

**Dorie Clark**, Contributor

8/15/2012 @ 11:02AM | 8,999 views

Forbes

# How to Get Someone to Like You Immediately

Psychologist Robert Cialdini says you shouldn't overlook the value of small talk in building relationships. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

If you're meeting with a client for the first time or starting a new job, you want to make a great first impression. But aside from the obvious (be friendly, polite, and dress well), is there anything you can do to get someone to like you immediately?

Famed psychologist [Robert Cialdini](#) says one of the most overlooked strategies is to rapidly seek out commonalities with the person you're meeting, which creates a level of shared trust. The connection doesn't have to be that unique or meaningful – perhaps you're both runners, or you both grew up in the Midwest. But it serves a powerful psychological purpose and can dramatically enhance your chances of being liked immediately.

If you know who you'll be meeting in advance, Cialdini told me in a [podcast interview](#), you shouldn't hesitate to research them. "Go on Facebook, go on LinkedIn, and see what information this person has freely given about him or herself," he advises. "It's not secret if they're talking about it online, and if you find that commonality or two, you can go there and zero in."

If your meeting is spontaneous (for instance, talking with someone at a conference), you can steer the conversation to identify shared interests. Don't hesitate to offer information about yourself as long as it's appropriate to the workplace, says Cialdini: "There's research that shows that self-disclosure is reciprocal." That means that if you share details about yourself, "people will tell you about

themselves and when you hit on a commonality, all of a sudden there's rapport."

This "small talk" may seem trivial to some,

but Cialdini believes it's central to business effectiveness: "A weakness of Americans is that we tend not to do what is done in many other cultures – spending sociable time interacting with other people so there is a context of commonality recognized by both parties, so subsequent interactions go more smoothly." The next time you're hoping to make a great first impression, your best bet may be to find common ground – fast.

What are your strategies for getting someone to like you immediately?

[Dorie Clark](#) is CEO of Clark Strategic Communications and the author of the forthcoming *Reinventing You: Define Your Brand, Imagine Your Future* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013). She is a strategy consultant who has worked with clients including Google, Yale University, and the Ford Foundation. Listen to her [podcasts](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

