



Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Some Born With the Gift of Gab, Others Study It

Whether you call it chitchat or small talk, there's a world of difference between conversing with co-workers and starting a conversation with a stranger.

Small talk is the order of the day at conferences and seminars where you find yourself next to people you've never met.

Why it's important.

There is an art to elegantly starting, sustaining and ending a dialog with a stranger. Chatty people may be born with the skill, but even they should have a conversational plan that sparks friendships and deals. Experts call the skill Conversational Intelligence.

Roger Baumgarte, professor emeritus of psychology at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., says small talk occurs in all cultures but the substance is different. Americans have an international reputation for being good at it.

What it consists of.

Quoted in the Wall Street Journal, Bernardo Carducci, director of the Shyness Institute at Indiana University, says everyone in a social situation wants to talk. The key is to let it be known you are open to small talk and to focus on the other person.

A successful conversation can be divided into these stages.

Five stages of the conversation.

First, you signal your desire to talk with a simple opening line, maybe something about the weather.

Next, in the introduction phase, mention something about yourself and give your name if appropriate.

Third, in the pre-topic exploration, you both are looking for common ground. Ask questions. If the other person introduces a topic, quickly respond or offer an alternative. You might be ready with some relevant topics.

Stage four. In the post-topical stage, keep the conversation going. Be careful not to talk too much, so avoid your favorite topic.

Stage five. You signal that the end is near and show appreciation saying something like "nice chatting with you." Offer a business card or accept one.



We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

Laughter is Good Exercise for Your Brain

Doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital have worked on a project that's a little less life-saving than its usual studies. The subject is important, but not frequently studied. It's laughter.

The physiological study of laughter actually has its own name, gelotology. Sharing a joke with friends or watching a funny video was found to be just as good for your brain as a session of yoga or meditation, maybe better.

Laughter triggers the gamma brain waves. Unlike other brain waves, the gamma waves linked to mirthful laughter spread throughout the entire brain and remain for the duration of the laughter response.

It's as if the brain gets a workout, explained the lead author of the study, which was presented in April at the Experimental Biology meeting in San Diego.

Researchers monitored brain waves of volunteers as they watched videos that were spiritual, distressing or humorous. The funny stuff produced the highest levels of gamma waves.

The gamma state is associated with feelings of mental clarity and an enhanced ability to experience integrative thoughts. It also helps individuals feel more focused, the researchers said.

So telling a good joke at the office can increase your focus and that of your co-workers, as well as promoting camaraderie.

At home, you could do you more good to watch a funny video or comedy than to see a deep mystery or a shooter show.



Get Out of the Recliner. And, No, it Doesn't Seem Fair

Here's why it doesn't seem fair. You walk a half hour per day to stay healthy. You work all day and in the evening you want nothing but to sit in your chair.

The very idea is now one of medical science's favorite study topics. Many studies show that sitting too much increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, especially if all the sitting comes to a total of four hours or more and is virtually continuous.

But the real news is: the disease risks are real even if you exercise regularly.

The key to avoiding these conditions is not to sit for long periods. Get up and walk around every hour or two. You don't need to jog around the block just stand up and do something at least for a few minutes at a time.

It could be during commercials, like getting ready for bed, wash your face, brush your teeth and put your pajamas on. During the next commercial make a phone call and stroll about while talking or straighten up the room.

The problem with sitting isn't just that it burns so few calories. Because of lack of muscle activity, it adversely affects your cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar levels.

For many people, it seems that life is switching from the chair in the car to the chair in the office to the chair by the TV. Most adults watch TV for several hours each day.

... Someone that could use our services? Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church? When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation, you will receive \$50 off your cleaning after their 3rd cleaning! If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your Bonus!

You Cannot Go Wrong with Mari!

"We have been using Mari for almost 5 years - cleaning our large home and vacation rental condo. Her girls are very honest and trustworthy. Prior to finding Mari, we had used A LOT of other cleaning companies and none of them even compare to what Mari offers. We actually look forward to seeing the girls who come to clean. They are excellent cleaners and very sweet. We give them our highest recommendation."

-Jensina M.
Paradise Valley

To Live Longer, Build Your Muscle Mass

If you're near the middle of your expected life span and wonder what you can do to live a longer, healthier life, here's what experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine advise: Build more muscle!

How could it be that simple? Well, apparently it is. Worldwide, researchers aren't completely sure why, but their studies continue to show that the more muscle mass a person has, the less likely it is that he or she will die prematurely, even after taking cardiovascular and diabetic risk into account.

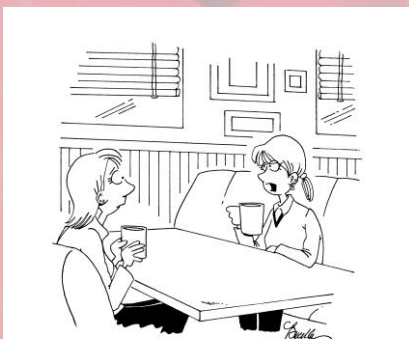
People who had the lowest muscle mass had a 30 percent higher risk of premature death than people with the highest amounts.

Doctors also say it's common for people with more muscle to have a more active lifestyle, which promotes longevity and also has something to do with their metabolism.

Whatever the reasons, they found that muscle mass relative to a person's height is a better predictor of longevity than the body mass index (BMI).

You can build muscle with a variety of strengthening exercises with dumbbells or resistance bands two or three times a week for about 30 minutes. Pushups and squats are muscle builders as well.

If you're new to strength training, ask your doctor for advice.

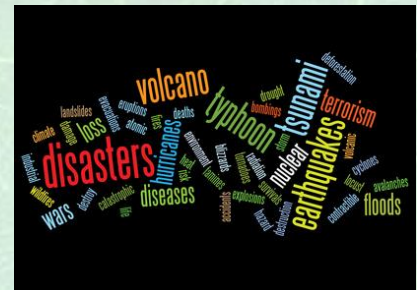


"How much older is the guy I'm dating? Well, he can play solitaire without a computer..."

Are you Prepared for a National Emergency? September is National Preparedness Month

If an emergency occurred tomorrow, would you be ready?

September is National Preparedness Month. Sponsored by FEMA, it aims to empower Americans to prepare for and respond to all types of emergencies, including natural disasters and possible terrorist attacks.



It's a time to prepare yourself and those in your care for emergencies and disasters, both large scale and smaller local events. We've seen tornado outbreaks, river floods and flash floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and even water main breaks and power outages that impact communities for days at a time.

Police, fire and rescue may not always be able to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care for at least a short period of time following an incident; the more people who are prepared, the quicker the community will recover.

Know your risk

-- Emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time. It is important to understand potential risks where you live.

Take action

-- Ensure that you can go for at least three days without electricity, water service, and access to a supermarket.

-- Prepare a disaster supply kit with at least three days of food and water. Have a supply of foods that don't have to be cooked if you cook with electricity, such as canned meats, beans, fruits, crackers, cookies and bottled water.

-- Create a family emergency plan, so your family knows how to communicate during an emergency. Be sure you can charge your cellphone in your car. Have enough gas in your car to last a few days, and have some cash on hand in case banks are closed.

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<http://www.CleaningSolutionsByMari.com>

Trivia Teaser – White Noise

Most important meal?

Across

- Get in a pool
- Farm female
- Flower with a bulb
- Black cat, maybe
- Cut the fat
- Warm-hearted
- Back-to-school purchases
- Island strings
- Fir or pine
- Ancient ornamental collar
- Debussy subject
- Sound of relief
- Gaelic language
- Thickness
- Allow

Down

- "One no", in bridge
- Iroquoian Indian
- Wedding cake feature
- Arabic for "commander"
- Cysts
- Conclude
- Firm
- Painter Georgia
- Schuss, e.g.
- Helix
- Spree
- ___ of Sandwich
- Trick
- Cooking meas.
- After expenses

The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.

1. Which child received a whole box of Turkish Delights from the White Witch in "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe"? a-Lucy, b-Peter, c-Edmund, d-Susan.

2. What TV series featured a chemistry teacher named Walter White? a-"Mr. Peepers," b-"Breaking Bad," c-"Our Miss Brooks," d-"Malcolm in the Middle."

3. What city is the setting for Erik Larson's historical book "The Devil in the White City"? a-Detroit, b-Vatican City, c-Chicago, d-Baltimore.

4. What city is located at the confluence of the White Nile and the Blue Nile? a-Alexandria, b-Cairo, c-Thebes, d-Khartoum.

5. The Chicago White Sox lost the 1919 World Series in what became known as the Black Sox Scandal. Which team won that Series? a-Brooklyn Dodgers, b-Cleveland Indians, c-Cincinnati Reds, d-New York Yankees.

6. What track on the Beatles "White Album," running over 8 minutes long, is the longest song recorded by the group? a-"Revolution 9," b-"While My Guitar Gently Weeps," c-"Helter Skelter," d-"Dear Prudence."

7. Which NBA team retired the #10 jersey of point guard Jo Jo White? a-Chicago Bulls, b-Milwaukee Bucks, c-Philadelphia 76ers, d-Boston Celtics.

8. "White Blood Cells" and "Elephant" were successful albums from what rock duo? a-The Black Keys, b-Hall and Oates, c-Capital Cities, d-The White Stripes.

9. What musical instrument is Jaleel White shown playing during the opening credits of the TV sitcom "Family Matters"? a-Electric organ, b-Harmonica, c-Accordion, d-Banjo.

10. What comic strip crime fighter was assisted by the sidekick Ebony White? a-The Spirit, b-The Phantom, c-The Rocketeer, d-Green Lantern.

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- 1-c, Edmund
2-b, "Breaking Bad"
3-c, Chicago
4-d, Khartoum
5-c, Cincinnati
6-a, "Revolution 9"
7-d, Boston Celtics
8-d, The White Stripes
9-c, Accordion
10-a, The Spirit

Never Forget September 11

Book Review: You Know How You See the World, Now Discover How the World Sees You

Readers who have found this Five-Star book on Amazon are giving rave reviews, some saying it's one of the most riveting and different books they've ever seen.

"How the World Sees You: Discover Your Highest Value Through the Science of Fascination," is written by Sally Hogshead. Over the course of her advertising career, she won hundreds of awards for creativity, copywriting, branding, and was one of the best advertising copywriters from the start of her career at about age 20.

She often appears in national media, including NBC's "Today Show", and in the "New York Times". She was recently inducted into the Speaker Hall of Fame, the industry's highest award for professional excellence. Her advertising work hangs in the Smithsonian Museum of American History.

On the back cover of this book, Hogshead tells some of the points she emphasizes in her work with Fortune 500 companies:

- * The world is not changed by people who sort of care.
- * Don't try to learn how to be fascinating, unlearn how to be boring.
- * Instead of focusing on strengths, focus on differences.
- * Every time you communicate, you are either adding value or taking up space.
- * To become successful, become more of who you are.
- * If you don't know your own value, don't expect anyone else to.
- * The greatest value you can add is to become more of yourself.

She asks the famous question: "You already know how you see the world. But do you know how the world sees you?"

Visit HOWTOFASCINATE.COM for free team resources.

Creamy Light Mac and Cheese



Ingredients!

- 3 cups cubed peeled butternut squash (about 1 [1-pound] squash)
- 1 1/4 cups fat-free, lower-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups fat-free milk
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tablespoons plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/4 cups (5 ounces) shredded Gruyère cheese
- 1 cup (4 ounces) grated pecorino Romano cheese
- 1/4 cup (1 ounce) finely grated fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, divided
- 1 pound uncooked cavatappi
- Cooking spray
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Directions:

Step 1 Boil the squash with milk, broth, and garlic to help marry the sweet and savory flavors for an intensely rich base. No roux, no clumps, no mess.

Step 2 Puree the butternut squash mixture until smooth. Fat-free Greek yogurt adds tang, richness, and thickening power to the sweet butternut.

Step 3 Stir the three cheeses into the pureed butternut sauce while it's still warm to ensure they all melt evenly.

Step 4 Use a pasta shape that holds on to the sauce. We like cavatappi because of its corkscrew shape and grooved ridges; penne rigate would also work well.

Recipe from CookingLight.com

Take the Trivia Challenge!

The average purchase price for a teen's car is

A – \$3,900 B – \$4,200

C – \$5,300 D – \$6,100

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

Psalm 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (NIV)