

NETWORKING TIPS FOR INTROVERTS

Our society often discusses introversion and extraversion by referring to the former as “shy” and the latter as “sociable.” However, Carl Jung, whose *Psychological Types* introduced the two concepts, defined extraversion and introversion based on how an individual's energy flows. For an extrovert, energy flows outward to other people, whereas an introvert draws energy from the environment toward inner experience and reflection. In an over-simplification, an introvert is someone who recharges by spending time with thoughts and ideas...alone.

Whether you're an introvert or extrovert, recognize that “networking” is an important part of the job search process. While many forms of networking, such as informational interviews and one-on-one meetings, will provide a comfortable environment for introverts, at some point in your job search process or career, you will need to attend a large-scale reception or networking event. Here are **10 tips to help you survive**.

BEFORE THE EVENT

PLAN AN ENTRANCE.

Have ideas of questions you might ask of attorneys present that could get the conversation started, if it doesn't always come naturally.

PLAN A GRACEFUL EXIT.

Even the best conversations need ending, but it can be awkward for a student looking for a job to cut off an attorney. Before you attend the event, work on an exit line, such as, “Well, I know you probably want to meet more people. I'll let you get to that, but I look forward to speaking with you again soon.” (Don't forget to get their card and follow-up with them later).

SET MANAGEABLE GOALS.

Rather than trying to meet every possible connection in the room, which could leave you feeling completely drained, focus your energy on a smaller goal, such as having good conversations with 2 or 3 people that could lead to follow-up.

For more information:

Remember, you don't need to “overcome” your introversion – you just need to make it through this reception. For more tips, consider reading *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain or *The Introvert's Guide to Success in Business and Leadership* by Lisa Petrilli, or check out Susan Cain's TED talk at: http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts.

AT THE EVENT

ARRIVE EARLY.

Walking into a noisy, crowded room can be overwhelming. The room will be a little quieter, and conversations a little easier, before many people have arrived.

TAKE ON A TASK.

If possible, such as where your student group is organizing the reception, take on a task that allows you to interact with the attorneys arriving at the reception as individuals, rather than as a crowd, such as greeting people as they check in.

STAND NEAR THE ENTRANCE.

If you find it difficult to approach groups of people already talking, or you feel like you're interrupting, station yourself near (but not at) the entrance so you can catch others coming in the door. Who knows, your approaching someone just entering a room might put THEM at ease, too.

TRY THE BUDDY SYSTEM.

All students can benefit from the buddy system. If you have trouble approaching others, you and a classmate could each plan to introduce each other to one attorney of interest that you meet at the reception.

AFTER THE EVENT

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.

Reward yourself for accomplishing your goal of meeting several contacts (#3) with a quiet activity that will allow you to recharge. If that isn't possible, be sure to schedule a 10-20 minute break after classes before attending the event and after to having a little time to breathe.

FOLLOW-UP.

Speaking of these contacts, follow up with them shortly after the event. Writing an email to someone, you met may also allow you to solidify your thoughts in a more comfortable milieu.

PRACTICE.

Attending large receptions can be overwhelming for many students and attorneys, including others you may meet there, but attending large-scale networking events can be a successful first step in making connections that can turn into one-on-one, good contacts, where you can shine. Continue to attend them to further your career.