Networking for Introverts: Tips for Success

1. **Focus on quality over quantity.** Networking is about building relationships - and one of the strengths of introverts is the tendency to build fewer but stronger and closer relationships. One person who knows your strengths well and vouches for you can be an extremely valuable asset.

2. **Prepare open-ended questions ahead of time.** Brainstorm questions such as “How did you get into this career?” or “What advice would you give a new graduate?” Bring this list with you and review it before entering a conversation.

3. **Find other introverts.** Studies show that ½ to ⅓ of the population are introverts. Find those who are also sitting alone and break the ice with them.

4. **Arrive early.** It usually is more comfortable to arrive early than late and have to enter into a room full of people.

5. **Do your homework.** If you really want to talk to a specific person, look up his/her LinkedIn profile or company bio. Find something that you can relate to or ask about.

6. **Bring a friend.** Ask someone you know to go to an event with you and introduce you to other people. Just be sure that your friend helps to bring you in the conversation rather than dominate it.

7. **Focus your energy.** Instead of trying to join many organizations, spend your time and energy on a few that you are genuinely interested in. Dedicate your time to strengthening relationships in those few organizations.

8. **Network anywhere.** Networking doesn’t have to only happen at professional events; you can network with your classmates, professors, friends, and family by simply building relationships with them and letting them know your goals for your career.

9. **Be interested.** Don’t worry so much about what you’re going to say next, instead listen to what the other person is saying and respond accordingly.

10. **Take time out.** Remember it is ok if you are feeling overwhelmed to take time out and to breathe, reflect and rejuvenate.

11. **Use LinkedIn.** You can use on-line tools such as LinkedIn to connect with alumni, classmates, professors, etc., but do not use it exclusively but as one of the many different channels to build your network. When inviting anyone to connect on LinkedIn, send a personal note not the generic invite.