

Social Anxiety

Conversation Scripts

Twelve word-for-word conversation starters, keepers, exits, and saves - so your brain doesn't have to improvise while it's busy being nervous.



1 PICK TWO BEFORE YOU GO

2 SAY THEM WORD FOR WORD

3 EXIT ON A HIGH NOTE

1 Openers that always work

SAY WHAT YOU BOTH NOTICE + ASK

"It's so packed in here. Have you been to one of these before?"

Any shared situation is an opener: the venue, the line, the weather, the music.

"That food table looks dangerous. Have you tried anything good yet?"

Snacks are the world's most reliable small talk. Nobody is thrown by this question.

"It's a lot quieter out here. Did you need a break from the noise too?"

For hallways and balconies. The other escapees are usually the easiest people to talk to.

2 Keep it going

THEIR ANSWER CONTAINS YOUR NEXT QUESTION

"You mentioned you just moved. How are you liking the new place?"

The follow-up formula: pick one word from what they said and ask about it. Repeat forever.

"A paramedic? Wow. What's that like day to day?"

"What's that like?" works after almost anything. People love describing their world.

"Three dogs? That's a full house. What kind?"

Echo + expand: repeat their key detail with warmth, then add one short question.

3 Graceful exits

APPRECIATION + WHAT YOU'RE DOING NEXT

"It was really nice talking with you. I'm going to do a lap and say hi to a few people."

That's the whole formula. No elaborate excuse required - a warm close and a next move.

"I'm going to grab a refill. Enjoy the rest of your night!"

A small true action always beats an invented emergency. Then actually go get the refill.

"I need to head out, but I'm really glad we met. Good luck with the move!"

End on a callback to something they told you. It proves you were actually listening.

4 Recovering from an awkward moment

NAMING IT LIGHTLY BEATS PRETENDING

"I just completely lost my train of thought. Anyway - you were telling me about your trip."

Blanking mid-sentence happens to everyone. Name it in one breath and hand the ball back.

"That came out weirder than it sounded in my head. Let me try that again."

Said lightly, this deflates the moment on the spot. Most people will laugh with you.

"I'm blanking on your name and it's bugging me. Remind me?"

Asking costs two seconds. Avoiding someone all night because you forgot costs the night.

WORTH REMEMBERING

The Spotlight Effect

You feel watched. You mostly aren't. In a famous study, students wore an embarrassing t-shirt into a room and guessed half the people would notice. Fewer than one in four did. Everyone is busy wondering how they come across - nobody is keeping score of how you do.

