

Building Meaningful Connections



Meaningful social connections improve well-being, strengthen belonging, and contribute to a healthier workplace environment. Research shows that relationships are less about being outgoing and more about being intentional, curious, and present during conversations.

Start Conversations with the FORD Method

The FORD Method is a simple framework for keeping the conversation flowing naturally.

F – Family

- Where did you grow up?
- Do you have family nearby?

R – Recreation

- What do you like doing most outside of work?
- Have you picked up any new hobbies lately?

O – Occupation

- How did you get into your field?
- What do you enjoy most about your role?

D – Dreams

- What goals are you working towards?
- Is there anything you're excited to accomplish this week/month/year?

Practice the 70/30 Rule

Aim to listen about **70%** of the time and speak about **30%**. For example, maintain eye contact, ask thoughtful follow-up questions, reflect on what you heard, avoid interruptions, and show genuine curiosity. When people feel heard and understood, they are more likely to feel connected and remember how you made them feel rather than exactly what you said.

Be Mindful of Social Batteries

Socializing can require **different amounts of energy for different people**. Be mindful of both your own and the other person's social battery. Pay attention to cues that either you or the other person may need a break, such as **shorter responses, changes in engagement, or signs that the conversation is naturally coming to a close**.

Connect with Purpose

Meaningful relationships are built through small, intentional actions. We can help foster a sense of belonging by focusing on the quality of conversations, creating regular opportunities to connect, psychological safety, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels seen and valued.

- **Prioritize quality over quantity.** Having a few meaningful conversations rather than trying to meet everyone can help build relationships built on shared interests and experiences. Research shows that high-quality conversations contribute to greater well-being and stronger social connections.
- **Create repeated opportunities to connect.** Relationships grow through consistent, positive interactions. Participate in recurring networking events, coffee chats, volunteering opportunities, or regular team check-ins.

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- **Foster psychological safety.** Create an environment where people feel comfortable sharing ideas by listening respectfully, welcoming diverse perspectives, encouraging questions, recognizing contributions, avoiding assumptions, and responding with curiosity rather than judgement.

Questions or Want to Learn More?

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