Small Talk Tips

1. **Be the first to Smile**
Make eye contact and be the first to smile. You will get a smile back and you will put the other person at ease.

*Ref. (1) pp38; (3) pp15*

2. **5 second rule for greeting and starting a conversation**
The first second: Focus on the moment of introduction.
The second second: Don’t think about what to say – listen for the name.
The third second: Repeat the name aloud.
The fourth second: Think of someone you know with the same name.
The fifty second: Use the name during and at the end of the conversation.

*Ref. (2) pp66*

3. **Give them something to talk about and keep the conversation going**
Use open-ended questions, avoid closing-down words.
Open-up words: who when what why where how
Closing-down words: Are you …? Do you …? Have you …?

*Ref. (1) pp50 (3); pp92*

4. **The graceful exit**
When you prepare to depart a conversation, recall why you originally connected with your conversation partner and bring the conversation back to that topic. Acknowledge that and be honest about why you have to leave.

*Ref. (1) pp140*

References

(1) SMALL TALK by Debra Fine
(2) HOW TO START A CONVERSATION AND MAKE FRIENDS by Don Gabor
(3) HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN 90 SECONDS by Nicholas Boothman