content yourself – so they will warm up at their own pace. Until they feel ready – do not shut up.

Be cheerful, don't be dying on the conversation – you have to imbue enthusiasm into your voice. It must sound lively and dynamic.

You need enthusiasm in your speech and interesting topics – we will talk about the topics ahead. By providing the content, you can talk forever and still get to do them a huge favor because you are granting them a shot at warming up at their own rate.

Now, think about this situation:

I am asking you to tell me a joke – unless you always have one prepared, you will

struggle to answer right away. However, if you are in a group of friends where everyone is telling jokes to each other, it is suddenly easier. Why is this? Well, simply because your mind had the chance to adjust in that direction.

In conclusion, if you have to warm up to joke you certainly have to warm up to socialize. Make it easier for others to socialize with you by carrying the weight of the conversation for a while.

Signal Recognition

Recognizing signals is a vital principle too.

People give you lots of signals, and you have to recognize and interpret them so you will know if you are bothering them, even if the topic is nice, if the voice rhythm is ok and those kinds of details.

How can you manage that?

You have to make use of the senses you were given. Eyes and ears are your best allies to interpret the reactions you get from your listeners. I do not have the time to go deep into the subject on this introduction, but I do want to say that most of us are already doing this interpretation on some level – we are all naturally social, so you can tell if you are boring someone.

I have a little tip in the bag for you; it's a general rule of thumb you may benefit from reading:

Always enter a conversation with someone or a group in a way that shows you always bring a little bit more energy than what they had before you arrived.

Let us consider this:

You are in a loud party and everyone is screaming, drinking, playing games and shouting around. You can't possibly come near the group to say "bla bla bla bla" with a lethargic monotone voice. It just won't work.

You got to go near them with more energy than them, so they can awe and think "Wow, this guy is lots of fun, I want to talk to this guy and hang out near the man, I feel my life is already improving!"

Remember, do not take value from them, and add it instead—you have to give in order to receive and conversations are all about exchanging value.

Let us think about an opposite situation:

You are in a library and the atmosphere is all nice and quiet. Now imagine you go talk to people, like you did in the nightclub – shouting around and jumping, dancing and playing around, full of fire in the eyes and stuff. They would not be ready to face that kind of energy at the library – you would burn their eardrums. However, avoid being completely bland just because it is a library – nobody likes bland persons and it certainly doesn't make you look interesting.

Always get a little bit higher than others in terms of energy.

The trick here is recognizing the energy level of your listeners – to discover how their brains are connected and what kind of energy they expect from their peers. You then look at that energy and throw yours just a tiny bit higher – and it's done. You'll be accepted and thought about as a great guy because you are never exaggerating or boring. Placing your energy level just a tiny little bit above your audience's energy level is one of the key factors to look interesting in the eyes of others.

Without proper training and experience, you will probably fail this one or two times and point too low or too high, but it is the fun part of learning! Learn from your mistakes and make the proper adjustments. If you fall, you get up – that’s how life teaches you.

People are almost always cool enough to grant you another shot if you failed to adjust your energy levels correctly the first try. They will send you a signal when you fail.

So, summing up on the knowledge so far:

Keep on talking until they warm up

Always have your energy just a bit higher than your listeners’

Some of you reading this can already do this part, so let us take a look at something extra.

You can manipulate the way people’s spirits will behave. For instance, if you want to have a great time – keep your energy rising as they follow. Do not rise without knowing they followed your previous rise – always be on the lookout for their energy levels, because if you rise and they aren’t following you, you may make them feel awkward.

If you want people to be serious and go over some important things with you, do the opposite of what you did on the first case – keep lowering your energy and slow everything down as they follow

you. You manipulated their spirits to follow yours.

Don't you think you can manipulate any group though – this isn't Force Persuasion of the “Star Wars” saga. The leeway that you get is proportional to the influence you already have with a group. If it's a group you never talked to, things are different than if you are with your childhood friends.

Let us take a look at an example: It is your party and people are coming invited. If some of them bring a friend, you will get away with lots of things and be able to manipulate them with better chances. Create a faux pas with that stranger.

Now, let us think about what would happen if you were at a job meeting and you knew no one. By now, you probably understand that you have to be more careful – trying to recognize signals and seeing when you passed your mark. You do not want to risk your neck over exaggerating something so thread carefully.

Off course, there is also the middle ground between those two cases. A good example is a convention where all the people there share an interest or hobby – or are passionate about the same thing. This gets you a more controlled environment, so people tend to be warmer towards each other. If you are selling something to a shopkeeper, then it is going to be harder – they enter the

conversation with distrust on their mind, they have all of their red flags raised already, they know you are there to sell.

So, the environment can play a vital part too. You have to analyze the context of your situation at all times to make sure you know what you can get away with and what can you get in trouble for. Do not shut up, keep your signal recognition sky-high and keep your energy level a bit higher than your listeners'. These are the keys for you to add value to a conversation.

5 Useful Icebreakers:

Useful Icebreaker Number 1:

Making your introduction

So, let us take a look at the first of our useful icebreakers.

This first one is the most useful and quite possibly one of the simplest of them all – it is the self-introduction. Let us take a look at the awesome simplicity it involves – it is not like it's the first time you have done this – you have been doing this all your life and your parents taught you how to do it at a young age. You pick yourself up, you get next to your listener and simply say: “Hello, I’m John Smith and I’m a friend of your husband and so on.”

Now here’s the secret:

Confidence is key – do not worry about seeming over-confident (just don’t be cocky either). You don’t want to mumble around and speak like: “Ahmm... I’m

John Smith...err....I'm a friend of..your husband... It is a real pleasure to meet you," – this will get you a result, but you won't like it as it will not be the best: the listener will feel as awkward as you, and that creates a lot of tension that reinforces the ice, making it difficult for it to break later on.

Always remember that by appearing shy, nervous and insecure – you are “shooting yourself on the foot.”

Great samurai warriors say that you have to swing with the intention of killing – that goes for this too: be confident, do not mumble around, but instead go in for the kill. You have got value to present and people like to see that – they get all

excited and they start thinking their life is going to be better now that they met you.

If you think the person or group you are approaching will value it, start up with a compliment like: “Hey, you look like cool enough guys, most of the people here aren’t nearly as fun, can I join you? My name is John Smith and I’m so-on...”

This works in all kinds of places like meetings, conventions, airplanes, bars and even funerals—in every conceivable place. Why does it always work? What makes it so infallible?

It is actually quite simple...

You are bringing a kind of attitude that tells people you are worth talking to and that they are not going to feel strange or awkward around you – they can only improve by the value you bring to the conversation. This will calm their fears down and help you get the ice broken later on.

Your enthusiasm, your confidence, your smile, your posture – you are telling people via sub-communication that their days are going to get better now that they know you and are talking to you”. Go out and practice, you are going to enjoy it, and it is a really good way to jump-start a conversation and make new friends.

Useful Icebreaker Number 2:

Be hilarious (don't be ridiculous though, careful – don't force it).

My next tip is about starting a conversation and using humor to do it.

Humor is a nice option because it breaks the ice and starts up the conversation with your new listener all at the same time. It really does lots of different things, because it makes you look self-confident while it makes others enjoy themselves. It is a great icebreaker and is really powerful amidst human beings.

A good property about humor is that it diminishes anxiety and nervousness.

When you or your listener are feeling a bit on the stiff side, a good joke is one of the surest ways to eliminate this

nervousness and to regain calmness and relaxation.

If you get to your listener up-front using humor, this shows you are a calm person and that they will have a good time if they keep on talking to you. You are offering value to them, and this is one of the best ways to start.

Now, let us look at an example of what a humorous entry looks like:

You're in a bar, and you are sipping a cold drink after a hard day of work. Meanwhile, the barman closes on you and accidentally trips on the mat, dropping a plate with beverages and breaking the glasses and spreading all the peanuts over the floor.

You can look to the guy sitting next to you at the counter, smile to him and say: “Unleash the Elephants!”

People who know that elephants love peanuts – and that think that the idea of a horde of uncontrolled beasts roaming the bar is funny – would find the scene attractive, because it turns an awkward and embarrassing moment into something people will laugh with.

A few pointers about humor now:

Do not try to force humor out if you are uncomfortable or nervous, this will backfire on you – and they will feel bad as well. Let me give you a leg up: Funny conversation starters are great when you are confident, but they will not work if you are insecure or nervous. The more

you practice the more likely you will be in the mood for joking.

Warning sign: Don't try to make humorous remarks about somebody – it may be innocent and well intentioned for you, but they may take it as an offense if you have not interacted with them enough and shown you are a playful person. You can do this to probe how strong or weak your listener's ego is, but prepare to suffer the consequences.

Be especially careful about your remarks when you are dealing with someone that appears to lack self-confidence, as self-esteem problems make this kind of people very vulnerable to criticism.

Useful Icebreaker Number 3: Situational Conversation

Another useful icebreaker is what I like to call the situational conversation icebreaker.

What is this about? It is when you drop a remark regarding something that is currently happening or present in the situation. Complimenting people on their clothes, shoes, ties, scarves and so on is an example of situational conversation.

This is something that can work wonders: If you have a nice piece of clothing you will probably be proud if someone compliments it - so, if you

flatter them, they feel more valuable around you and will want to talk to you more (they will think you add value to them).

Well, I avoid this one for two main reasons. First of all, this is one of the most used ice breakers, so people have said that and done that – and if not, well it is pretty obvious and shows that you are not being very creative. Make an effort and strive to be different!

Another factor that strays me away from this path is the way people can think of it – they can get the feeling you are just “breaking ice” and that you could not care less about where that pretty looking blue tie came from. So, this may cause a negative impact – it is kind of a double-edged tactic, no one likes a “groveller”.

But it is ok if you do this, everybody does it, but my preference rests with not doing this, I like to make my ice breakers feel genuine and this actually pays off. If I really like a piece of clothing the listener is wearing, I'll ask where they bought it, but if I do not like it – I will not ask, simple as that.

There are many more interesting situational conversation starts that feel much more amazing and original. The last useful ice breaker was a better one, because humor is a great conversation starter that happens to be a situational opener all in one.

Why is that?

Well, simply because you took something that happened in that moment and made a

remark about it. That really works and you should keep this in mind.

If you are in a nightclub and at the middle of the night there is a blackout and everything gets quiet – you have the chance to turn to the person next to you and say “What happened now? Maybe they didn’t pay the electricity bill!” (Even if it is that amazing girl you have been looking at the whole night) – Perfect conversation starter.

You successfully started it because the content was fresh and you shared a mutual experience.

There are literally thousands of ways you can practice this. For example, when you are waiting for something and a kid swears in public – you can just turn around and say something like: “Ah... he

knows them all eh? Kids these days...” –
The content and context isn’t very important now, what matters is that you are sharing an experience you both went through, and that creates empathy making it easier to talk to that person after this.

It is great as an icebreaker and if you want to get to know the other person a little better.

So, as you are walking around this big world, start to notice the little details and all of the things that happen around you – you can practice your social skills by making a comment about them if you see anybody else who was noticing those happen too. Give it a try and you will probably get amazed with the results.

Congratulations, you made a new acquaintance and you're starting to get the hang of this!

Useful Icebreaker Number 4: Getting Help

This is a method you have used before; you ask someone for their help.

Everyone has experienced this method already. If you ask a stranger for a light or for him to tell you the time, then you are asking for help – and people are usually friendly in this case. They will try to help if they can. I, personally, have gotten into great warm conversations by simply asking people for their assistance – I got a few friends that way, right on the spot.

Time and time again, the tip is to keep it fresh – make sure you aren't asking just for asking and that you actually need their help. Do not resort to asking just to have something to talk about; do not make the listener's lose their time with you this way – they value time and you should too.

So, by now you see that starting a conversation with someone is actually easy. Do not force it; if you want to meet them, just say hi and introduce yourself – or put some situational conversation in use.

Decide as you go. The rule is to avoid depending on help if you have other options available. If not, then go for it, but don't force it, and act natural.

Just an additional remark, and this is true for all useful ice breakers, but particularly true for ice breakers via help request. A normal conversation focuses on several topics that follow a random path. This happens because of the linked thinking stream that makes an idea spark up from another completely unrelated idea. So, be ready to jump around chaotically as this is the way it should be.

A little bad tip: Instantly kill a conversation and get it to a whole lot of awkward level by staying on the same topic time and time again.

Why does this happen? Why is this such a huge turnoff?

Well, people will start to think that you just know about that topic and really have nothing more to say. As time

progresses in the same topic, awkwardness grows and boredom builds up. Keep the natural order of jumping around in topics, no matter how you started the conversation.

Finally, do not forget that until your listener warms up, you have to carry the weight of the conversation respecting the 90% or 100% rules – you are the one that provides the content. Your listener will thank you by contributing his own content once he warms up.

Pro-tip: Get as many conversation topics around in the start, because that is the path that it will follow any way. (It is also useful to build up wide rapport, but more on that later)

If you respect the normal path of conversation, people will enjoy talking to

you and they will contribute with content. If you keep your “mono-topic” conversation, well, people might think you are an expert at it first, but they will get frustrated and decide you are too boring. Avoid doing this, or you may lose a valuable connection.

Useful Icebreaker 5: Challenging

This useful icebreaker is one of my favorites. By using this tactic, you already tossed the topic on the table, and you have got the potential of being able to keep talking about it.

I call this the challenging useful icebreaker, not because it is challenging, but because it challenges the listener –

you have to ask a question that your target can not help but respond to.

When I was a teen, my girlfriend got me a bouquet of flowers – well, I was overjoyed, but I could not tell what it meant.

Well, I was thinking on the meaning another day and there were some people around, so I picked myself up and asked to know if they knew what a girl giving you flowers meant. I proceeded to tell the story, and before I knew it, I sunk in the middle of an awesome conversation with them– one of the most fascinating conversations I was ever in.

Well, the key factor to a good challenge is the question, the situation – what you ask has to be challenging, yes, but it has to be engaging too.

The better the question, the more fascinating the story, the more they want to contribute with content.

And it is actually quite simple and straight forward to have one of these intrigue based conversation starters. Just think about your own life. Think about some of the unusual things that have happened in your life, or the amusing things that have happened in your life, and you can create one out of those. It is always interesting to get other peoples' opinions on things like that so it is useful for starting the conversation and to get feedback on a topic that was actually intriguing you.

This is where I raise another warning sign: As I said previously, normal conversations jump around to several

different topics – that is natural. Well, with this kind of icebreaker your audience will feel compelled to keep to that topic – you must avoid this and get the conversation to follow its natural way. Changing the natural rhythm of conversation is never a good thing.

It is ok if you are enjoying a particular flow of conversation, and we will talk about this later, but right now let us see how to easily break the ice.

So, how do you break the ice?

Ultimate Advice: Keep on conversing!

Always keep in mind the ultimate advice I just gave you – have fun and keep talking. Until you get the ice walls down, your listeners are still cold and getting

warmed up, so they will not contribute like we discussed earlier.

If you don't do this and simply shut up or stop providing fresh content – then they will feel compelled to stop the conversation there.

So, keep on talking and carry them there till their brain catches up to you and they get in on the actual conversation.

Add a little of your own value.

You have to, besides keeping the conversation, add value to it – Value is the best equity on a conversation and its value is priceless. If people are both contributing, it ends up being an amazing conversation. If only one person is paying value to it, then it is only

mediocre – and one of the entities involved will get out quickly.

In this section, let us go over some of the concepts that will help you out in making a great conversation by adding value to it to keep your listeners engaged.

Keep this in mind: Do not struggle to add value. If your listener wants to add value himself, then let him do it – that is the point anyways!

Now in this section, we are going to look at a few ideas or concepts that will help you to really run the conversation and add value to it in a natural way.

Do not get me wrong, but you don't have to be the beacon, the cornerstone and the pillar of the conversation. You need a lot of maturity to step back and let someone

else add value and control the conversation for a bit, so do this from time to time and people will notice – I guarantee that.

Don't be the class's clown and dance for a coin – this means that you shouldn't entertain others by trying too hard, because this way they will never see your true self.

I have a friend that happens to be an awesome illusionist. When he is feeling shy or when he meets new people, he starts performing magic tricks to add value. Well, here is the problem – once he does one people start going around saying “Wow, that was simply amazing. Do another! Do another! C'mon, another one! Just one!”

So, he does another, and where is the conversation in the middle of all that? What's he getting out of the conversation? Where is the value he is supposed to get?

He became an attraction, a clown, a dancing monkey – that sucks. Do not go there and don't do that. Try to add value in some different ways.

A rule to take with you in the bag: if you entertain someone, do it because you like it. When it is not funny anymore for you, simply stop it. You are not their servant and people will understand that even if they seem disappointed at first.

Do not be an entertainer and their personal clown whose only purpose is to give out value to others, that's really depressing. When people start craving for

another trick, make them work for it. Give and take is what conversations are all about. Don't just give; don't just take.

Signal Reading

This is another thing you need to do in order to be an expert ice breaker – you have to know what the signals that show the ice is already broken are.

Lots of people break the ice and don't realize it because they didn't read the signals. If after you break the ice you keep on talking – you will begin monopolizing the conversation in excess, and you will kill it.

You should be having a normal conversation, and you got it killed by

talking non-stop because you thought you still had to carry it on your shoulders.

You do not want to be one of those persons that get drunk with the sound of their own voice. Nobody likes a narcissist and that's what you're going to look like if you do this, so beware.

You did not get drunk with your voice, you just didn't realize they were ready to speak, that the ice wall was broken and the red flags were down.

So, what's the trick? How can you tell? Well, they are pretty easy to tell – they start by asking you things like your name, what's your job, where do you live or start to tell you their own stories and jokes. If your audience compliments or

teases you, smile in agreement or look fascinated – they are opening to you.

Above these signals, there is one of them that people do not notice and it instantly tells you the ice walls are down and the red flags are broken. The reader: the unconscious mind.

What's the sign and how to detect it?

The gut feeling you have when you just “feel” things calmed down.

When people start to talk to someone, they have some inner tension. When you talk with a group, you'll deal with the group's joint tension. This tension is inside you and you can feel it. When the ice breaks, you will feel all of that tension slowly dissipating, like being drained or fading like a clearing mist.

You will start to feel comfortable and your “inner alarm” will tell you: “Look mate, the tension is slipping away, we are in the right path – they’re feeling great and relaxed now!”

They are starting to feel they can trust you at this point and you feel it too – you notice this by reading the group’s sub-communication variables. Start noticing the details and your gut feelings, because they are useful signals you can use to recognize tension levels in a group – you’ll know when it fades.

The 7 Imperial Icebreakers

Icebreaker #1: Humor

I've given you some useful icebreaker tips, now it is time to analyze the icebreakers themselves. Well, the most powerful ice breaker of all is humor. Telling a joke or funny story will do wonders to clear people's tensions and break the ice – and you will look confident doing it too.

Remember back at high-school when there were popular kids and kids not so popular? Do you see now that popular kids were popular because they were confident and not the other way around? If you hadn't realized it yet, well maybe you do know. Confidence assures people around you that you know what you're doing, and that's a plus that relaxes them and keeps them around you.

Humor comes in different sizes and packages and you can deliver it in variety – funny remarks, comments, teasing, jokes and etc...

Keep it real though; do not go over the top. If your audience is too young for some remarks, simply do not make them — use common sense when calculating these kinds of things. If you are around elders, I mean really old people – mind your language, do not shock them – they did not live in the same society as you and they may not be prepared to hear certain things that sound natural to you.

Make sure the humor you are delivering fits the situations and your purposes.

Another key factor is that humor only works if your spirits are feeling it, if you are feeling the light side of your

personality strong that day or if the sun seems to be shining on your shoulders since you woke up. If you force it, you ruin it. You have to share something you are feeling yourself or it will come out as fake and forced.

If you don't have it in you, learn how to get your spirit in the mood, because that's an awesome feeling, and it helps you connect better.

Icebreakers #2 & #3: Social Vibes and Storytelling

I will deal with these icebreakers together because they're the "lighting and thunder" of a great conversation. Let us look to both of them to better understand what I mean.

Storytelling was around before the wheel and toilet paper were, people love stories and they also love to tell them. On your quest to master your voice, you have to aim to become a master storyteller – this is one of the key skills of a great speaker and you should seek to dominate it.

Mark Twain was a great storyteller and people worshipped him for it – he would add value, entertain and be able to maintain normal conversations easily – he was a great speaker.

Social vibes are the phenomenon that consists of the “give and take” people engage in with their conversations. It is like a game of ping pong where you and your audience are the paddles and content is the ball. It keeps changing

fields. That is what social vibing is all about.

It is a normal chit chat, the kind of small talk people make with each other, small statements that do not add anything, like talking about the weather and saying that “it is cold outside; the weather lady told it would be a hot day”.

You may think this kind of topic is not important, but I can assure you it certainly is. To understand this, you have to have a grasp on the meaning of this concept “social vibing.”

Let us first understand that the content in social vibing is not important at all. The info you share will not be deeply considered and you can fill it in with almost anything. Social vibing is all

about exchanging emotional charges and energy.

It is an excuse, a means to an end, the trader of emotional intensity between two or more parts.

When you meet a friend that you have not seen for a long time, well it is a wonderful experience, but sometimes you just have small talk – it does not matter at all, it is still interesting because you are exchanging your emotional energies and it is a great experience for both.

Why does this happen?

Because you missed your old friend and you are feeding each other with emotional intensity that binds you

together. You are trading emotional charges and this reinforces your bond with your friend, a bond you had stopped working on for some time, that's why this works so well.

Now you are beginning to understand why social vibes are so important and why they are very powerful even though the content is small talk and seemingly useless.

The key here is: do not waste your time thinking about the context, but focus on the emotional vibe you are transmitting – take people through an emotional rollercoaster with highs and lows to keep them engaged. The vital point here is the exchange of emotional charges and you have to make sure they are tuned up, forget content!

Share enthusiasm and good things in an excited way, with fire in your spirit and tell some sad things that happened in a more thoughtful and peaceful way - build a vibrant conversation that will keep the emotional rollercoaster going on and this will bind you closer.

Ice breaker #4: Intrigue pieces

There is a wonderful ice breaker that I have baptized “intrigue pieces.”

Well, this is widely known as a “party piece,” but it can be used in many different places and occasions – lawyers can use it, therapists can use it, you can use it at parties, if you’re a student, in class, you name it.

An intrigue piece is an ice breaker that teaches something cool or intriguing. By intriguing your listeners, you pull their attention and you break down the red flags making the ice go with it. What an awesome way to create value and get attention.

Avoid becoming a trivia machine though, everything is bad in excess!

Have some light and some heavy intrigue pieces to use in different occasions.

Icebreaker #5: Life Observations

Break the ice by making observations about life, yours or theirs.

If you take a look at a stand-up comedian you will see that most of his humor is based on life observations. Why is this so funny? Well, you instantly feel a bond

towards that joke. They usually grab something everyone does, like singing in the shower for example. People think life observation jokes are funny because they result from shared experiences – you experience having made what the standup comedian says he has done.

Imagine a philosopher, now mix it up with a stand-up comedian, what do you get? The result is someone who can take topics and make them serious or funny as he sees fit. Guys like this are great company, because they have unique views on the world, so they add value by sharing these views – people are aware of this and they will feel more than happy to talk to these guys.

If you become this type of person, you will become an expert “personality

reader.” People like to watch on other people, and if you team up with them, you will create a form of companionship which will facilitate your conversation efforts – by breaking down the ice and lowering the red flags.

Icebreaker #6: Personality Reading

These last ice breakers are amazingly fun! This one is called personality reading.

This consists of watching someone and telling them about themselves afterwards. People always seem to like what they hear, especially if it is a compliment like, “Hey, I noticed you are bright, that thing you were doing isn’t for everyone”.

If you notice they are constantly looking at details and being very picky you can say “Hey, I see you are very methodic about this. You must be that way professionally too right?”

You will notice that many people read their horoscope in the newspaper, even if they do not believe any of it.

What about those facebook quizzes? Do you really believe that quiz that promises to find out what animal you will be in your next life to be credible? Off course you know that is simply a funny little thing that means nothing, but you take it anyway because it speaks out to you. People like to exist and be recognized for it.

This is because people are in love with themselves, and they love to hear the

feedback other people have for them, what they think of them and what makes them unique. Do not get that huge flattering machine-gun ready yet – like everything, do not exaggerate and make sure you compliment based on facts rather than because you want the conversation to continue. The rule I am constantly enforcing fits here too: “Don’t force it”.

Warning sign: Make sure that you are positive in your analysis or it will not work; nobody likes to be badmouthed and criticized. If you are going to criticize people, put something positive in the middle. Most of the egos out there are fragile, even though they may not seem like it.

Personally, I like to make some humorous personality readings, to keep them fresh and engaging – pull out something teasing about their unique traits and they will feel their identity is passing through – that is always a good thing.

If you see a person who is being shy to the extreme, you should try saying “Hey dude, you talk too much! Shut up already! The others want to talk too” – make sure you sound friendly and funny though, avoid seeming like you are mocking the guy.

If this works out, you will be helping him anyway because he feels like contributing, but he simply can’t cut it. He’ll notice he is not contributing, and he will start to build tension. By noticing

that and clearing the air, he will be grateful you introduced him to the group by “pulling him in” the conversation.

If you are over solicitant, people will feel extra bad. Allow them to free their spirits off with a little humor. What you did was saying you noticed he was not speaking and you told him “that is ok, don’t worry over it”.

You have to be sensitive when you do things like that. Do not overemphasize the sense of friendliness because that can seem forced and faked and he might feel ashamed – that’s something you don’t want. It’s all about having fun, accepting each other, feeling the social vibes and exchanging emotional charges.

Icebreaker 7: It's All Fun and Games

Fun and games are a great way to get the red flags down and all the ice broken simply because they appeal to the younger side, the “forever young” part of us that never dies.

But what do I mean with this ice breaker? How does it work?

Well it can be as simple as a little game at a party in that you have to roam around pointing to people you do not really know to make them tell random life stories – they’ll interact this way and the ice is broken from within.

Games have the ability to get some red flags down. Let’s think about one of those games that issue a challenge on a failed task. If two people are playing and

they don't know each other all that well and one fails a task, that person takes a card that orders her to kiss the guy on the right. Kissing someone you don't know is hardly conventional, so normally all red flags are up – this time however, since the challenge is part of the game, the red flags are down. That person may even end up kissing someone she didn't have the guts to greet outside the game

Play all kinds of different things – including those bar games, drinking games, truth or dare, storytelling games, you name it! Go online and find a bunch, learn them and learn how to teach others. Playing these games will unfreeze their minds and make them socialize with less ice on their minds.

Try to pick some games that “force” people to tell some stories about themselves, to share experiences, to do some joint challenges and to work together to achieve some goal – these are some examples of what you should look out for to find games that bond and that qualify to be great ice breakers.

It also conveys that you are a fun to be with guy and that you can really be interesting. Engage in things that show you are fun to be around because people really like to hang out with playful persons – these are the kinds of people that teach others more about life.

Have fun, play a bit!

How to Talk Normally

Stamp on the previous section and let us move on to the next, you are having fun and you broke the ice walls down and got to the other side of all those red flags – now, it is natural conversation time.

How do you run a great conversation? Any pointers?

Well, to teach you this, you have to know a little more about the purpose of a conversation and what a conversation stands for.

Conversations exist to build relationships and strengthen bonds. Building relationships you share your ideals, you get some ideas, you exchange emotional

energy and ideas. A vibe goes between the intervening people and you exchange all those emotional charges we discussed earlier.

When you are having a bad day, a good conversation can get you right on track again, even if you did not address the event that left you in the mud and the conversation didn't had to do with that topic.

Two humans helping each other are the basis of what socializing means; we are cultural and social beings and we must help each other. This is in our genetic material and it is only natural that we do this.

Think about a conversation this way: It is a content based and context based thing. You exchange emotional energies and

ideas and if you keep the exchange fun and interesting, your conversations will naturally bloom until you have great conversations sprouting out like daisies.

Well, how do we do this now?

How do you exchange these emotional energies as well as exchanging ideas?

This is something we will talk about next, but before continuing try to get a grip of what we discussed up to this point.

Storytelling and Social-Vibing

The cornerstone of every great conversation is the interaction between

two people and storytelling and social vibing are the twin backbones of it.

We spoke about this earlier and noticed that social vibing must be maintained like a roller coaster – with its ups and downs and changes in rhythm and emotional charges

It is what we call an emotional rollercoaster and both your stories and your ability to socially vibe will become these vehicles to express these things.

I do not encourage to force this. You have the ability to feel these emotions you are trying to out, so I suggest you feel them in order to express them.

Create the thought of all these different emotions to go through them all and create a chain of linked-thinking to allow

you to jump from one emotion to another as you wish.

It is important to keep in mind that feeling the emotions you want to convey is really the only way to make your words sound genuine and truthful – if you do not feel these emotions you will sound forced, so teach yourself to feel them when you need it.

You can't force it, because it has to look genuine and be fun to you at the same time – it is the natural way of communication. Stories happen by themselves: do not force them.

Why make it harder for yourself?

The path you have to use is the natural path, the organic path, the path with the

least resistance. Experience all kinds of emotions and stick to the positive ones. Allow these things to drip out of your being on the stories and experiences you share with others. It leaks out naturally through your body language and voice tone.

If you see you are getting stuck in a fixed state of mind, make it your goal to “get out of it.”

“How do I do it?” – I hear you ask.

It is very simple actually. There are some ways you can “hijack” your personality. Talk louder if you want to become more animated and whisper if you want to calm down. Use your body language and use faster movements to become more animated, calm down and slow down to get calmer straight away.

Storytelling

Let us take another look at the skill I say that makes or breaks a great orator. I am going to speak about a factor people often neglect, and I think it is vital.

There are a lot of things to say about storytelling, and for those of you that had creative writing at school, well there are huge differences between writing them and telling them – the stories that is.

Storytelling is really an oral tradition. The best thing I can tell you about becoming a great storyteller is simply learn to enjoy your own stories. Visualize the story and live it, grab the emotions you feel while visualizing yourself living

that history and adopt those feelings – it is a great leg up towards perfecting your storytelling skills.

I created a whole lot of exercises you can practice on in your free time. They will teach virtually anyone to become a good storyteller. I included lots of them in the home study program.

I will leave you some ideas to find stories of your own – the better mine for stories is your own life, so grab a pickaxe and go mining for experiences up until you fill a whole repertoire of stories worth telling. Keep practicing them in order to memorize them, but don't recite them word by word – live them and tell the experience.

Now I can hear you say “Nothing interesting ever happens to me. . . Meh,

how am I going to be able to find stories in my life? What should I tell people about?”

Thinking that way is what is keeping you from being a great storyteller, you need to ditch that line of thought.

Stories are a bit similar to jokes and humor, they will only start popping out when they see others are being thrown on the table already – it is the warm up neurology again.

Learn about the life story that really moves you or your family and memorize it.

One of the easiest ways to tell stories when you are in a group of friends is to throw some shared experience to the

spotlight saying something like
“Remember that time when we....”

If it is a funny story then tell it while you are memorizing it as a fun story to tell in other occasions – you are starting to realize interesting stuff happens to you after all.

Note just the high points.

With practice you will start to have a large stock of pretty well rehearsed stories you can take with you to use in several different occasions, whether you are trying to make a point, breaking ice or just entertaining.

You will have a whole range of stories ready to be used for any occasion! Good stories, fun stories, sad stories, stories that make you think – you name it!

The old storytellers, like the medieval bards, the African tribesmen, and the other storytellers of old knew only 1 to 10 stories, but they would tell them time and time again!

The difference between them and you is that they were experts in remembering the high points of the stories – they could expand the main events and the stories’ strong points to hours and hours of authentic storytelling epicness, or they could shorten them down to the really big points only to dish them out fast.

Your storytelling technique is directly proportional to your ability to expand and contract your stories. When you can freely do this then the story begins to seem fresher and more alive each time you tell it. You don’t memorize

individual words, you tell the story from your heart, respecting the core emotions.

To tell stories the natural way you have to:

1. learn the highlights, the main points of each story, and
2. then really perform it again from fresh.

Keep your senses alert and watch your audience for feedback. Notice the parts where they are fascinated and also the parts they look bored. Shorten the parts in which they are bored and make the cool parts longer.

This way, you can tell the same story time and time again and tailor it to the personality of your listeners – this is a priceless skill.

Let me illustrate this point with an example:

Let us suppose you saw an iguana eating a whole banana once. It's highly unlikely so it is obviously something you can tell. Now, you're chatting with a group of friends that are talking about how animals can be smart – perfect time for you to share your story.

You start telling about the iguana, saying:

“Once I saw this iguana, and it was eating a banana, well she looked at me and gulped it faster like it feared I was going to steal it”.

So far so good. Now you are talking with some friends that say how animals can be stupid. You tell your iguana story:

“Once I saw an Iguana, it was eating a banana and when it looked at me it nearly chokes!”

You just told your story to convey two different points – you tailored the story to the group’s need. Practice this and your stories will be worth a lot more.

Performance, voice tone, the ability to hit different points and customize what your audience wants to hear, the ability to expand and contract parts of the story and fill in the gaps in between, are the abilities that will make you a legendary storyteller.

Hot Topics

The simplest way to build up social vibes is to talk about a topic of popular culture.

For example: the latest celebrity gossip or new film or new theater production. All these things have instant appeal to people around you.

Men will typically settle down to talk about sporting events, because it is a safe area for them to share information and share experiences with each other.

Hot topics are great to generate social vibe, but diversify your investments – your ability to use a wide variety of topics is going to be a crucial aspect that will turn you into a great orator.

Having said this, I will give you another **warning, you should always avoid three topics:**

- Religion
- Political Topics
- Conspiracy Theories

I am not saying you can't talk about these topics, but they can lead you down to some dead end paths like boring conversations or someone delivering a long sermon to you. If you are not good at trouble-shooting conversations – stay off these topics.

Why?

These topics are deep topics that involve personal beliefs and ideas that people

will stand for and defend at all costs, this can cause some trouble and get you some big problems.

As you dig through the various onion skins of confidence and resistance of your listeners you can manage more controversial conversations, but leave the complications out if you are only getting to know that person – or else it could flare up pretty quickly.

Let us look at something interesting – Gandhi, the savior of India, was actually an English lawyer before he got famous. Did you know that? Not a lot do. Think about it, India's great leader once had the one of the most ridiculed professions around.

This is only to show you that there are thousands of topics around that are ripe

for the taking – you can introduce them, talk about adventures you had perhaps, or poetry and literature.

Talk about knitting, as long as you are enthusiastic about it and it delivers value to the conversation.

Make some Statements:

So, you are social vibing and making sure that the emotional rollercoaster is running with its ups and downs and your chosen topics are jumping around so you never get stuck. The question is:

What else do you really have to do to make it more interesting? To make it epic?

Some people who are in a spot where they think they can't contribute will start

using questions as a mean of getting away with the lack of value – what a big mistake . . .

This is a trap and you should not fall for it. People using questions are just passing the hot potato to their peers so they place the pressure on the shoulders of another.

They start creating a questionnaire to see what the other thinks about this and about that only to make them be the ones who carry the conversation.

There is nothing wrong with asking questions, but you are no police agent trying to capture a thief. You always have to provide value or the relationship you are focusing on will die out – no point of having it anymore.

You are supposed to carry the conversation while the other person is warming up, not the other way around. Even if the person already warmed up, you still have to provide your fair share of content.

So, do not ask a question if the reason why you are doing it is because you think you have nothing more to say. Use rhetorical questions instead.

The Rhetorical Questions

If you are asking questions, you better write rhetorical questions – ask the question and answer it yourself.

Ask something in the lines of “Hey where did you grow up? I ask this because I grew up on London streets,

awesome city to live in, the whole place was brimming with life and I had lots of neighbors with my age, well not so many live there now, but it's still a very special place.”

So, notice I asked the question but I did not stop providing content, I covered for you when you hesitated instead. If you had answered, I would gladly take the answer and move on from there. This is about providing content when your listener isn't ready to provide you with it by the time you ask.

You must be ready to catch up on your own questions in case the listener leaves you hanging, or it can be awkward – getting on with nothing to say. He will feel particularly bad as he thinks that

because you asked a question it was his duty to respond.

There are some rules to asking great questions – regarding when to ask them, when to avoid them and other factors you have to weigh. A conversation can be totally destroyed by the wrong kinds of questions and you should always keep this in mind.

Stream of Linked-Thinking

I want to add something up to the social vibes section – the idea of streamed linked-thinking.

Remember you will largely be making statements instead of asking questions. Statements are the meat of social vibing.

But how do you make sure the statements actually lead somewhere?

This is called linked-thinking – every time a statement is made, you are being presented with an offer. If I say olive, you make all kinds of associations, the first one probably being the fruit, so you might think about olive oil next and say it. Now I heard the word olive oil and I am instantly starting to think about oil instead. Hearing of oil, you think about gold, as it is an equally good trading value. Now I am thinking about gold as a color, and because you said it I start talking about orange and back to fruits...

You see, just by associating we jumped around several different topics – this is the power of linked-thinking and this is the way topics jump around in a natural

conversation. This chaotic jumping around is normal and even ideal, if you break the jumps and keep to the same topic, you will have a bad time.

Offer and Accept

An offer in this context was the word olive. The other person accepted the offer and the association grew from there. The olive is in the same group of the olive oil, so I accept it as well – going with the flow.

If I want to block the subject I'll simply say “Children bla bla bla bla . . .” – this is blocking the subject because it has nothing to do with olive and olive oil. It completely altered the topics.

Blocking is not a bad thing, for instance when you are having trouble you can use blocks to kill off threads that started to run amok.

If someone is getting too sensible and emotional about a certain theme, blocking it would be a way to change the topics smoothly without getting anyone upset – so you should definitely do it.

The problem that comes with blocking has to do with running a mainstream conversation – it can kill off the entire vibe until there is nothing left to talk about. If that is happening, accept whatever offer others are making, even if it is a boring one – take the time to warm up yourself and start tweaking it to fit the conversation.

If the conversation dies out it will end prematurely and that's not good for either of the parts involved.

Building through common experiences

What is the best thing to use when you are social vibing with someone? We have gone through this already and you know it – it is the act of sharing common experiences.

If you meet a new acquaintance and you want to get to know him or her better, what do you do?

Well, you share stories and see where you match – if you have gone to the same school, worked for the same corporation, if you have the same hobbies or sports team and so on...

The more things you have to share between yourselves, the stronger the initial bond will be, the faster the red flags are lowered and the ice will also break down easier. Sharing mutual experiences creates a social bond between people.

This is why people who love a baseball team will easily rapport with another team fan, they have a more controlled social environment to create rapport. It is a safe haven where they can have a mind meeting. They can start talking knowing that the topic “baseball team” is a great starter and move on from there.

This is not the only way to build a relationship, but it is definitely worth mentioning. Polish your skills and get to improving.

Deep Rapport vs. Wide Rapport

Common experiences are great to build rapport and relationships, but there is a problem that engulfs people – they get stuck on that topic and so the conversation starts to get boring or to die out – killing the standard flow of conversation.

The problem about having a common experience is that if you both enjoy baseball, you will get so hyped talking about it that you will skip the part in which you change topics.

Remember what natural conversation feels like? Well yes, it goes all over the place and covers every kind of topic through the power of linked thinking.

This allows you to build wide rapport instead of deep rapport.

Let me give you an example of what I mean by this. Let us imagine you are back at school and at school you have a favorite teacher. Let us say it was Mr. John Smith, your biology teacher. This teacher was cool. He was hip, he was hop, and he really liked you, and you really enjoyed his lessons too. Perfect.

Well, even though you really enjoy his classes, try to imagine a situation in which you go out with your friends at night and you sneak some drinks into the party. Now your biology teacher, Mr. John Smith comes in and he is a cool guy. He will not tell your parents, and he will even go to talk with you. How do you feel?

You feel a little bit awkward, because it is unusual. You contextualize your biology teacher in the context of school and in the biology class. If you meet him at the supermarket and he starts talking to you, it will be strange because it feels out of context. This is a classic example of too much deep rapport.

You like the biology teacher and you get on with him, you enjoy his lessons, but because these lessons are all about the same subject – biology – and all in the same place – class room – your mind has only one experience with Mr. John Smith, so you'll only feel normal hanging out with him in those conditions.

When you step outside of that, you step outside of your comfort zone and things start feeling weird again and unusual.

If you are going to have something real with someone – whether it is a family member, a costumer, friend, lead, lover – you have to get away from focusing solely on deep rapport. It is a good thing, deep rapport, but not at the expense of wide rapport.

But what is wide rapport?

Wide rapport is going over many different topics. If you have met someone recently – say 5 minutes ago – and you bump into them again later, then you go to another party one week after that and you meet him again. After all of this you meet him at a sports gathering.

Even though you have not chatted a lot with this person – maybe half an hour in each place – you will feel you know this person pretty well because your brain formed up memories of that person.

There is more range in which you know about that individual, so your comfort zone is wider.

Your aim when you are chatting is to go over lots of different topics, because that way you are going to widen your comfort zone. It also helps in your relationship – so please don't focus on just one subject, focus on different life stories from different times. The more you widen your topics the more you can socially vibe and the more successful the relationship will be.

That's it! It is that simple!

Give the listener some space to talk about their interests too, this creates a vast landscape in which you can meet each other and form the basis of a true relationship – proceeding to shape it together.

So, now this apparently simple concept – starting a conversation – is suddenly more valuable to you, because it allows you to maintain a long conversation and later on develop it into a great relationship. Keep things going and allow different topic exploration. Allow the linked-thinking pattern to kick in and master this skill properly. Training and honing your skill are the keys to becoming a great speaker.

Don't resurrect old topics

I have spent tons of time emphasizing the importance of opening multiple conversation topics, and this is truly important because it allows relationships to move forward in a natural way, but there is something else I would like to discuss here which goes hand to hand with this idea. This is the concept that you should not “resurrect” old topics.

If you are talking about something – let us say about baseball (again). Halfway through that charming story you get interrupted by a waiter. No problem.

Now, the waiter left and everyone talks again – lots of people resume the previous conversation, but this is an

error. Sure there are ways to go to old topics and I will get there in a moment, but let us take a look at the reasons why it is not a good idea to re-engage on the old topics.

Let us understand this by picturing another situation:

You are with a group of people talking about baseball again and you have a great story to tell them about baseball. You bide your time and wait for the little pause to insert your story and give your own value to the conversation. The only problem is that the conversation moved away from that topic. You missed your opportunity.

You want to tell that baseball story though, so you still insert it on the next pause you see. Nobody thinks that is normal because it has no meaning now that the conversation changed topics. You have missed your window of opportunity and it does not fit in the context anymore.

Conversations have a natural flux and life span. Do not get stuck in the middle of this stream of linked thinking.

When you resurrect an old topic, the subconscious mind of every person in the group is not on that point anymore, so it is not relevant content for the linked thinking pattern they are on now. To make that topic relevant again, you have to let some things happen – let us go over that in a moment.

If you got interrupted and for any reason failed to catch your window of opportunity before the bandwagon moved on, do not go on resurrecting that topic and simply start a new one. This also applies because of another thing: When you create a new topic, you are helping yourself to get the rapport to widen.

Remember what I said when I mentioned the importance of introducing new topics earlier – it expands your comfort zone and it avoids awkward moments like when you met Mr. John Smith, the biology teacher, at that party.

This also shows something about you – if you keep on introducing new topics without it being a challenge for yourself, then the others will feel that you are a

pretty confident person on the social level. If you are very confident socially then they will trust you more – they end up thinking that talking to you is awesome, because conversation will never run dry.

The irony of course is, is that as your partners begin to relax in their conversation, as they feel more comfortable inside their own skin, they will be able to contribute more and more and more and more useful things as well - which means the conversations you are having have the potential to become great conversations.

How to properly resurrect a topic:

I gave two great reasons why you should not resurrect old topics, but if you have to do it because it is important, well there are two ways you can do this.

The first way is if someone asks you to go back to the previous topic. If that happens then your listeners are still at that point of conversation – so they still find the topic to be relevant. The group, or the individual at least, haven't moved on from that point and your topic is still alive –so say what you've got to say.

And, as people are soliciting you to come back to the topic you do not seem too needy.

Needy, because if nobody asks you and you tell your story anyway people will begin thinking – “Yeah? Nobody is over there anymore” – or they will just feel

awkward without knowing the reason (it's because of that sub-conscious drift in topic).

The second option is what you should do if nobody asks you to resume your previous topic – there's a little gimmick you can do to introduce it. Dead topics are dead because the group's subconscious mind moved on to another topic. What you have to do to properly revive it is re-energize the original mind set.

How do you manage that?

Simply introduce that topic by allowing conversation to flow in a different direction. You just have to begin tweaking the conversation towards the

original idea. That's when you can start the topic all over again.

Check out this golden rule: Just start the story from the beginning like if you had never started it, you start it and finish it all the way, like it was never interrupted in the first place – so it fits as a complete piece and feels natural.

If you want to see how a pro does it, just listen to any radio show. These guys are experts at combining topics. They do it like this:

“We are the DCS radio station, talking live to such and such a person, he is a rock star, and rock stars sing a lot of loud music. Now here is a fellow who sings a lot of loud music, and here is our next song.”

Can you see that he forced some associations that merged a topic with yet another topic ostensibly unrelated but with a natural chain of re-introduction provided by the DJ?

You can do this too, just do not do it often because even though you can master it, you are taking the fun out of it – you have to let the other parties contribute too. The intervenient parts grow by participating.

Troubleshooting

Well, look at that, we have come a long way already. You now know how to start conversations, how to use icebreakers, how to run a conversation – but what

happens if you get into trouble during that conversation?

How do you manage it to avoid confrontations right from the start? And if trouble does start, how do you rescue the conversation to keep it from dying?

The way you handle problems is what makes sure problems go away if you fail to anticipate them. This next section is all about troubleshooting in conversation.

Do not show insecurity

This can be seen as a repetition of something I talked about earlier:

Avoiding signs of insecurity. Your lack of confidence will get you and get your audience – if you show lack of

confidence, they will not trust you either, and the conversation hits rock bottom.

If you show you are a calm and secure guy that has lots of confidence, they will relax and you can then start building something that enriches you both.

Learning the signs of insecurity is vital, so you can avoid it.

So what are some of these signals?

Well, on the outer level it's:

- talking too quickly,
- stuttering,
- mumbling
- nervous mannerisms, such as fidgeting,
- moving quickly,

- becoming over-reactive (someone says something, you jump to
- answer the question.)
-

These are the factors that show your audience you are nervous and lacking confidence – this puts your audience’s red flags up and makes them nervous as well.

The opposite is true however, if you talk slowly, calmly and with a stale body language, the world will perceive you as a calm and confident person. A relaxed person has to show their relaxation smoothly, mainly via body language – exposing their neck, belly, throat and your soft parts in general.

Animals will typically protect these areas because they are vulnerable, and when

we get nervous we still do it ourselves. If you find yourself acting like this you have to try to relax, tell yourself to chill out (with your inner voice that is) and as your inside calms down, your outer self will follow.

Steer clear of murky waters.

This is to say something I mentioned earlier: Avoid dangerous topics like politics, religion and conspiracy theories. This can go a long way to keep you out of troubled waters.

Why is that? Well, again . . .

Simply because these topics take people very close to their core beliefs and their emotional self. If you start to say your religion is right and another member of

the group disagrees, the people will go full force on you, invested emotionally to defend their ideals and their ideas.

So, “steer clear of murky waters” until you are confident you can clean your mess and repair the damage you have done by entering these areas. Those three topics I mentioned are by far the most obvious, but they are not the only ones – use common sense when deciding what is and what is not wise to address. Do not start cracking jokes at a funeral, please – believe it or not, it will shock people. If you are at your friend’s wedding you should not talk to her father about how drunk she always is and tell him about the time you slept with her four times in a row. These are things you can filter using your common sense and you can

prevent lots of damage by doing this – it is going to help you avoid lots of problems both in the long and short term future.

Having said that, notice that these topics can turn out to be awesome in conversational value, but you have to be emotionally sensitive enough to interpret the data of the feedback received in order to avoid crossing the line and doing irreparable damage. This is the type of conversation that can get someone seriously hurt and affected.

Prune the conversation

There are times when conversations go bad even when you do everything to prevent that from happening. This is

normal and what you have to do is keep projecting confidence. Be calm and relaxed.

If someone brings up one of those hard topics like religion and things start to become out of control you have to do something – and what about if you are talking to someone and you are stuck in a topic?

How do you get people out of those topics?

The first strategy is called conversational pruning. This consists of cutting the topic off by moving to an unrelated one but in a way that makes it look like your story is completely relevant. Try using a

connector sentence like “I know that is awesome, but that reminds me of a story that. . .” and that’s the time you insert your unrelated topic into their subconscious mind. By the time they know what happened you already changed the emotional tone and rhythm so the old blood lust conversation no longer fits there. Most people will have the common sense not to revive that topic and let it go.

This isn’t very wise though as you risk seeming like a needy person again. This is easily perceived as forced – but then again, that’s why I recommended not to revive dead topics. You can pull this off with great results if you practice enough, so start now!

Also, another thing to have in mind – it's best to revive an old topic than to risk losing your audience on a fresher one (like out of control topics like politics and religion).

Blocking Topics

What about if they do not have this common sense I am talking about and they still want to talk about the topic again? What if you decide pruning is not enough? What if you need a more polite approach? This is how you do it – Topic Blocking.

The way to use this technique is very simple – (I know this is starting to seem a

fighting game’s tutorial, but bear with me on this.):

First things first, you take care of the emotional environment to acknowledge what everyone said, then you simply change the topic without any excuse or rational explanation. It will be something around these lines “. . . Well do you know what I think? That Bigfoot exists!”

You can also turn to them and state: “. . . Well, that is very interesting. Another interesting fact is olive oil not mixing with water.”

Well, you probably noticed I made zero effort to explain or notify as to why I was changing the topics – that was the intention – but because I acknowledged your statement, I have not slighted you and I did things the peaceful way.

Once more, people will take the hint and drop the topic to get a new and fresher one, even more if you do a solid introduction, filled with energy and enthusiasm. If something is getting very lame or bland, spice things up with a bit of your energy and value. Make it happen by changing your state of mind, and with that, the whole groups' morale. You are now starting to make it more difficult to go back to the old conversational topic because it is locked away in a different kind of emotional and energetic state.

Do you like what you are learning up until now? Well, don't just stand there – study and practice it to hone all of these amazing skills

Do not be a doormat, be polite instead

We are at a point I just want to push down some info really deep into your skull – conversations are all about the exchange of emotional charges and that means you are playing a great part and even a polite one because you are handling what is thought as very personal information that people are sharing with you.

Being polite does not mean you have to get on your knees or lie down and be a doormat while people walk over you. You can disagree with people, but do it in a way that does not harm their ego and does not get you hurt.

A good way to “agree to disagree” is finding a thing that you both agree on. Let’s say someone says homosexuals do not deserve to get married and adopt. You

could say, if you believe it: “. . . Well I agree that they should not adopt but I’m fine with them getting married. . .” – and then you can follow up with your own point of view.

It is a pretty good option, as the alternative is arguing, and this takes you nowhere – as each person will stay true to their ideals.

Do you know the expression “meet me halfway?” Well, here is a concept that benefits from that maxim. Give and receive – it’s the basis to a healthy conversation.

I agreed with the points I can agree with, so this is the same as acknowledging that person’s beliefs and ideals. This is pretty much like telling someone “You are not wrong, but there is another way to look at

that subject and I am on that point of view, so check this out. . .” So, you acknowledged the person and presented your point of view – now you can have a great discussion – a peaceful one – that will enrich both of you.

People will treat you the way you condition them to treat you

There is a very interesting topic still to cover and I want to talk about it now. A very important concept that helps you steer away from trouble is the idea that you have to condition people to treat you the way they want to be treated.

Let’s take a look at what conditioning means in its core:

Conditioning is, in physiology, a behavioral process whereby a response becomes more frequent or more predictable in a given environment as a result of reinforcement, with reinforcement typically being a stimulus or reward for a desired response. Early in the 20th century, through the study of reflexes, physiologists in Russia, England, and the United States developed the procedures, observations, and definitions of conditioning.

The same principle that makes discipline training to dogs work out is the principle we will explore – the conditioning process.

Now, do not get me wrong, I do not want to compare people to dogs but I bet you

can agree that we are just as influenced as them. Think about your life as a kid. I'm sure there were person's you would throw a tantrum at and some others to which you would never do it. This is a good example of conditioning. Children are a good example, so let us keep that in mind and talk about it later.

It is when you meet someone that they will treat you like they have been taught all their life – mainly through their life experiences. But then they'll start becoming conditioned by the way they are treated and by the feedback they get from you. The longer your relationship lasts, the more conditions you'll inflict on that person – so your own behavior becomes responsible for what they're

doing. You're the one that enables or disables tantrums for example.

So, you're the one responsible for changing the way people treat you if they don't treat you the way you want to be treated. You have to change something in your own behavior and in your responses – they will then stop treating you the way they've been doing it.

How do you accomplish this?

Just keep in mind that every time you're interacting, you're forming a conditioning cycle. If you're doing it unconsciously you're still conditioning – and if it's going the wrong way then you'll end up being treated worse and

worse and this will destroy a relationship that would be healthy otherwise.

In psychology, this is named “boundaries drawing.” Take a look at the times you saw explicit boundaries like “You slept a lot today and you got up late, make sure you get up on time next time okay?” This is a very simple yet explicit way to draw boundaries.

The problem is that when a relationship is declining and getting more and more negative, it’s usually because either of the parts of the relationship is behaving in a destructive way – probably unconsciously. Rephrasing, they are actually in the grip outside of their conscious control – this means you have to draw your boundary in a way that the

unconscious mind can accept and respond to.

Once again, how is that possible?

Imagine someone who goes on tantrums all the time. The traditional way of restricting that is by punishing. So what do you say? Do you say “Stop having tantrums so often because it’s killing me?” Well, no, because it’s a known thing that when you pacify people by giving them what they want they’ll just do it more often. So you’re actually handing out negative reinforcement.

It doesn’t take rocket science to work that out.

You’re giving that person attention even though it is negative attention. If a dog barks non-stop, it won’t stop just because

it gets spanked. The dog is barking because it wants attention and if he can't get positive attention, well, it has to be negative – any kind of attention will do.

With children, the same thing happens – they just want attention and are willing to have negative attention too, so if they can't get hugs and kisses, they'll accept scolding and being yelled at – it's the second best thing. People who are very insecure are prone to developing this feature because they want to be noticed. Little children often think their only way to influence the lives of others is by yelling – to get attention, regardless of its quality. Their payoff is attention, and if they get it then the tantrums are going to continue.

Let's see another easy to understand example: Picture someone having a temper tantrum and you do everything they say... they are just going to have another tantrum later right?

If you argue with someone while they are having their tantrum, it gets worse because you reinforced it, with negative attention, but it got reinforced regardless of the attention's quality. Now it's getting out of hand.

The way to extinguish a fire is to starve it of fuel, to starve it of oxygen or the actual burning materials itself. That is the only way you can deal with a fire.

How do you do this in the context of a conversation?

Well, you can extinguish the conversation as well. Extinguish the conversation by withdrawing attention, which is the ultimate payoff.

Picture another tantrum and place that person in front of a wall. Do you think the tantrum is going to last? Well, think again because the wall doesn't give much attention or reaction. It's not approving and it's not getting angry either – this non-reactiveness is a big tantrum turn off.

Why does this happen?

Because reinforcement behaviors were cut off! Now it's the time I share another of my warning signs:

Become 100% non-reactive. Don't close yourself emotionally and don't withdraw either – don't refuse to talk to someone, because this is still a reaction, so they still have their payoff and reinforcement.

Make sure your emotional state gets unaltered and you keep it unaffected by them – and make sure they witness this. The only way to fake this (because we all know that it affects us) is to practice and rewire your inner self so you can still act unaffected by everything others make – taking care not to accept it.

Conversational Exits

We are coming close to the end of this intro and one of the last things I have to teach you is how to end a conversation in

a smooth way while keeping everyone happy.

Be aware of the emotions

The general principle about conversations is about being aware of the emotional tones and undertones that happen so you can take care of them on an intellectual level.

A simple and easy way to take care of people on the emotional level, while telling them “. . . it is time for you to leave” is using nonverbal implicational suggestions that it is time. Start paying attention to conversations and you will notice some silence or lulls, just moments before they end the conversation.

For example, on the telephone, people give out signs before they hang up, they start sighing, saying that it is time to go or making little noises. Heavy breathing followed by silence is a popular nonverbal cue that they are about to make the ritual excuse before ending the conversation.

People who acknowledge these cues are rare, so once you know what they sound like, what they feel like and so on, just recreate them at the end of a conversation and you are giving the other person the option of ending the conversation themselves first. It is a very nice way to do things – better than saying “. . . Well this has been nice, but I have to go in a moment, but I will off course gallantly

allow you to finish up this conversation by yourself”.

If they can't pick up the hint, well, take some momentum back and use a different strategy – we will go there in no time – and close the conversation without ruffling any feathers.

Acknowledge and Excuse

Now that you really have to take control of the situation and everything is going fine but you have to go, how are you going to do it?

Use a method that was discussed earlier when we talked about topic blocking, because when you block their topics you acknowledge what they said so you can take them on an emotional level and

introduce a fresh idea. Well, here you do the same, but instead of inserting a fresh topic, you just go!

How is this done?

Getting to acknowledge someone is done the exact same way as before. Someone is talking about baseball and you go “oh yeah baseball, that’s awesome and I just love baseball, it’s my favorite sport of all times. . .” and the topic is acknowledged. Right after that you insert your ritual excuses and it is time to leave.

How to make your excuses

My tip is the simplest it can be: Always tell the truth. Tell them why you have to leave – not because they are boring or

bland, but because there is something you really need to do soon.

It is always great to fob people your excuses offering a reason why things are happening. If you ask for a loan, you will have more possibilities of having it if you tell what you are going to use the money for. It is a psychological principal.

Let us say you are taking photocopies and you want the photocopy of an important document taken. There is a long queue though and you are now asking people if you can jump ahead of them. They say yes or no, but if you offer a reason of why you have to jump ahead of your place, they will say yes more often, there is research that proved this.

The research is quite interesting actually so I am going to share it with you. There

was a group that tried to prove this point and so they had someone to try and ask people to jump in front of them in line. Well, at first, the man would only say “Excuse me, can I have your turn in line?”. Some said yes, others said no – everything as expected.

Then, the man tried again after some days and this time he would say something along these lines: “Excuse me please, I really need to take a copy now, can I please have your turn?”

The results were amazing. Even though saying that they needed a copy now didn’t actually tell anything about the urgency or problem, people said yes considerably more – interesting right?

The study resumed and later on the man made the question and this time gave a

convincing motive – the yes rates bumped up once again. Interesting piece of info right?

You may not be giving a useful explanation or a truthful one, but it is proven that people comply more often. It flips a mind switch that makes the proposal seem more reasonable, so they become more helpful too.

So how do we use this in order to end a conversation smoothly?

You acknowledged them and now it is time to leave. You may say something around these lines “Hey, I really have to go back to the office now so . . .” or “I really have to talk to my friend John Smith over there, please excuse me” or even “that was really interesting, see you this weekend on the yacht?”

Noticed that these things gave a reason and acknowledged at the same time? You did this using these simple formulas:

- I have to . . .
- I want to . . .
- I will see you at . . .

If you want to seem even more polite and play it safe, use two reasons instead of one like this:

“I have to go to the factory because I have to work now.”

“I want to speak to a friend because she is standing over there and she looks like she needs a friend.”

“I will see you later at the club because now it is time for me to go.”

Did you notice I did not add much information but it is much more persuasive now? There is a reason that does not enlighten, but it creates sympathy.

This is not sure shot recipe, but the important thing is to hand out the reason of why you have to leave – after acknowledging the person you are talking to.

Now, for those of you who think this is one of the hardest parts of a conversation, here are some lines you can pick that will get your peers’ approval:

“I have to do X because . . .”

“I want to do Y because . . . or . . .”

“I will see you at stage Z because . . .”

“So you are basically saying . . .”

“I am obligated to a certain action . . .”,

“I desire to do a certain action . . .” or

“I will meet you again later so this is not the end of our interaction together . . .”

Don't get new topics

Just a final note about ending conversations in a smooth way: The

biggest mistake people make is that when they are leaving they turn back and create another offer.

This starts the conversation process all over again and the conversation lines start all over again. If you are late for a train and you say “That is really awesome but I really have to catch a train now...” and then you turn back to say “Oh . . . by the way I forgot to tell you that Margaret . . .” – you just ruined it. You ruined everything for you, you created an offer and they have to accept it and just keep talking. Now you feel you have to stay in that conversation – it was you who created it.

If it happens the other way around, you don’t want to be so rude as to decline it, so you accept it and sprinkle some

content of your own on that offer – that get's you back in the conversation. Congratulations, you're this close to missing your train!

What do you do now?

Well do not panic yet because it is actually pretty simple: Do the acknowledge and go solution again and run it until you kill the conversation politely, then start running towards the train station like a kid chasing candy.

Here is an example, you make your excuses, you are about to go and then your friend, say Peter, says to you:

"Oh and by the way, you know the baseball score was such and such."

Do not get tempted to ask who scored the points and so on. Get it into the “acknowledge and go” machine and keep on killing the conversation politely.

So, this is what you’ll say:

"Oh, that is really interesting. Thanks for that. Now I am going to have to make my train because otherwise I will miss it."

And you go off again. If they add another piece, you have do the same thing again.

Acknowledge what they said and go.

Failing to acknowledge can make your listener feel he is being ditched off and nobody likes it so remember to keep acknowledging even when you are in a hurry

Notice that because you are not adding any more info and you are refusing to

accept new information you just acknowledge them to take care of their emotional level and that they have their value and ride on presenting solid reasons to do it – and then leave.

From my experience, more than 3 cycles of acknowledge and go are rarely necessary. People who know you will not want you to lose the train and they will not keep you away from the station insisting on adding content. Even when they don't think of you, 3 straight rounds of acknowledge and go can kill off any conversation by removing value and content (remember the whole metaphor of extinguishing fires by depleting the oxygen).

Conclusion

Well, I hope you enjoyed this ride as much as I did and I am going to give you a final leg up by summing up everything you learned with me.

So, without further delay let's start remembering what you have to practice:

Conversation is a form of art

Conversation is a form of art and as such you have to master it. No artist gets to be famous and immortal by slacking off and you are certainly not becoming a great speaker and a good conversation partner by doing it either. Master your voice, your conversational skills and your technique and become an expert storyteller.

Remember that without effort nothing comes, and that practice is vital. We are

all social beings but it is your job to practice your social skills and you only do this by talking, so stop reading and go on!

Draw a line you have to cross each day like: “I promise I’ll try to have at least one great conversation each day”.

Consciousness Linked-Thinking

Consciousness linked thinking is what makes conversations wider. Remember wide rapport? Well, it is usually built of this stream.

Consciousness linked thinking is what makes topics on a conversation jump around like crazy, from olive to olive oil, to oil, to gold, to blue, to orange. This is how topics change and the energy

changes with them. Don't fall behind the topics and don't revive dead topics either.

The linked thinking jumping around is what makes conversations natural, it is their natural rhythm and you should never try to avoid this, even if you are very comfortable with the current topic – don't keep it or people will think you have nothing more to say.

Simple Rules – Igniting a Conversation

Igniting a conversation is one of the simplest parts of the process. If you really want to talk to somebody, just do like your parents taught you to do when you were little and present yourself.

Don't forget that when you enter a conversation you have to be prepared to face and respect the 90/100 rule – you

must provide 90 to 100% of the content and value while your listener is warming up his brain for conversation.

Carry the conversation on your shoulders and feed it fresh content while giving your listener value and he will repay you with content later on when he opens and the ice is broken.

Recognizing Signals

Recognizing Signals is as important as everything on the vital area of social interactions. You have to know what your audience thinks of you and to be able to read the feedback it sends.

How do you tell if you succeeded in breaking the ice? How do you tell if you just crossed the line in terms of respect?

How do you tell if somebody is insecure, nervous or anxious?

Well, you do all of this by recognizing signals, and this is a subject you can only master by practicing your social interactions a lot.

5 Useful Icebreakers

You have learned some useful ice breakers like:

- Introduction
- Challenging
- Getting Help
- Be Hilarious
- Situational Conversation

You learned how to break the ice by introducing yourself, by delivering some

challenging or intriguing questions and to be hilarious in order to pass on the image of a fun and confident guy.

You learned that you can get some attention by asking someone for their help and you can always try to input some situational conversation as well.

You finally learned that you have to practice this in order to avoid seeming forced. You really have to make it look real.

Learn How to Read the Signals

What does it mean to get smiled to and nodded in approval to? That is right! It means people are starting to open up for you - this is really a good thing and you should stop monopolizing the

conversation – nobody like that kind of people that talks and talks non-stop.

Learning how to read the signals is as important, if not more, than recognizing them – so once again – Practice it!

The 7 Icebreakers

- Humor
- Social Vibes
- Storytelling
- Intrigue Pieces
- Life Observations
- Personality Reading
- It's all fun and games

You learned that humor is a huge plus in a conversation – it breaks the ice and it

shows that you are someone who is fun to be around with. Social Vibes and Storytelling are the twin backbones of conversations and intrigue pieces sure can get the audience captivated.

Life observations are a very good icebreaker as shared experiences bond people together easier than most topics. Personality reading is something to be taken into account and practiced a lot.

If you want to have fun and break some ice while looking awesome, try the tips you learned in this section. In the end – it's all fun and games.

How to Talk Normally

Sure, getting into a conversation is vital – but learning how to talk normally is as important as well. You learned how

conversations should be here – every part should contribute with value and content, even though you are expected to carry it if you were the one who started the conversation.

You have to make use of ups and downs to make sure your conversation is an emotional roller coaster and you have to hone your voice and rhythm to keep people engaged.

Allow the conversation to follow its natural path and bounce topics.

Storytelling and Social Vibing

Storytelling and social vibbing are the twin backbones of any conversation. Convey strong emotions on your stories or chit chat with the purpose of

exchanging some emotional charges with that friend you haven't seen in years.

Storytelling

Roman and Greek speakers should be an inspiration to you. They could feel the essence of a story and so they were able to tailor it to their audiences, expanding or contracting story pieces as they would see fit.

This is a priceless ability you should try to master, as well as the skill to identify your compelling life stories to memorize and tell around.

Stream of Linked-Thinking

A topic will remind you of another topic that keeps on doing this mental jump to populate each conversation with a lot of content variety.

The thinking pattern that allows wide rapport to breath, the stream of linked thinking is the process that leads conversations on their natural path and that you have to follow if you don't have to fall behind.

The stream of linked thinking is what carries the group's sub-conscious around in different topics, and everything outside that topic will seem awkward and needy.

Deep Rapport vs Wide Rapport

Too much deep rapport can severely diminish your comfort zone, and although it is important you should try to build some wide rapport as well.

To build up wide rapport, try to set up a great variety of topics while you are still carrying the conversation on the 90% to

100% rule – this will help you out later. Deep rapport is on the same topic, and it builds up every time the same topic enters into play.

Deep Rapport made your encounter with the biology teacher Mr. John Smith seem awkward outside of school and wide rapport made that guy you met in several different occasions feel bounded to you. Don't focus on one or another, try to have both.

Troubleshooting

You learned that there are always ways to repair damage if the conversation hasn't died down. You learned a lot of tactics that allow you to repair conversation or to avoid trouble altogether.

You also learned that there are topics that you shouldn't talk about unless you are prepared for a solid discussion. Topics like politics and religion that will directly involve your audience's ideals.

A technique you learned was how to prune conversations so you can avoid getting into trouble. If you do get into trouble, I taught you that the worst thing you can do is to get anxious, nervous and out of confidence. Be confident and people will trust you. If you seem weak, people will feel nervous and anxious as well.

Blocking Topics

Sometimes you know that a topic means trouble and you want to avoid getting

into it at all costs. Sometimes you see where the conversation is going and you need to cut it off. You learned how to do this by blocking the conversations.

You learned it is very important to acknowledge your listener before making the block and inserting new content.

I also taught you that while you should always be polite, you shouldn't be a doormat – available for everyone to step on.

We talked about conditioning and how it can influence people both positively and negatively as well as how to avoid negative and positive reinforcements.

Conversational Exits

Ending a conversation is a conversational piece people feel uncomfortable with. I taught you how to overcome this by being aware of the small signs that give the idea it is time to go on the subconscious level. I wanted you to perceive this signs to mimic them later on forcing your unsuspecting audience to end the conversation on their own terms.

This is a polite way to make conversations end. You also learned that if you stop feeding content and value towards your listener that he will be out of fuel and the conversation will inevitably end.

How to Make your Excuses

I taught you that the best way to make your excuse is by simply telling the truth. People will understand even better if you provide a reason – even if it doesn't clarify why you have to leave by that time.

I also made you see that by acknowledging and going you can get away from a conversation while you make your listener feel appreciated at the same time.

A good tip here is to mention that your contact is not going to end by saying something in the line of “. . . so I will see you this weekend then?”

Summing up

I gave you the tools you need to succeed. I taught you techniques, I gave you

examples, I have showed you researches and facts – now it's in your hands.

I believe that now you are realizing the importance of conversations and its complexity. If you are determined and passionate you can practice the techniques in this book and transform yourself into a great speaker like M. Twain was.

Remember – conversations are all about taking and giving – trading – emotional charges, value, context and energy.

This path was interesting and it sure made you realize some new things – new things that I hope you are going to practice until you master them, because that is the way of the voice and every artist needs to perfect their craft.

Conversation is a form of art.

Embrace it and use it advantageously!