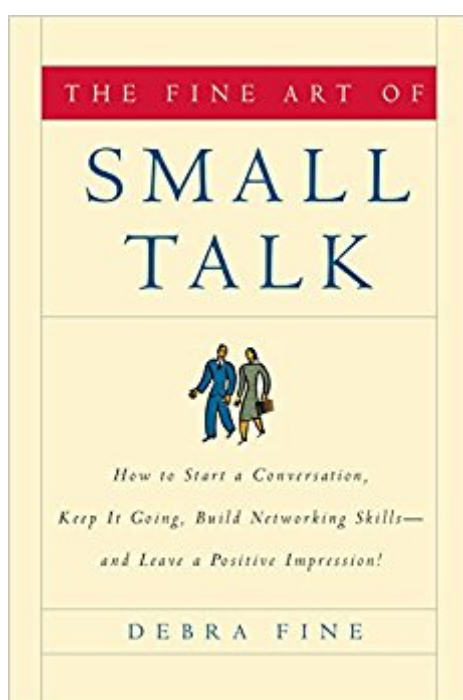


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# The Fine Art Of Small Talk: How To Start A Conversation, Keep It Going, Build Networking Skills -- And Leave A Positive Impression!



## Synopsis

Nationally recognized communication expert Debra Fine reveals the techniques and strategies anyone can use to make small talk--in any situation. Do you spend an abnormal amount of time hiding out in the bathroom or hanging out at the buffet table at social gatherings? Does the thought of striking up a conversation with a stranger make your stomach do flip-flops? Do you sit nervously through job interviews waiting for the other person to speak? Are you a "Nervous Ned or Nellie" when it comes to networking? Then it's time you mastered *The Fine Art of Small Talk*. With practical advice and conversation "cheat sheets," *The Fine Art of Small Talk* will help you learn to feel more comfortable in any type of social situation, from lunch with the boss to an association event to a cocktail party where you don't know a soul.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Would-be social butterflies will get encouragement but little inspiration from this not quite scintillating self-help primer. Fine, a conversation consultant, insists that small talk is the necessary overture to deeper communication, the key to generating business leads and dates and a pathway to a richer life in which strangers are magically transformed into acquaintances. She covers such cocktail-party conundrums as how to spot "approachable" interlocutors, how to make introductions, how to butt into an intriguing conversation, resuscitate a flagging one and bail out of a boring one, and how to resist one-uppers, know-it-alls, motormouths and other abusers of talk. Given the ingrained human reluctance to talk to strangers, will, not technique, is the real issue. Much of the book is taken up with motivational pep-talks to get readers to initiate contact (one agonizing exercise suggests "walk

through the mall and just say hello to ten people as you pass them"); in a world where everyone feels at a loss for words, Fine argues, saying virtually anything makes one a "hero." Unfortunately, it doesn't necessarily make one a great conversationalist. The heart of Fine's methodology consists of long lists of icebreakers and inviting questions that she instructs readers to memorize and regurgitate as needed to jump-start and sustain conversations, and these read like rather bad small-talk-dull ("How has the internet affected your life?"), stilted ("Do you have a personal motto or creed?") and awkward ("Describe an embarrassing moment you've had."). Tongue-tied readers can benefit from her pointers and exhortation, but one hopes they will think a little harder before they speak. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

These two books treat similar subjects, but the contrasts are significant. One covers the entire landscape of speaking, whereas the other focuses just on "small talk." The title of *Speak from the Heart* describes the book's very solid premise. Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and motivational speaker Aduardo emphasizes the importance of being genuine as he attempts to cover every conceivable speaking situation, including public speaking, private conversations, group discussions, and listening. He guides readers in the use of eye contact, developing a conversational style, and being comfortable with their message. Despite many charming personal anecdotes and stories drawn from other sources, this book remains a heavy read. Ironically, while Aduardo tells us to make a connection with our audience rather than to "cover the material," he does a much better job of covering the material than of connecting. In contrast, Fine fully engages her audience. She involves readers in the discussion and gives lists of lines people can use to start, maintain, or end a conversation. She discusses conversation topics and how to use them and also includes quizzes, throws in a poem, and scatters a few cartoons to break up the text. Originally released as an audiocassette in 1997, this work comes across much like one of her seminars on small talk. The *Fine Art of Small Talk* does everything that *Speak from the Heart* says should be done. Aduardo's book is best for academic libraries or large public and business libraries. Fine's is a better choice for most public libraries, as well as business libraries. David Leonhardt, Toronto Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Best.

The book is not giving you the secret of life. Its not saying how to make friends or how to be a social person. Even if it is so, they're not in my concern. The main point of this book is, it shows how to

establish connections in short period of times. Just for talk. May be this talk will not be much effective for you or may be there will be no value for you, but nobody knows what will happen during these small conversation..And it shows you that some those kind of thoughts are exists, not for only you but every people all around the world. As Debra says, after reading this book you will not have your time from one party to another, or you will not travel around for meeting new people. You'll againg stay at home and read your books. But wou will know these. Know how to do them, if it is necessary.

I still have trouble breaking the ice personality wise, but at least I know exactly what to do and how to do it. It's exhausting for me to follow, but it works.

Love the clever suggestions. A must listen for every civilized human being from age 12 on up.

A good read with lots of good information. Much was basic and not much use to a more experienced person, but great for my teenage daughter who found this enlightening.

Very cute read about something that is often overlooked as a skill, but can be invaluable to your professional career! This book is a very short and easy read with a lot of good information!

Great information for that most scary marketing tool, the face-to-face meeting and networking. My students rave about the encouragement it gives them.

Great advice and confidence-building suggestions! I have used these general suggestions and they work well. The lists of potential topics provided were not as helpful though. I cannot imagine using many of these topics at events and feel like if I were asked many of these topics at an event I would find the asker to be creepy or nosy. Perhaps more should be said in the book about how context plays a role in using these topics, or the suggestions given could be more general. Additionally, perhaps the type of people I network with in my region of the US are within a different context than she has in mind, or perhaps my reluctance to use these lists is based more on my personality and place within the career world.

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