



HOW TO
SPEAK
SO PEOPLE
LISTEN



Grab their
attention and
get your message
heard

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Speaker's Checklist: Conversation starters

Most conversation starters are on a spectrum from situational to personal. Since the *“you principle”* tells us that you should focus on the other person, rather than on yourself, that means me.

- Make an observation about where we are.
“There is a good turn-out today, for a mid-week event.”
- Ask me something about where we are or some specific feature of it.
“Do you know anything about the history of this building; it’s so impressive.”
- Ask me about how I came here.
“This place is nice and central; how did you come here tonight?”
- Ask me what drew me to come here.
“What appealed to you most about this event?”
- Express an interest in speaking with me.
“I couldn’t help noticing you and wondered if you would mind if I introduce myself?”
- Make an observation about me (avoiding anything that might embarrass me).
“I am interested in what you said earlier on. Your comments were thought-provoking.”
- Ask me something about what I am wearing or have with me.
“I see you are carrying Mike’s new book; what are your impressions of it?”
- Ask me something you think I might know about.
“When you are writing a book, do you have a process you follow?”
- Ask me something about myself.
“What interests you most about the work you do?”