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Being Interested is Interesting

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Being Interested is Interesting

By Ashley Turner
UCF Forum columnist
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The practice of delighting in someone else can help build lasting, meaningful relationships.



Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, we all love to talk about ourselves. Many of us get excited discussing our dreams, desires, feelings or even the Netflix show we just binge-watched last night. Our social media is filled with updates and pictures of our favorite coffee, what we did during our vacation, or the new business we just launched.

Most of us crave attention and want to convince the world that we are interesting and live fascinating lives.

Whether you do this to make friends, get more job opportunities or enhance your personal brand to sell products or services, the objective shouldn't be about being interesting but being interested.

In Dale Carnegie's book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People," he mentioned Publilius Syrus' most memorable quote, "We are interested in others when they are interested in us."

I noticed that my most valuable connections are made when I establish intentional relationships and take an interest in getting to know others on a deeper level. When you show genuine interest in someone, you begin to build trust and a safe space to communicate and engage. But in order for someone to open up to you, they must first let you in.

In my career coaching sessions as a human resources professional, I talk to my clients about the power of networking and tapping into the people you may or may not know. Before you reach out to someone about needing a job or a reference, you must first focus on developing an organic relationship.

Instead of asking, "Do you have 30 minutes to chat about how I can work at your organization?" ask, "Can we meet for 30 minutes to discuss how you got to where you are in your career?" This type of question changes the conversation's focus to them and makes them much more likely to agree to meet about something they know most about: themselves!

Delighting in someone opens the door and provides an opportunity for you to deliver your value. That is how you can turn an informational meeting into a relationship.

Delighting in others is a practice I use both personally and professionally. I have read about its importance before, but I became most convinced when it was used on me.

A couple years ago I worked in talent acquisition and recruitment, and there was an executive position we were interviewing to hire. I greeted our first candidate in the lobby and brought him to my office to go over what his day of interviews would look like.

We had small talk and discussed the itinerary, but we still had a few minutes before his first interview. He saw a skydiving certificate in my office, purposely placed to spark conversation, and he asked about my experience skydiving and why I wanted to do it. I expressed my desire to let go of fear during that period of my life and to continuously try new things that make me curious and excite me.

He later asked me about what I was currently doing to feed my curiosity and I realized that I hadn't done something to make myself happy in a while. Throughout the brief conversation, we shared the importance of "staying young" and taking chances. It was a

conversation from a candidate that I will never forget because for those 10 minutes, he made me feel like he was sincerely interested in me and my experiences.

In any interaction, people will always remember how you make them feel. Becoming genuinely curious about the person you want to influence or attract is vital to building a connection.

Ask questions and note how they speak, what they get excited about, and how they feel. Once you learn to become a friend and start listening to understand and not respond, you will notice improvements in the relationships you build. Listening allows us to pull from other's experiences to continue to learn and grow in our own lives.

So, before you try to influence or entice someone to help you or buy from you, remember that interesting people are noticed, but interested people are remembered.

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