

If you are an introvert, starting a conversation may be difficult, but it's a skill that can and should be developed. Social conversations can be a great foundation to nurture and develop work relationships. And, through the simple art of conversation, you can begin building enough social capital to address tough issues when you have to.

Here are a few tips to think about:

Think ahead...have a story, a question or a news item to share for any occasion...a hallway conversation, meeting or event.

Listen more than you talk...ask interesting questions; be genuine; focus on others.

Tailor your conversation...a political topic with a like-minded politico is okay; but don't say "how are those Vikings" if your listener doesn't watch football.

Take your turn...a conversation is a group project with no room for monologues even if you think you are clever, funny and engaging.

Be authentic...don't use a phony politeness; drop any affectations or phrases that you think are cool or trendy. Be you.