

[INTRO MUSIC]

STEVER ROBBINS: Stever Robbins here. Welcome to the Get-It-Done Guy's Quick and Dirty Tips to work less and do more.

Today's topic is How to meet people at networking events. Today I went to a really fun get together of social media folk they graciously invited me to speak for the first five minutes and I graciously spoke for the first 10 minutes and eight seconds but who's counting? You can see the video at qik.com/video/6844 That's Q-I-K.

After the talk, one eager person came up, thrust his business card in my hand, smiled, and zipped off. It was beautiful, like some fabulous ballet routine with a touch of modern dance, informed with a Twyla Tharp sensibility. And now, days later, I'm staring at his business card fondly. Do I remember him? Yes. Was it good for me? Sure. I'm getting an entire podcast episode out of it. Was it good for him? Nope. The card went straight into the trash after I outlined this episode.

Let's get something straight. Before they've met you no one cares who you are, unless you're rich and famous, in which case, you don't care who they are. If you're going to connect, connect. Stop. Talk about a shared interest. If you're at a social media breakfast you know the shared interest-- it's social media. Hallelujah!

I'm about to share my most closely guarded introvert secret. I am incredibly shy. At least, I've learned to say hi to someone I haven't met yet. I say, hi, we haven't met yet, my name is Stever. It's amazing how well that works. It's equally amazing that I didn't learn that until I was in my '30s.

Then comes small talk. I love small talk! No, I don't. I hate small talk.

Here's a typical small talk conversation from my end.

"So you have a wife? Husband? Poly-amorous family unit? Dead? Oh. I'm so-- Yes-- Fire is a terrible way-- Uh. Well, look on the bright side. At least they weren't kidnapped and to-- Oh. Oh my. Whoops. Uh, he-he. I sure put my foot in my mouth that time. Well, look at the time-- here's a tissue. Um, I-- I have to run. Bye, now."

"Excuse me. Are you the manager? My new friend at table five is having a breakdown. Could

you get someone to look after him? Thanks."

Small talk is not my thing. But, if I can speak to the crowd for five minutes about something interesting, people who share that interest come and introduce themselves. No pressure, no need for small talk. That's why I do public speaking. It's my way of saying, hi, I'm Stever, please come talk to me.

So this guy did come talk to me, only he didn't talk. He gave me his card and pirouetted away. He could have talked. He could have discussed social media. He could have complimented my name tag, which I wear on the right lapel. Got that? It's a whole other tip I'm sneaking in here.

Wearing your name tag on your right. Then, when you shake hands with someone, they naturally look straight at it and can easily learn your name. Name tag goes on your right, your right, your right. And he would also have been right, if he just said something. When you're meeting someone stop and talk. Ask about them. Learn about their hopes, dreams, fears, and aspirations. One of my favorite questions is, what gives your life meaning? If they don't walk away thinking you're loony, you'll have some great conversation and they'll remember you as the person they really connected with.

If you must talk about yourself, tie it to the topics they care about. I love kids too. My five-year-old nephew, wrote my name as his first word. You can leave out the part where he wrote it in permanent magic marker on your brother in law's face, when he was passed out after drinking binge, or, leave it in. After all, you have a reputation to maintain. When you get their card, immediately write something on the back to remind you who they are. "Invented solar powered, electric sheep. Would make a good guest on radio show." Otherwise, you'll get home with a stack of business cards that will sit on your desk for six years until you finally throw them out.

While your pen is out, don't just give them your card. First, jot on the back what you want them to remember about you. Then they'll have a reason to call. "Stever does interviews for his podcast. Call him to do an interview about your sheep fetish." Then you can simply say, it's been a pleasure meeting you. Smile and walk away. What could be easier?

Let's recap. Put your name tag on your right lapel. Walk up to someone you don't know. Say, hi, we haven't met yet. Or be a speaker, they'll come to you. Then ask all about them until they say something interesting. Offer them a reason to stay in touch. Exchange cards, writing on

the back so they remember you, and you remember them. And that's all that it takes to make networking a snap.

Don't you just love meetings? I do too. Especially when I can participate from my own comfy chair, with my co-attendees spread all over the globe. GoToMeeting.com lets you hold meetings remotely over any internet connection. Try it free for 30 days at GoToMeeting.com/podcast.

This is Stever Robbins. If you have a question about how to work less and do more email getitdone@quickanddirtytips.com or leave a voicemail at 866-Wrkless, that's W-R-K-L-E-S-S. Check out the website at QuickAndDirtyTips.com. You can find my social media breakfast presentation video, our new pod casters, Sales Guy and Small Biz Tech Girl and this episode's transcript.

Work less, do more and have a great life.

[EXIT MUSIC]