

More than luck is necessary

by LISBETH LEVINE

Many people think that the only place they can meet members of the opposite sex is at a mixer or in a crowded bar. These people are ignoring the potential that everyday situations hold for forming new relationships.

"Meeting people is scientific," said Dr. Martin V. Gallatin, Ph.D., a former sociology professor who currently gives lectures and seminars based on his system of meeting people. "There are very specific things that you must do if you want to meet people. If you wait for luck to strike you, you'll wait forever."

Gallatin developed his approach of interacting with people out of a need for it himself. "When I was in college," he explains, "I wasn't very good at meeting people or relating to women, and as a result, spent far too much time by myself."

By trial and error, and by questioning hundreds of people, Gallatin's system was perfected. Gallatin has appeared on "60 Minutes," "PM Magazine," "Good Morning New York," as well as doing several radio interviews to discuss his method of meeting people. He also teaches at least four seminars including, "Meeting People Naturally," "Lover Shopping at Bloomingdales," and "Rejection: Not Letting it Get to You." His complete set of 53 rules for interacting with other people is described in his book, *Meeting People Naturally*, available Spring, 1982.

"If you want to meet people, you need four things: the right attitude, awareness, skills, and action," Gallatin said.

The right attitude is crucial in getting other people to respond positively. "You should wake up every morning and think, 'Who am I going to meet today?' If you don't feel confident, you're not receptive to meeting other people, because even if someone does approach you, you'll think, 'what's wrong with him?' or 'why's he bothering me?'"

Gallatin also said to keep in mind that people are generally flattered when others want to meet them.

The right attitude also includes handling rejection. "Since you will be meeting more people, you're bound to get more rejections," Gallatin said. "Don't let it get to you. Just say, 'who's next?'"

Three types of awareness are needed to make a good impression, Gallatin said. One is a personal awareness; in other words, knowing your good and bad points. A societal awareness is also necessary to make the right impression. In an elevator, for example, do not wait until reaching the top floor to start a conversation, and do not use a

loud barroom voice. Finally, develop an environmental awareness of being able to pick up the general tone of the environment, and what type of mood the people are in.

Many people become nervous at the thought of meeting new people. Two important things to remember at this point are to repress all negative thoughts and to begin to speak immediately. "If you start worrying about what you're going to say," Gallatin said, "you'll become frightened and nervous."

Approaching that certain someone is fairly simple, but getting to know them requires certain skills, Gallatin said. He explained the difference between luck and skill. "Luck is going to a party and seeing one or two people you'd be interested in talking to. Once you see them, the rest is skill. If you don't know what to do, or if you wait for them to approach you, you won't meet them. Remember, they might not have the nerve to come over to you."

An important skill is knowing how to maintain a conversation. Gallatin does not believe in using lines to open a conversation and advises not to worry about what is said. "Most people think that they have to say something really profound to get someone's attention. What they're forgetting is that if the person's not interested, no matter what you say it won't do you any good. And if they are interested, you really don't have to say much. It's only the people who aren't sure about you that you need to impress with your conversation."

Many men make the mistake of talking about themselves when they are nervous, instead of finding out what they have in common with the woman they are attracted to.

Another awkward position that many people have been in is talking to someone they are very attracted to, but who is speaking about a subject that they know little or nothing about. At this point a skill known as reversal should be used. Say something like, "Frankly, Brad, I don't know as much about micro-surgery on brain cells as you do. Have you seen any good movies lately?"

Gallatin emphasized the need to act casual during a conversation, and not to ask too many personal questions until seeing that the other person is interested. Use humor in conversations whenever possible.

A skill that many women lack is knowing how to get rid of men they do not like. "Men respect women who stand up for their rights, and it's their right not to talk to somebody if they don't want to," Gallatin said. He calls his method of dismissing the undesirables "pest control."

"You've got to force yourself to do this," Gallatin said. "At first you'll be very uncomfortable, but after about 10 times, it'll be like second nature. Remember, you're doing them a favor by rejecting them right away. You're better off hurting his feelings for two minutes, then he can go on to somebody else. Once you get used to doing this, you'll be a new person."

After using conversational skills the last step is taking action. Gallatin advised to always carry a pen and piece of paper around to write phone numbers on. After talking with someone for about 10 minutes, ask to exchange phone numbers and maybe get together for a beer.

"Don't limit yourself to getting just one number," Gallatin said. "You should get at least two or three a night, because you don't know if the other person is attached, or maybe they didn't really like you that much. You will get rejections."

"Women can and should ask for a man's number if he doesn't ask. He might not think she's interested in him. If a woman doesn't want to have to actually call him first, she can say, 'I'm looking forward to hearing from you.'"

Gallatin's rules can be applied in any situation, but he has some added tips for certain circumstances.

At a party a group of girls should separate into pairs and mingle. First look at all the men in the room, then at all the women. Now look over the members of the opposite sex. Do this twice. Then choose three people that you would like to meet, and number them one, two, and three. "Now you know who you want to talk to, and the order in which you want to talk to them," Gallatin said. "Some people get very nervous, because the person they're most interested in frightens them the most. If this is the case, start with three, and work your way up."

Watch the person you are with constantly to see if they are interested. If they are they will probably smile, keep looking at you, move closer to you, and look involved. "If a person's interested in you, they will usually act like they're more excited about things than they really are to maintain the conversation," Gallatin said.

"Many people object to the idea of shopping for someone," Gallatin said. "They think it's unemotional and unromantic. That's not true. It's a lot more romantic than a dating service or having your mother introduce you, and it becomes a challenge to meet new people. Remember, chemistry can be encouraged. By following my system of meeting people naturally, you could make your life much better."

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