

# Interpersonal Relationships

Having positive interpersonal skills (social skills) involves maintaining relationships that are mutually satisfying, fulfilling, rewarding and enjoyable, for all parties.

1. **Seek out new interactions.** Evaluate what your interests are and join a club, class or group. Go out of your way to meet people in these new environments. You never know there may be a lifelong friend across the room waiting for you to say hello.
2. **Be prepared.** If you are anxious about going to a party and/or meeting new people spend some time before the interaction preparing. Think of possible topics that you can talk about easily. Brush up on latest political topics, the current popular movies, television shows or news happenings around the world. Be prepared to comment on your research to maintain a conversation.
3. **Don't overthink.** Try not to over think what you are saying and doing. Try to relax. The person that is criticizing you most, is you. If you stammer or spill your drink, it is ok, move on. Try to not let these tiny errors get in the way of you having fun.
4. **Listen.** In uncomfortable situations it is easy to forget to listen once you have asked a question. Hear what the other person is saying, ask follow up questions. If you don't know anything about what they are talking about, bonus, that means there is more questions to ask. Be curious.
5. **Take mental note.** Take mental note of the upcoming events of your new acquaintances. Next time you see them ask follow up questions about the events and how they turned out. Your new acquaintance will be impressed you remembered.
6. **Don't believe the lie about first impressions.** Don't worry about giving a less than desirable first impression. Everyone is nervous the first time they meet someone new. Most likely you didn't give as bad a first impression as you thought and secondly most people do not remember all of the details of their first interaction.



7. **Be friendly.** People want to talk to others that are encouraging and uplifting. Compliment the person you are talking to about their accomplishments or even what they are wearing.
8. **Be aware of the give and take.** The most successful relationships comprise of a mutual give and take. Some people may 'over give' by inviting themselves over the next day for supper, while other 'under give' by revealing very little about themselves and come across cold or unfriendly.
9. **Learn how to change topics.** Have a couple transition statements in your back pocket just in case you find the conversation dragging. Some examples, "come to think of it", or "that reminds me".
10. **Make eye contact.** It may be uncomfortable for you to make eye contact. Try to challenge yourself to make eye contact as this can increase the ease and comfort of the conversation. Don't forget to breathe.
11. **Be authentic.** We want to be impressive when we meet new people, but sometimes if we are trying too hard, that could put people off. Be authentic with people, yes have boundaries with what you share, be show them your real self. The people worth knowing will like you for you.
12. **Avoid post interaction analyzing.** Avoid seriously analyzing your interactions after you meet someone new. If you look at anything that closely, you are bound to find errors and reasons to feel deflated.
13. **Practice.** Interacting with others gracefully is a skill. The more practice you have the more comfortable you will be.
14. **Be patient.** Remember, developing lasting relationships takes time and intentionality. Be patient as the relationship grows.
15. **Allow mistakes.** Friends are going to do and say hurtful things sometimes. Try not to overreact. Is the relationship worth sticking it out though the hard times? If you decide yes, your relationship will be even stronger.
16. **Visit a success coach.** If you would like more information on this topic visit a success coach. To book an appointment, visit the student success office (2nd floor of south campus hall) or call 519-888-4567 ext. 84410.

Adapted from - Stein, S. J. & Book, H.E. (2006). *The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Success*.  
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