

Hello. How is everyone? Good? All right. We got a lively bunch today. OK. So, yes, as Taylor was saying-- thank you so much-- we're here to talk about building your networking confidence.

My name is Torsheika Maddox. Thank you so much for coming out to chat with me today. I hope that we can all be participatory in this discussion and conversation.

I'm an Administrative Project Manager and Researcher here on campus in the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. So like I was saying, I'd like for our session to be interactive so I'm hoping that you also bring your thoughts and ideas into the conversation and space. And before I get started, I'd like to get a sense of who's in the room. I know, as was asked earlier, there are some master's and PhD students.

But even before that, I'd like for you to take a moment to introduce yourselves to the people at your table. So I'm going to give you about three minutes or so to introduce yourselves to the people at your table. And then we'll reconvene. OK.

OK. I'm going to bring us back together. So I'm going to pick on a few people so I hope we all came ready to chat, unless there's volunteers. So can I get a volunteer?

To do what?

Well, I'll tell you after you volunteer. Any-- any takers? All right. Can you introduce your partner for me? Can you give me your partner's first and last name, why they're here, what they're interested in, research interests?

Well, this is Martha. She did not-- I got that right?

Yeah.

OK, good. I'm terrible with names. This is Martha.

Hm mm.

We didn't actually exchange last names. She's a bit of a non-traditional student. She's a surgeon.

OK.

Who is interested in surgical education research and has come back to UMass to get a master's of education.

OK. OK. Thank you. Any other volunteers? You look like you might be a willing participant. Can you please

introduce your table, first and last names?

[INAUDIBLE]

No? OK, OK. I'll pick on one more table, back here for a corner. Anyone want to jump in and try to introduce your table and maybe give one passion about people you're talking to? No takers? All right.

Even though we had three minutes to kind of get to know one another, sometimes it's difficult, right? Things come and quickly leave us. I want to tell you a little bit about who I am before we kind of dive into our conversation a little bit further today.

I'm a New Jersey native. I'm learning to sew. I enjoy traveling. My personality type is ambivert, and I'm excited today to talk with you about networking.

So that may have felt a little uncomfortable, and that's OK. Hopefully by the time we get done today, you'll feel a little bit more confident about talking with others and networking and really remembering that information. So don't worry. This was just a small little self-test and self-assessment.

So oftentimes in our interactions, we're passively listening, right. We're kind of waiting for that opportunity to talk about our likes, our dislikes. You know, we're kind of only passively interested in what the other person is saying. We're just waiting for that opportunity to jump into the conversation.

We might be a little more inclined to tune into a conversation if we know that the person we're interest-- if we know the person we're interested in talking to or if we have an immediate connection, right. We tune in. Afterwards we might take that person's business card, but it kind of makes it to the bottom of the bag, right. Or it makes it into the trash bin, and we never really do anything about it. Our network doesn't grow.

So I'm going to give away the punch line here at the beginning. The most important piece to networking is making meaningful connections. We'll talk a little bit about why.

So how do you define networking? In other words, what does networking mean to you? Anyone? Sure.

I'll say meeting new folks to expand the-- I don't want to use the word network, [INAUDIBLE]. It's like you've got your personal network, like people you know in different places that you don't have connections in.

Would you mind just repeating the questions, so we can hear?

Sure. Sure. So the question was, how do you define networking or what does networking mean to you? I saw a couple of other hands. Yes.

In [INAUDIBLE] of meeting people you don't already know to add to your social network, learn how to approach people you otherwise wouldn't be making conversation with.

OK. So we're talking a little bit about creating connections, thinking about how to approach folks. I saw a hand here in the grey. Yes.

Forming relationships so you can exploit those relationships for resources.

So some sort of gain to be had from making a connection with someone. So we're all in the same ballpark. So the Oxford dictionary defines a network or networking is-- networking as, "interacting with others to exchange information and developing professional or social contacts." The Webster dictionary takes it a step further by specifying a purpose. So they define networking as, "the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions specifically to cultivate productive relationships for employment or business," so getting to that point you were making, exploiting it for an end, right.

So traditionally, when we've thought of networking, we're in these large groups, and there's conversations. It may be at conferences, social gatherings, networking events. You're armed with your business cards, right.

You've got a stack of your resumes. You're well-groomed and put together. And you've been trained to talk to as many people as possible and to collect as many business cards as possible.

So you know, we talk awkwardly for about 10 or 15 minutes. We exchange those cards, and we move on to the next person or maybe to the food line, you know, to recharge a little bit. But I mean, this really is akin to speed dating, right. You're just trying to march through this as quickly as possible, and you're on to the next person.

However, more and more, networking has been defined by social media platforms, like LinkedIn or Facebook or YouTube or any number of things, whether or not we actually have conversations online, right. So we're making these connections on these social platforms, but we may or may not be having conversations and having depth to our relationships. So something that's becoming really popular is sharing or retweeting someone's post as a way of showing that you're in agreement or support with what they're saying.

So you may have tens of thousands of connections, right, but many of these connections may lack quality or depth. It's really difficult to have deep relationships with tens and thousands of people, right. So please don't misconstrue what I'm saying, you know, as a disincentive to network. What I'm saying is that we must be intentional, active, and selfless in our networking.

So why do you believe networking is important? You must see some value in it because you're here today. Why is it important to you and your future aspirations and goals? Yes.

It's probably harder to find a job if you don't know people in your field.

OK, so getting to know folks in your field to find a job. Great. Anyone else?

To develop collaborations, to access other kinds of resources, access to do the networking for [INAUDIBLE] in the field or something.

Right, so like mentoring, absolutely. Anyone else? Why is networking important to you? What's the benefit? Yes.

Exposing yourself to different ideas and inspirations and information?

Absolutely, to spark interest. So it's kind of easy to-- when you're thinking about networking-- to dislike it. It may feel a little self-serving in some instances. It may feel a little manipulative because you're having these targeted small conversations.

You may feel like it's even draining, right. You've got to kind of pump yourself up to get ready to go network. You've got to find that energy.

You might feel like it doesn't work for you. Or you're like I have prelims. I have work. I have class. I'm TAing.

I have a family, you know. When do I have the time to network with all of these competing interests? But believe me, you don't have the time not to commit to networking because it can greatly benefit you and your future with some of the things that you've talked about today.

So you're absolutely right. It may help you find potential employment opportunities, someone who can give you advice, mentorship, assistance, maybe even friendship develops, right. You can receive coaching.

While there are many benefits to networking, the point is to make those real connections with people. I want you to think about your friends, right. If you had a friend who came up and said, hey, I want to-- I want you to do this favor for me. Can you drive me to Chicago?

Or can you take me up the street or pick up a book or whatever it is? You're more inclined to want to do that favor, right, because it's someone you know, someone you've developed a relationship with. Same thing in networking, someone is more inclined to think of you or to want to help you in some way if they've built a relationship with you. So you can think of it is in the same way as building those friendships.

So one of the things that's important when networking is understanding who you are as a person so you can be authentic in building these relationships. Because it can feel a little inauthentic when trying to develop relationships with folks who you don't know. So does anyone know what the three most common personality types are? Yes.

In that one you mentioned earlier, ambivert, extrovert, introvert.

Well, someone came prepared. Yes. So the three main personality types are extrovert, introvert, and ambivert. Anyone want to take a shot at describing what an extrovert is or the characteristics of an extrovert? I think we've all seen them. Yeah, yes.

They gain their energy by socializing with others, [INAUDIBLE] intentions. They are not afraid to compensate with [INAUDIBLE].

Well, you guys are very well-prepared. I feel like you could give part of this talk for me. You're absolutely right.

So when we're thinking about folks who are extroverted, they're typically assertive. They're go-getters. You know, they seize the day. They're the social butterflies.

They're great at thinking on their feet. They're relatively comfortable with conflict. And given the choice, they usually prefer going to environments that give them frequent opportunity to speak with others, right, so they're just kind of floating around the room. I think we've all seen these folks.

And so they definitely flourish in opportunities to engage with other folks. Introvert, anyone want to give characteristics of an introvert? I feel like it might be an easy one, but I'll throw it out there. Anyone? Sure.

[LAUGHING]

People who are extroverts, a person who gets their energy from being alone. Whether or not they like socializing, it's not what charges the batteries.

Right. And you guys are spot on with talking about this energy piece and what helps you to be your best self. So an introvert is someone who usually likes to devote their social energy to small groups of people that they care about, preferring maybe a glass of wine with a close friend or a small coffee date or something like that, but a setting that's a little more intimate. Introverts are more deliberate so they're more likely to think before they speak, take a little bit more time to respond, and are more deliberate in their approach to risk.

And so they have a very active inner life. And they're very-- they're at their best selves when they tap into that. How many of you are well-versed or know much about ambiverts?

I feel like this is something that we're talking a little bit more now because we primarily have focused on intro and extroversion. Anybody want to take a stab at defining ambiverts? Don't all jump at once. In the back.

Is it somebody who can just as well [INAUDIBLE]?

So, right, ambiverts are a little bit of both, right. They fall somewhere in between that introvert and extroversion spectrum. Ambiverts tend to do well in social settings but also need that time to retreat and to recharge their batteries, so it's a little bit of both. They can tap into both the strengths of the introvert and extrovert.

Which personality type do you identify with most? If you had to think about yourself, where do you think you fall in this spectrum? So what we're going to do, we're going to take the next seven minutes or so to complete a short assessment to see which personality type you identify with.

One thing-- just keep in mind that we change from day to day, right. We are human creatures that way. So I want you to think about the things that resonate with you most today when you're answering the questions.

So if you have a score of 38 or more, you fall into the introvert category. For those of you who are between 22 and 37 points, you fall into the ambivert category. And for anyone who has a score of 21 or less, you fall into the extrovert category.

Can I get a show of hands for those of you who are extroverts? All right. Show a hands for those of you who are ambiverts. A good bunch, OK. And then show of hands for those of you who are introverts. All right.

So it looks like our introverts and ambiverts make up a large portion of our group today. Anyone surprised by where they fell? Yeah, no, OK. So you have a good idea of where you sat? So what? We know our personality type, now what?

It's important that we play to our strengths when we're networking. For those of you or the one of you in the room who is an extrovert, it'll be important to make sure you're not dominating the conversation, right. And you want to allow others to be participatory. So you come with an energy that's very bright and could easily fill the room, right.

So you just want to make sure that there's that balance. For those of you who are introverts, it will be really important for you to make sure that you're participating in the conversation so the person that you're engaged-- that you're talking with, knows that you're engaged in that conversation. And for those of you who are ambiverts, it could go either way, right. So you want to make sure that you're doing that self-inventory as you're participating in these networking events to see where you're leaning that day and to adjust accordingly.

So when we're thinking about being in these networking spaces or having these networking opportunities, you know, we've kind of heard over and over again, just go ahead and jump in, right-- without many tools. But you know, it's really important, when you're going to networking events, to make sure that you have a plan with goals and objectives for networking. And in many cases, the networking really starts before you even arrive. You'll have

the opportunity to meet tons of people at conferences or even here at your home institution and in your home departments.

So it'll be really important for you to make a list of people that you want to see. So when we're talking about that planning and those goals, for the people that you've identified on your list, you kind of want to see what they're working on, right. Many of us have websites and pages where we talk about our personal hobbies and interests. Maybe you find something to connect on, right, to help spark up that conversation in a very authentic way.

So develop a list of questions you would like to ask. See if you have friends in common. We're all connected on LinkedIn and Facebook and all of these social networks. Oftentimes, it's really easy to find a colleague who can do an e-introduction.

It's really a low stakes way to begin having that conversation, right. They get to say something great about you. You should meet my colleague. They're great.

I think that there is this point of intersection. And from there, the conversation is very natural, right. That's just one easy way to begin that conversation.

If you're going out to a conference, because there's so much happening with all of the sessions, with the dinners and things that may be taking place there, it also may be to your benefit to reach out and see if you can set up time to grab coffee or grab lunch with someone. Because once you get there, your schedule kind of takes off. And sometimes peoples' schedules fill before they come to conferences and things. So the more that you can do on the front end before you attend conferences or before you attend events, the better.

So once you do get to the networking event, be that a conference or whatever the case may be, start the conversation as a social one. We're people first before our profession, right. Small talk, like I've been saying, can help you uncover points of intersection for the both of you as you're developing this relationship.

You may discover you have friends in common, you know, hobbies that you both share. You may find out about pet research projects that they're working on before it even becomes public and have an opportunity to get involved. Or they might be able to connect you with someone else who has interests similar to yours and, again, do that e-introduction or introduce you in person. That is a really easy low stakes way to begin those conversations and to begin making meaningful connections.

So it's a delicate balance of small talk and pointed conversations. If you're at a networking event, and you're not there to meet someone specific, right-- so if you haven't identified people that you know for sure you want to talk with-- that's OK. You can still plan. You want to come armed with some questions that make it easy to naturally get into these conversations, right, to help you get started and discover these commonalities.

So here's five useful questions that you can kind of put in your knapsack, so to speak, as you're attending networking events. When we go to events, or even when we're networking in our day-to-day life, right, many of us may just jump into conversations. If you're at a food line somewhere, you may just begin talking with the person standing next to you about the food that's in front of you.

And you get into a great conversation, and then you realize, I never even told them what my name was. I never asked them their name. We've been talking for 30 minutes.

This is really awkward, right. It makes it a little more difficult to go back to that beginning and say, hey, by the way, what's your name, where are you from, right? So it's always great to start with names.

Secondly, you want to ask, what do you want to be doing for a living? So the common question that we ask is, what do you do for a living? Or what do you do, right? So this is just a little bit of a different twist on that that may spark some interest. It may give that person an opportunity to think, like, to think about that.

And then, secondly, they may not necessarily be doing the work that they want to do. Or they may be ready to make a career shift or change. And then that also sparks some very interesting conversation. We all attend events for very different reasons.

So kind of asking what their reason for attending that event is a good way to kind of gauge where they are and their purpose for being there. And then what are you passionate about in life? We all have that one thing, right, that we could just talk ad nauseum about. So asking about someone's passion is a really great way to break that ice and to get to know someone-- again, meaningful connections.

Lastly, what are your research interests? So all of you are graduate students, and you're looking for others with whom your work intersects. So this is low-hanging fruit in terms of questions and really talking about the research projects that they're working on or that you're working on.

You can put your own spin on these questions and make it your own. But these are just good icebreakers outside of, how's that weather? Or how was the flight in? You know, these are the things that we hear all the time. So this will help to set you apart just a little.

Actively listening, how many of you have been-- or I'm saying, be genuine, sorry. How many of you have been in a conversation with someone, and you could tell that they were just passing pleasantries before they got to what they really wanted? Anyone? You're kind of, like, I can tell you're just kind of waiting to get to the thing.

How did you feel about that? How did you feel in that moment? Impatient, yep. Anyone else?

It makes them-- it makes them somewhat disingenuous.

Hm.

Like, if you don't want to be socializing with me, you don't need to try and fire me up.

Right. Not so great. It doesn't make you feel so great about the request that's coming. How would you have wanted someone to approach you?

If they want something, just come with it.

Just come out and ask, right. Like you were saying, we can all tell when someone is being disingenuous. And I can't underscore enough, you know, being your authentic self. That doesn't mean we won't stumble. It doesn't mean it won't take practice, but practice makes perfect.

So practicing with other graduate students is really important, taking those questions when you go to mixers that are happening on campus or when things are happening in your department. Particularly if you're newer in the department-- some are larger than others-- this is a great way for this to begin to feel ingrained or a part of you so it doesn't feel like, I'm just saying these things so that I can get to this ask or get to this question, right. Because, again, we're underscoring building real connections.

So I want you to think about a few questions. You don't have to raise your hands. I'm not going to put you on the spot. But who can tell me where I'm from? OK.

Don't feel inclined to raise your hand if you don't want to, but you can if you want. Who can tell me what I enjoy? Who can tell me what I'm learning? A few, OK.

Who can tell me what my personality type is? I got a few more on that one. If you hesitated on these questions, then it's important for you to be extra vigilant to hear what others are saying. It's really common, like I said, in the beginning of the conversations for us to kind of tune out on those pieces. But that's where we get the most important pieces of information, who we are, when we begin talking about ourselves.

So one good trick, when you're thinking about names, is to use a person's name three to four times in the beginning of a conversation. So if you're introducing yourself, you know, hi, my name is Torsheika. Nice to meet you. Oh, Christie, fantastic, Christie.

It's so nice to meet you, Christie. Tell me where you're from. But the more that you can repeat that early in your conversations, the more likely you are to remember that name so you have fewer of those awkward moments of, I

walked away from this person, and I have no idea who they are. And I hate to ask, if you didn't get a business card, right.

Once you've finished your conversation, if you did get a business card, it's really good to put a note on the back. So if there's some sort of defining feature about the person, you can write on there how you met them, something that you talked about, or something that will help you to remember who they are. Particularly if you're going to huge networking events, and you're talking to a ton of people, it may become really easy to forget what are some of the key things that you talked about, right. The important pieces, you want to be able-- when we get to the next piece, when we're talking about follow-up, we want to make sure that it's genuine. And so being able to recall those details are really important.

So, like I said, we've all done it. We've gone to these networking events. We met someone for coffee. We went to a conference, and we return home.

We returned to work. We returned to classes. We returned to life. And we forgot about the stack of business cards that we collected, and they start collecting dust. So our stack of business cards grows, right, but our networks didn't.

So it's really important to follow up with someone within that 24- to 48-hour time frame. You know, it was so great to meet you. I enjoyed our conversation about X. You can include an article or a link to something that you talked about.

One, it shows that you are actively listening in that conversation. It comes off as being more genuine in your conversation. And the fact that you actually followed up is meaningful, particularly since this is the step that is often skipped when we're networking is that follow-up. So this will also help to set you apart.

Last but certainly not least, practice makes perfect, right. The more you practice networking, the more you practice small talk, the more comfortable you will become. But remember, when you're at these networking events or when you have the opportunity to meet new people, be mindful of how much air space you're consuming. You want to leave room for others to jump in. Think about things that are outside of work that you feel comfortable sharing.

So this gets to a part of that preplanning. Think of the things that you would feel comfortable sharing with someone who you're just meeting. Be sure to ask genuine questions of others you're talking to. Be conscious of your body language.

Our nonverbals say a lot, right. So if we're kind of here or turned away, and we're not giving that direct eye contact, that can really read as someone who is disinterested, right. So it takes a little extra work, but we want to

be mindful of how we're presenting self when we're in these spaces.

Most importantly, we're very comfortable with people that we know, right. So when we go to these networking events, we may have colleagues. We may have friends who are also participating. And we find ourselves gravitating there, right, because it's easy. That's not helping your network grow.

So you want to make sure that you're connecting with people outside of the network group you already have, outside of your department, outside of your friends group, so that you can really stretch that community. So each of you got an index card. I'm going to give you the next five minutes to write down some answers to the following questions.

Who are you? What do you want to be doing for a living? Why are you here at this event today?

What are you most passionate about in life? And what are your research interests? So I'm going to give you the next five minutes to jot down-- excuse me-- the answers to your questions.

All right. So is everyone done writing? Any time is really the right time for networking. For example, now is a great time to put some of the things that we've talked about into practice. So if you didn't get to finish writing out all of your thoughts, that's OK.

This was an opportunity to help you preprepare your thoughts so that you can go into the conversations having some idea about what you want to share about yourselves. So on the top of your index cards, you'll notice that there are two stars. I want you to find the person that-- there's multiples so find someone who has the same color star as the first one in the top left. Does that make sense?

So you have two stars in the upper left corner. The one that is further to the left, you're looking for someone else who has the matching star. I'm going to give you two minutes to find your partner, and then you'll go through the questions on your card. OK, find your person. If you can hear me, clap twice.

[CLAPPING]

All right. So we're going to switch. We're now going to find the person with the second matching star. And we're going to begin a new conversation with a new partner. OK. I know.

It can be a little intimidating having to start over because you have built such great bonds with your first partner. But we must part ways for a short while, while we build a new connection. So I'll give you a few minutes to find your next partner, and then we'll go through the questions again. OK, all right. Clap once.

[CLAPPING]

All right. Thank you. So we're going to all come back together. So can I get two or three people to volunteer to talk about what their experience was like with this prepared speed networking? Anyone would like to share out? Yes.

Another comment, needed to rearrange the questions a bit, asking what you wanted to do for a living before asking why you're here--

Sure.

--kind of felt like an unnatural progression to the conversation.

Sure.

But having that script definitely made it a lot easier to get started. And then, once you get started, the rock kind of pushed off the ledge and rolling down the hill.

Kind of sped up really quickly?

Yes.

Good. Anyone else? What was your experience like?

[INAUDIBLE]

Yes.

Yeah, I think this was really helpful. I mean, once I found-- I found out I didn't have to [INAUDIBLE]. And upon introduction, we can just move into other areas. And sometimes, we will talk about things that are not [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah.

So I find that, you know, if you can keep one or two things in your head, and open up on that then there's so much you can explore with the person.

Yes.

I found that having like sort of a specific, like, sort of, context for the conversation where, like, you have an excuse to be having this conversation.

Yeah.

Or like an excuse to be talking about specific aspects of it makes it a lot easier. So like, you know, it's easier in this workshop. But I'm imagining, like, maybe for myself, like, you know, a game about, like, how to-- like these are the excuses that I'm going to--

Yeah.

--to make myself actually have these conversations.

Good. I'll take one more, if anyone else wants to share. OK. So you're right. This helps to give you an introduction into the conversation. We may be at an event, or we may be at a conference that has a particular topic, but it still requires a little bit of extra effort and a little bit of work to build that connection with someone.

But you're right. If you have a gateway set of questions or some gateway thoughts or things to talk about, it makes it much easier to begin opening up about yourself, learning more about others, and even thinking about how you could-- ahem, excuse me-- connect those who you're meeting with people who are in your networks. So that's kind of that selfless piece, right. And having that conversation initially, you may say, I'm not certain how we may come together in the future. But you know, maybe you'll be the connector for someone else, and someone else who is networking will be a connector to you. So networking is definitely multipurpose.

But really I just want to underscore that preparation piece, right. When you're thinking through, what are some of the things that I'm willing to share with someone who I don't know yet to build that meaningful conversation? And what are some things that I can talk about to really make it easy to get into that conversation, to build connections, and hopefully future collaborations or mentorship opportunities or opportunities to collaborate on research, right.

So just a reminder, authenticity is key. I mean, we talked about that earlier. We can all tell when someone is being disingenuous so keep it real. Be yourself.

And many of you did that in using those questions in a way that felt natural to you. That's exactly what you should do. While it's good to have a network with breadth, you want to make sure that there is depth to your relationships, right. You want to make sure that, while you have tons of connections, that you're really developing meaningful relationships with people who are in your network.

And proper planning and preparation prevents particularly poor performance, so network early in your academic career and network often. Even though we took a short amount of time to build connections here, you just don't know where the people you met today, where you may meet them down the line, or how you may intersect again.

So don't forget to grab, you know, the contact information for those who you've met here because your colleagues are also a part of your network. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

So we still have about 10 minutes. And I'd like to open the floor if there any lingering questions or thoughts. Yes.

Do you have any tips on actually starting the conversation? I don't mean the questions. I mean, walking up to someone and inserting yourself in whatever they're doing. My biggest problem with networking, especially at conferences and such, is it feels very artificial, and I also have [INAUDIBLE]. Is there a way to rally that?

So I kind of jokingly said, sometimes when we're networking, we kind of take a break over to the food line. But actually, while you're in that space, that is often an easy way, right, to insert yourself into a conversation, if you're standing next to one and say, you know, oh, that looks great. Or what do you think about the food, or whatever the case because you're in that context, right? So that's one way.

Using people you know, so while we don't want to congregate with those who we have come with, you may see someone who is talking with a person who you have yet to make a connection with. And coming up and saying hello to your friend, and then introducing yourself to that next person is a good, natural entrance into that conversation. And then, thirdly, thinking about that tabletop space, so oftentimes you'll see the low tables with chairs, which kind of feels like this is someone's space.

And I probably should ask if I enter it. Having those high top tables, kind of coming over and making space and, you know, can I join you here is a really easy way to kind of let yourself into that conversation. And oftentimes, people who are in those spaces are also looking for someone to talk with as well. Does that help? OK. Yeah. I saw a hand in the back, yes.

What's your advice for taking on, doing this sort of cold networking contacts [INAUDIBLE] you don't have a connection or--

Sure. Ahem, excuse me. I think a really good way of doing that is with email. It's always great if we can find someone who's in that circle who can do that introduction, but if not, taking the time to look at the types of things that that person is working on. Oftentimes, people will have personal pages or things like that, which would give you some things to talk about.

But I would-- in reaching out to them, I would say, hey, I saw that you're working on X or saw that you're interested in Y. I also have a similar interest. You know, would you be, you know, willing to, you know, meet at said

conference or get together for coffee or be available for a phone conversation because I'd like to get your insights, right?

All of us like to be the expert at something, right. So it's really easy for people to want to participate in those conversations if you're coming to them for their expertise, right. So thinking of ways that you can enter that conversation, to kind of get their expertise about something or their insights about something or getting to know more about them is a good way to open that door. Good question. Yes.

So if you have someone that you've kind of made an initial contact with and you know that [INAUDIBLE], you don't need them now. You need them in three years.

Uh huh.

How do you get from where you are now to three years where you've built that connection and they can help you?

That's a good question. And so reaching out periodically-- hey, I saw you had a new paper that came out. Congratulations. You know, glad to see you're doing well.

What are your thoughts about future directions? You know, having multiple points of contact is great. If you're going to a conference, and you see that they're going as well, hey, let's meet up for coffee, or asking them which sessions they're attending. It keeps their-- it keeps your name or your image fresh in their mind, right.

And they're like, oh, I know this person. I'm expecting to meet them. In very easy ways, you can begin building a relationship long term, which is great, right, because it gives you an opportunity to make that genuine connection over a longer period of time.

So when it comes to a point where there is an ask, it's like, hey, we've met up at conferences. We've had-- we've grabbed coffee every now and again. Sure, no problem, I'd love to connect you with so-and-so, or I'd love to work with you on whatever paper. So I think being strategic about making sure that you're keeping in contact with people is important. And another good way to build contacts or connections, particularly if you're interested in working with a specific faculty, is taking their courses-- excuse me-- or finding other ways to interface with their work.

Is there a certain amount of time-- I mean, make sure you reconnect every blah-- whatever?

Every six months or so, you know, particularly if you're thinking about a longer stretch. If you begin developing that relationship more, that may become more frequent but, you know, at least a couple of times a year. I thought I saw-- yes.

Sure. So I feel like a lot of times, the connection that you can make is a mutual thing, like it depends on how that person is reacting to you. I mean, like, not everybody may be connecting with you.

Right.

And I think that is the source of most of the confidence. Like if one conversation goes well, and then you go to the other one and then you can start another one. But if you meet a few people who are not as open to talk to you [INAUDIBLE], and everything went awkward, so your confidence would just go down because of that. And I feel that it drains your energy to go to the next person. So I just wonder whether you have any tips on that, and sorry-- more than that--

No, that's OK.

Can I ask another question?

Sure.

So-- and you were talking about making [INAUDIBLE] connections. And at the same time that, when we talk about networking, we kind of refer to the situation that we talk to a lot of people. And so I also see a contradiction there about talking to many different people, making meaningful connections.

So because when you have in your mind an agenda to talk to many different people, that kind of just counted a little bit on casualness and how you're going to connect to that person. So yeah, I don't know. What is my question?

Sure, that's OK. And I'll try to answer the second one first, and then we'll come back to the first one. So you make a valid point, right. So when we're thinking about conferencing, there's tons of people there to meet, right.

But we also talked about that planning and having your own goals and objectives. They can be as large or as small as you would like them to be. So you may go and introduce yourself to a number of people.

But the point is is that you want to be intentional about the relationships that you're building depth with, right. So we talked about there may be this breadth of connections and relationships. And maybe you connected at some level in that conversation, and it may be more superficial than others. But you want to be intentional with the people who you want to follow up with and the people that you want to build a deeper relationship in the right now, right.

So while you may be meeting a number of people, it's that intentionality piece. Does that-- does that help with that piece? And then could you restate your first question for me? I'm sorry.

About [INAUDIBLE], I think a lot of our confidence comes from that.

Right. So right, networking is hard. Most of the room in here, we're introverts and ambiverts, right. And we need kind of that energy to be able to participate. And our confidence can take a little bit of a hit, right.

So it's really important to think about, what are the low stake places where I can begin building my networking confidence? So some of that may be departmental mixers. That's very low stake.

You may not know all of the faculty there. But that gives you an opportunity to begin using some of the questions to start conversations. You have access to students who work with these faculty, so you can get some understanding about the research projects that they're working on.

You have their websites where you can see the projects they're working on, the classes that they're teaching. Start local. There's also other graduate students in your program, right, who are at the same level, above, or below you.

Start networking there so that helps to build your confidence and get out the prenetworking jitters, so to speak, right. So as you're figuring out how you will-- or what your approach is to networking, you can do that with those who are closer to you so that when you go to events and it's people who are unaffiliated with your institution, unaffiliated with any of your graduate circles here, you'll have a little bit more confidence going into that space. Does that-- does that help? OK.

[INAUDIBLE]

And a good way of doing a little bit of that outside of your department, the graduate school regularly holds mixers. So I would encourage you to participate in the mixers that they have. Set a goal for yourself.

You know, how many graduate students do you want to meet? How many people do you want to have in-depth conversations with? So that's that in-between stage, from being in your home department and having some sort of external conference or event.

So definitely maximize on that opportunity to practice because the more you practice, the better you get. So I recognize that we are at time. However, if anyone had additional questions, I'll stick around for a bit. But thank you so much for coming and chatting with me. I hope you have a great rest of your afternoon.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.