

Nice to Meet You': The Art of Being Introduced



“Chris, I’d like to introduce you to Ellen. I think she may be able to help you with your job search. Good luck! I’ll let you two take it from here.”

If you are new—or a little rusty—to [the world of networking](#), important introductions might feel intimidating or even awkward, especially if you don’t know what to say.

But remember, introductions are just the first step to new friendships. Networking is ultimately [about building relationships](#) and reputations. If you are fortunate enough to be introduced to someone who can [help you progress professionally](#), you’ll want to know how to [make that exchange more successful](#) and likely to happen again.

10 rules of introduction etiquette

So, do you want to nail that next introduction? If so, these are the 10 rules of introduction etiquette you need to remember:

1. The introducer is using their reputation for *you*.

When someone introduces you, they are asking a friend or colleague to make time for you. It's a personal favor, and not too many requests can be made of any one person. In turn, you become a personal reflection of the introducer, so make this opportunity count—it's not all about you.

2. Follow up—quickly—to show good introduction etiquette.

When an introduction is made, proper etiquette is to move promptly, not only as a sign of appreciation but to ensure your new contact remembers the introduction. In business, two weeks is an eternity and a thousand things have flown by since. A delay can also unintentionally communicate that the introduction isn't that important to you or that you have no sense of urgency, neither of which is helpful.

3. Aim for an in-person intro.

Not every introduction will have time to meet you in person, but try for face-to-face meetings when possible. Nothing, not even a great email back-and-forth, replaces an in-person conversation.

4. Your schedule is secondary.

Introduction etiquette means that you adapt your schedule to theirs—don't expect the other way around. Be willing to meet before work and close to their office. Never ask them to come to you, because you are the one asking for the favor.

5. Prepare for your meeting.

Know who you are meeting in advance by researching your new contact before you get there. You'll not only look prepared, but with a better idea of what to say and [the extra confidence](#) that comes with knowing who you're talking to, you'll have a much more productive and meaningful discussion.

6. Know the 'ask' to show proper introduction etiquette.

Don't spend your meeting hoping that the person you've just met will know what to do or how to help you if you can't even articulate it yourself. Figure out what you want, then narrow your request as much as you can. Say something like, "My goal is to connect with people in the financial services industry in New York," or "I'd appreciate your advice on finding an agent for my nonfiction book targeted at teenagers." Take it as far as you can.

7. Work on a relationship, not a transaction.

Don't outsmart yourself and determine who is "worth your time." Even the person who doesn't have a current job opening might have the next perfect introduction for you or decide to create a brand-new position based on your conversation. Networking and introductions are organic, not formulaic.

8. Show gratitude.

You were the recipient of two favors, so send [a personal thank-you note](#) right after your meeting to both the contact and your introducer. Other people have taken time from their busy day to help you, and a simple thank-you note is the proper etiquette to show your appreciation for the introduction and strengthen the connection.

9. Stay in touch.

[Send a LinkedIn request](#) to your new contact—but don't use the automated LinkedIn note of "I'd like to add you to my professional network." Instead, add a personal comment referencing your meeting. Additionally, look for other ways to stay connected after your first meeting—follow them on Twitter and stay on top of your email, for example. When you are asking for help, you've got to stay on top of it and make sure no opportunity passes you by.

10. You can't just be a taker—it's not proper etiquette for new introductions.

We all know those people in our network who only call when they're looking for a new job, then hide away until the next time they need help. Do a favor for your contacts by asking, "What can I do?" You may, for example, become the introducer in turn, making introductions that are valuable to them.

I once spoke to an entrepreneurial class at Southern Methodist University. After the class, a student came up to introduce himself and thank me for coming. He also told me that he knew another respected author in my space and offered to introduce us. I received a LinkedIn request that night with a personal note thanking me again for visiting his class.

This is how it's done.



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