

## Small Talk Helpers – Starting Phrases

<b>Talking about the weather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beautiful day, isn't it?</li><li>• Can you believe all this rain we've been having?</li><li>• It looks like it's going to snow.</li><li>• It sure would be nice to be in Mexico right about now.</li><li>• I hear they're calling for thunderstorms all weekend.</li><li>• We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we?</li><li>• How about this weather?</li><li>• Did you order this sunshine?</li></ul>
<b>Talking about current events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did you catch the news today?</li><li>• Did you hear about that fire in Yorkville?</li><li>• What do you think about this transit strike?</li><li>• I read in the paper today that Yorkdale Mall is closing for renovations.</li><li>• I heard on the radio today that they are finally going to start building the new subway line.</li><li>• How about those Blue Jays? Do you think they're going to win tonight?</li></ul>
<b>At the office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking forward to the weekend?</li><li>• Have you worked here long?</li><li>• So, are you working hard or hardly working?</li><li>• I can't believe how busy/quiet we are today, can you?</li><li>• Has it been a long week?</li><li>• You look like you could use a cup of coffee.</li><li>• What do you think of the new computers?</li></ul>
<b>At a social event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So, how do you know Justin?</li><li>• Have you tried the cabbage rolls that Sandy made?</li><li>• Are you enjoying yourself?</li><li>• It looks like you could use another drink.</li><li>• Pretty nice place, eh?</li><li>• I love your dress. Can I ask where you got it?</li></ul>
<b>Out for a walk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How old is your baby?</li><li>• What's your puppy's name?</li><li>• The tulips are sure beautiful at this time of year, aren't they?</li><li>• How do you like the new park?</li><li>• Nice day to be outside, isn't it?</li></ul>

### **Waiting somewhere**

- I didn't think it would be so busy today.
- You look like you've got your hands full (with children or goods). Can I help?
- The bus must be running late today.
- It looks like we're gonna be here a while, eh?
- I'll have to remember not to come here on Mondays.
- How long have you been waiting?

There are many ways to start a conversation, and many reasons why you should. Friendships can form, business relationships can sprout, and at the very least you can create a positive social interaction for someone and add a little sunshine to their life – if only for a moment. It is a good habit to get into – the habit of presenting yourself positively (*i.e., open, and friendly*) to the world.

### **Keeping the Ball Rolling: Generating 'Flow'**

Once you have got the conversation started you need to generate topics of conversation quickly, and with a good, comfortable sense of 'flow' that does not seem forced or randomly glued together. It needs to go from one topic to another seamlessly and without the appearance of effort. It cannot simulate an interview or a telemarketer's script. ☺

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** At every opportunity, try your new small talk skills with clerks, sales staff, and bank tellers, and anyone that is paid to talk to you! Get good at it so it's there when you need it for dates, networking, interviews, client meetings and any other time you need to strike up a conversation or keep one going with a new colleague, friend or even a stranger. By practicing all the time, you are much more comfortable when the important meeting, interview or date comes around. Practice really helps a lot here. Pay attention to their words, voice and body language. Pay attention to YOUR words, voice and body language as well!

Coach Ric