3 Ways to Up Your Game in 2018

Executive coach, motivational speaker, and IBM City Program Leader Roger Osorio had three challenges for attendees at the 2017 Propelify Innovation Festival. Now, he wants you to get out of your comfort zone to become a better entrepreneur in the new year.

Challenge No. 1: Introduce yourself. No, like, the real you.

We're all used to the classic introductory conversation starter: "So, what do you do?" Next time you're asked this old networking standby, don't just mumble your name and day job. Try introducing yourself and naming your true passion. "When I started introducing myself as a coach," Osorio said, "I was more passionate, more engaging – and people could feel that and responded to it."

Related: Judith Glaser: Conversation Is the Most Underused Innovation Tool

Don't know how to share your passion in getting-to-know-you chitchat? Try one of these three openers:

- "Hi! My name is Noreen and I'm working on …"
- "Howdy! My name is Dipanjan and I can't stop thinking about …"
- "Hello! My name is Gideon, and I am cranking away on my passion project …"

Talking about what energizes you will make you naturally more passionate and encourage others to do the same. Be real in your conversations, and you'll quickly forge real connections.

Challenge No. 2: Start a meaningful, authentic conversation.

Creating a real connection with someone begins with initiating a real conversation. Communicating about meaningful topics is the way to forge new relationships in business and personal life alike. A good conversation creates intimacy, highlights shared experiences or feelings and gets real. If you want to make a real connection, try asking someone what inspires or motivates him or her. Ask what that individual's vision for the future looks like. Cut through the fluff of small talk, and you'll make find friends, mentors and partners faster than ever before.

Related: This Important Leadership Skill Isn't Hard to Master, But Most Don't Do It

Challenge No. 3: Follow up.

So, you've taken the scary leap of introducing yourself as the real you and engaged in a real-deal conversation with someone. The next step? Contact that person (you did get a card, right?) within the next two to three weeks. Initiate a follow-up phone conversation or meet up for coffee. Maintain the connection you've courageously worked to build, and offer up your value, service or fellow connections. People like people who help them. Offering to be of service, however you can, will build a stronger connection between you and your new contact. An introduction is the first step, sure, but carrying the relationship forward into the future makes that networking really count.

Related: Why I Give Away My Knowledge For Free — and How That Helps Me Drive Sales

Watch highlights from Roger's talk at the 2017 Propelify Innovation Festival:

[embedded content]

How will you step out of your comfort zone this year? Tweet us at @LetsPropel.

Want to get the motivational kick-in-the-pants you need from Robert Osorio's full video? Like this video? Sign up for a complimentary Propelify Insider membership and receive access to our library of incredible content and talks from innovators, changemakers and entrepreneurial geniuses such as Al Gore, Divyank Turakhia, Arianna Huffington, Jason Fiefer, Marcus Weldon and more.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/306826