



## **Small Talk Topics to Try With His Parents**

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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Communicating with others, especially those who you do not know very well, can be a bit of a "guessing game" at first. But there are a number of things that you can do that will help you to build a relationship quickly merely through conversation:

1. Remember that everyone has something interesting about them - Not everyone likes to talk and some people are more private than others, but there are interesting stories captured in the minds and hearts of each person. Your task is to see if they will share them with you.
2. Ask good, open questions - Make sure that when you are talking to another person, you ask questions that cannot be answered with the words "Yes" or "No". They will only lead you to a dead end. On the other hand, if you ask open questions that cannot be answered simply, you will likely open a treasure chest of valuable information. For example instead of asking "Did you always live in Alberta?" which will garner a "yes" or "no" response, try "Tell me about the place where you have lived that was your favourite". The "tell me about" provides the other person an opportunity to choose what aspect they wish to describe for you.
3. Be quiet and listen well - Interrupting will only shut down the conversation. If you ask a question and then listen attentively, you will provide an environment that gives permission for the other person to share with you. In fact, listening to someone is one of the highest forms of respect as it communicates the message "I believe you have something important to say and I want to hear about it".
4. Look for topical cues in the environment as conversation topics - A person might be wearing a golf shirt and that observation on your part might lead into a discussion about sports. Perhaps there are family photos in the room that you can ask about. Even asking about a person's residence or renovations can result in a lively interaction.
5. If you are "stuck" for topics, you can always talk about history or accomplishments - A question such as "How did you become interested in training for a career in accounting?" or "What is the thing that you are most proud of in your life?" You might be surprised at what you learn.

The whole key to having a good conversation with another person is to be able to find a topic that interests them. If you are able to ask good questions and become a good listener you will win the respect of the other person. In fact, I find it very revealing when one person makes a comment such as "We had such a good conversation" and I know that the other person in the room had hardly said a word! You see good listeners are often given praise for being good communicators when all they really do is keep the conversation going through attentive skills and the odd question!