



How to Improve Your Conversation Skills

Buy some breathing room. When an agenda is packed too tight, you spend more time focusing on your schedule than on the moment. Say no to low-priority items so that you can say yes to high-priority ones.

Avoid distractions. Give your undivided attention to the person you're with. Put down your phone. Stop looking at the clock. Yes...the to-do list can wait.

Choose your location wisely. It's difficult to have a productive conversation in a loud restaurant or bar. So choose a place that's conducive to discussion.

Make the person feel special. Be genuine. Make eye contact. Make the person feel like he or she is the only one who matters (at least for that moment).

Turn off the television. If you're looking for quality time, watching TV together hinders conversation. You may know a lot about the program but little about what's happening in his or her life.

Keep a level head. A few drinks make great company. After a few more, you probably won't have a meaningful conversation, much less remember what you talked about.

Never respond emotionally. If you're angry or upset, count to 10 before communicating your feelings. If that doesn't work, try 20.

Be genuine and truthful. It's important to tell it like it is, rather than placate people by telling them what they want to hear.

Show that you care. Make sure you don't dominate the conversation. Listen actively rather than thinking about your response.

Get the signal. If you're "visiting" someone via cell phone, make sure you have a strong signal. And don't surf the web during the conversation.