

approach, and those who are approachable, find more opportunities and better opportunities over time than those who appear nervous.

Whether it be an event or an impromptu moment like standing in the line at the supermarket, the choice is yours. Connect, or wait for others to connect.

The former takes a little courage, but brings the best results. The latter is easy, but your destiny is not in your hands.

Trea Tijmens is a professional matchmaker and dating coach based in Geneva and co-author of *Sexy Secrets to a Juicy Love Life*. She's also in business for herself. She feels strongly that pro-actively making connections brings clear benefits to her dating clients, as well as to her own business development.

Trea has many best practices that she recommends to her single clients that apply to meeting new people - whether at events, the supermarket, airports or just about anywhere. Below are six of them.

Claim Responsibility

You are responsible for the success of your networking. You are responsible for making the networking experience positive. Ask not what others can bring you but what you can bring to them.

So, no one is looking at you, smiling at you or talking with you? Do you wish it were different? Then be the change you want to see in others. Look at people, smile and talk. You will be amazed at how contagious this is.

Two Choices: Wait or Create

In sales as in dating, we have two choices: wait for opportunities or create

opportunities.

Waiting means that you want something, you have a goal, but that you are not taking action to get to that goal. A goal without action is a dream. Doing nothing usually does not bring us further toward our goal. If we do nothing, nothing will change in our situation.

So we have to become active and initiate opportunities ourselves.

Set The Right Small Goals

Setting goals is great. However, if you are on a mission to sell or find a date, people smell it from miles away. You'll come across as a *closer*, when what you really want to be at this stage is an *opener*.

Instead, set realistic goals, such as I will speak to five new gentlemen. I would like to speak to someone who has a connection in the travel sector. You will be much more likely to achieve your goals, and you will feel confident, energized and motivated to do it again.

Over time, increase your goals. The idea is that you continually expand your comfort zone.

Don't beat yourself up if things do not work the way you would have liked immediately. It's a learning process. Keep tweaking and improving, and you will be successful.

Be Positive

Positive attracts. Confidence attracts.

Smile. Be upbeat, playful and fun. Make others feel good about themselves. Give them sincere compliments.

Be in the moment and give the person you speak to your full attention. Be genuinely interested in the other, not in pushing your own agenda. Look for the good in everyone. Everyone wants to be appreciated and people love to help.

A simple way to engage with someone is to ask for help on something.

“Hello, can you tell me what time the apero / dancing / presentation starts?”

Then, “Thanks so much. By the way, I am Trea,” and give them a smile and a warm handshake.

Make It Easy

In addition to being confident in approaching people, make it easy for people to approach you, too.

Position yourself at opportune places where it is easy to make connections, and look at people. Opportune places can be anywhere: close to the food buffet, bar or an entrance where everybody has to pass. Try different locations and see what works. Never hide in a quiet area or dark corner.

And simply don't check messages on your mobile, and don't make phone calls. If you have to make an urgent call or reply to an important message, step away from the high-visibility places.

Otherwise, always be engaged with your environment. Keep your body turned towards others, look at them and just smile.

Just Connect

Connective networking is networking with a purpose but, again, don't show up pushing an obvious agenda.

If you come to a networking event or party with a mission such as “I have to get a new client,” or, “I have to find a date tonight,” you will be too focused on what *you* want.

Just be in the moment. Enjoy the people, and just connect.

When you make a fool of yourself – for love or for sales – it gets easier the more you do it. When you see how much people appreciate it, you’ll actually feel wiser.

When it looks easy for you, and when it feels easy for the others, it’s actually not so foolish, after all.