



Be more social:
the art of hosting and
attending social gatherings

We Thrive Together

Socializing

No matter how you're wired—introvert, extrovert, socially adept or socially awkward—something in us all longs for meaningful relationships with other humans. Connection is something we all desire from life.





Tips for Hosting and being a Guest

- **Be present:** The Art of Hosting's four fold practice includes being present and hosting yourself.
- **Be a good guest:** Commit to the event and be enthusiastic.
- **Be a good host:** Create a welcoming atmosphere, have plenty of seating, and be prepared with extra food and drinks.
- **Consider the venue:** The venue can impact the mood of the event.
- **Use the circle:** The circle is a basic form that can help with getting to know each other, making decisions, and reflecting on what was accomplished.
- **Use conversational processes:** The Art of Hosting uses conversational processes to help people take charge of challenges.
- **Be friendly:** When attending a social gathering, be friendly and willing to talk to others.
- **Avoid divisive topics:** Focus on friendly banter and shared interests.
- **Match guests:** Hosts can introduce people to each other based on similar interests or backgrounds.
- **Send guests off with gifts:** If your budget permits, you can send guests off with a small gift, like a handmade recipe card or a flower bouquet.
- **Commemorate the event:** You can commemorate the event with a DIY photo booth, a disposable camera, or have guests draw a self-portrait.

The Art of Hosting Social Gatherings

- As [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) states, to gather means “to bring together or assemble from various places, sources, or people.” I like that, especially the *bring together* part. It’s an honor to gather groups together and create an environment that is warm, inviting, and impactful. This should relieve any stress or pressures we put on ourselves when it comes to inviting people into our space because it really isn’t about how much or how little space we have.
- Speaking of our space...I recognize it can be uncomfortable opening up your home to those you might not know very well. It takes vulnerability and just pure willingness to accept that it won’t be perfect. Perfection is not what we are striving for in a gathering. Remember, it’s about connection. Don’t open your home up to others because you want to wait until your living room is just right or your kitchen has brand new appliances. Worry less about the physical space or things that fill it and **be more concerned with who fills the space and how they will be engaged with one another.**






Hosting

In the book, *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker, she talks about how we tend to only think about the “stuff” of gathering rather than the people or the gathering itself. It’s easier to control the invitations, choice of music, or logistical details, but those aren’t the things that will sincerely connect people. **Instead, think about how you can create conversation throughout the occasion or how you can introduce like-minded friends to each other.** This will cultivate community more than just a date people put on their calendars.

How you can prepare yourself for future gatherings

Any tip to take the stress out of planning a gathering is a great tip, right? If a gathering includes an entire meal with sides and desserts, allow others to pitch in. If your strength is people, then ask the guests to bring a side to share. If your superpower is creating delicious flavor combinations and delightful appetizers, then ask friends to bring their favorite boardgame or yard game to play. Especially when the weather is nice, it seems like spontaneous dinners are much more common. These gatherings are really fun, but I never like to come empty-handed, even if that means boxed brownies or some sparkling water with fresh lemons and limes. A practical way to avoid this is to **find a few go-to recipes that you can easily whip up and bring along.** Keep the ingredients on hand so you don't have to make a special trip to the grocery store.



Socializing

- Navigating social waters is a delicate dance for hosts and guests alike. Parties are celebratory; they are excellent opportunities to make lasting memories. However, hosts and guests need to adhere to some unwritten rules of etiquette to make the experience pleasant.
- This guide will explore the critical party etiquette guidelines for guests and hosts. We will examine the host's responsibilities and guest mannerisms that foster a friendly environment. These include planning, communication, party etiquette, balancing entertainment, and overcoming unexpected hiccups.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A HOST IN PARTY ETIQUETTE



IF YOU'RE WONDERING, "WHAT IS A PARTY HOST," IT IS THE PERSON PLANNING THE PARTY FOR GUESTS. AS A HOST, YOUR PARTY HOST'S RESPONSIBILITIES GO BEYOND LOOKING FOR A SUITABLE LOCATION AND BUYING FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS. IT INVOLVES SETTING THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE FOR YOUR PARTY SO EVERYONE ENJOYS IT.



YOU MAY BEGIN BY ESTABLISHING THE PURPOSE OF THE BASH; IT COULD BE AN INTIMATE DINNER, A CASUAL GET-TOGETHER, OR A LIVELY CELEBRATION OF A PERSON OR MILESTONE.



YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO PLAN BY CREATING A GUEST LIST AND SENDING OUT INVITATIONS. LET THE INVITATION HAVE PRECISE DETAILS LIKE THE DATE, TIME, LOCATION, THEME, AND DRESS CODE. IF THE EVENT IS A POTLUCK, ENSURE GUESTS UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY BRING TO AVOID MENU OVERLAPS AND GAPS.



MAINTAIN GOOD EVENT PLANNING COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR GUESTS TO KEEP THEM INFORMED BEFORE THE PARTY. REQUEST THEM TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AND UPDATE THEM ON ANY CHANGES YOU MAKE TO THE SCHEDULE OR VENUE. PARTY ETIQUETTE ENCOURAGES YOU TO MAKE SURE THEY HAVE CLEAR DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS. YOU CAN USE TEXT MESSAGES, CALLS, FOLLOW-UP EMAILS, AND A GROUP CHAT TO TRANSFER INFORMATION.



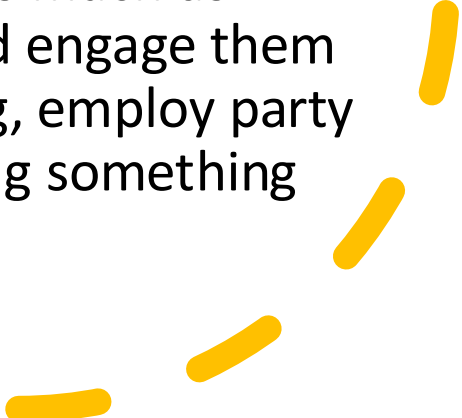
ON THE D-DAY, TALK TO ALL GUESTS, OR AS MANY AS POSSIBLE, TO HELP THEM GET COMFORTABLE. INTRODUCE THEM TO EACH OTHER AND SPEND LESS TIME WITH ONE PERSON OR GROUP. INSTEAD, WALK AROUND THE PARTY CHATTING UP DIFFERENT PEOPLE. HAVE SOMEONE HELP YOU ATTEND TO MINOR DETAILS LIKE THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT, ADEQUATE LIGHTING, AND APPROPRIATE MUSIC TO SET THE MOOD.

creating your guest list

When you are considering who to invite, I encourage you to think outside the box. It is easy to stick to the same group of friends, which is totally okay for casual hangouts. If you are trying to engage with others in your community, neighborhood, or church, push yourself outside your comfort zone. Think about those who may not always make the list. These could be widows, unmarried singles, single parents, or larger families.



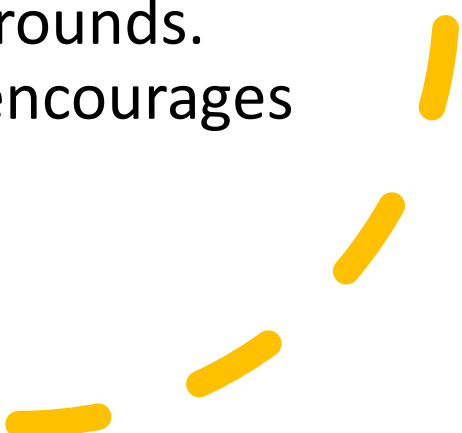
PARTY ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS ATTENDING SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- As a guest, your responsibility is to show up and make the party as pleasant as possible for yourself, the host, and other guests. Guest etiquette involves arriving on time and bringing a dish or a gift, whichever seems appropriate. If you're uncertain about any party details, contact your host for clarification beforehand.
 - During the party, practice party etiquette by mingling with others and discussing inclusive topics. Avoid any triggering conversations like religion and politics. When you see a new face, start a conversation and get to know them. Follow the house rules and avoid dominating conversations or monopolizing the host's attention.
 - Stick to the party theme and dress code as much as possible. Look out for stranded guests and engage them in an inclusive atmosphere. Before leaving, employ party etiquette by thanking your host and stating something you loved about the party.
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GRACEFUL EXITS AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

- As a guest, a graceful exit from a party is a much-needed social art. Know when to leave by being attentive to the social cues. The best possible time is when you sense the party is winding down. Call on your host and tell them you're leaving, say thank you, and exit without causing a scene. Going too soon may seem rude, but so does overstaying your stay.
- If you're the host, practice party etiquette by thanking every guest for coming to your social gathering. Refrain from making anyone feel guilty for leaving too soon, and instead, tell them you're hoping to talk soon. After the party, you can send a thank you note in the group chat, email, or text to express gratitude.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN INTERACTING WITH OTHER ATTENDEES

- When attending a social gathering, follow party etiquette by being willing to talk to other people at the party. A friendly demeanor is helpful when interacting with unfamiliar guests. Steer clear of divisive topics and focus on friendly banter that everyone can joke about. Talk about shared interests and positive experiences, as negative stories may dull the mood.
 - Hosts can boost interaction by introducing people to each other. Match your guests with people of similar interests or backgrounds. Select a seating arrangement that encourages mingling.
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NAVIGATING UNEXPECTED HICCUPS

- No matter how much you plan, prepare for some unexpected events, such as a late caterer, unpredictable weather, or guests getting lost. Whatever happens, stay calm, as your guests will likely follow your mood consciously or unconsciously. If you remain composed when managing unexpected hiccups, they will, too.
- Have a contingency plan and people who can help you make changes quickly. Let your planning team or close friends be solution-oriented and display impeccable party etiquette under pressure.

Mingle with ease and grace at all of your social functions

- **Prepare for the event.** Never go to an event without something to say or talk about.
- **Plan your self-introduction.** Have a pre-planned self-introduction tailored to the event.
- **Take business or social cards with you.** Always take your business or social cards with you. They make it easy for others to contact you.
- **Dress appropriately for the occasion.** When you are dressed appropriately for an occasion, it will make you feel more confident, as well as more comfortable. When you are dressed inappropriately, it will not only make you feel uncomfortable, but it will also make those attending the event uncomfortable.
- **Go on time, or no more than fifteen minutes late.** If you go late for an event, conversational groups will have already formed, and it will be harder for you to break into conversations.
- **Adopt a positive attitude.** Think about the benefits of going to the event, and then adopt a positive attitude, because your attitude begins on the inside and shows on the outside.





Mingle with ease and grace

- **Make an entrance.** Never rush into a room. Walk in slowly, step to the right of the entrance, smile, and pause for a few minutes before entering the room. Everyone watches the entrance. This is your first opportunity to make a good impression.
- **Look approachable.** Smile. Make eye contact. Just as important as being able to approach others is looking approachable yourself.
- **Break the ice: make small talk.** Even though it is called “small talk,” as Michael Korda says, “There is nothing small about small talk. Your shared experience is always a good topic when you want to initiate a conversation with a new person. Talking about the venue, the food, the room, the view, the weather, are all good small talk topics.
- **Build rapport.** Build rapport before launching into any conversation that involves opinions. Connect first, and after you have established a bond, you can give your opinion about something. Do make it a positive opinion; and tread lightly; social functions are not meant for serious conversations.
- **Play the three-three “game.”** Make it your mission to meet three new people and find three things in common with those three people. It’s like a fishing expedition: you throw out topics to see which one takes. After you find three things in common with a person, you will have a natural rapport with them. If you don’t, move on to the next person. Don’t allow yourself to become discouraged.
- **Avoid asking impolite questions.** If you want to avoid being considered rude and lacking in class, do not ask personal questions like, “How old are you?” “Are you married?” “How much money do you make?” “Where do you buy your clothes?”

Mingle with ease and grace

- **Know how to handle your cocktail utensils.** It is possible to hold a glass—even a cocktail plate with your glass on top of it—in your left hand, while you shake hands with your right hand when you greet another person.
- **Eat or talk.** If you want to be viewed as a refined and polished socializer, you will certainly not talk with food in your mouth. You can eat or talk—just do not do both at the same time.
- **Properly introduce others.** Knowing how to properly introduce others will put you far ahead of the crowd. When you incorrectly introduce someone, it can be insulting to the person you are introducing and embarrassing to the others around you. Introducing others even if you have forgotten the rules, however, is an act of kindness.
- **Enter conversations with one person or a group, but not two people.** Initiating a conversation with one person is ideal. He or she will be grateful to you for walking up to them and starting a conversation. Walking up to two people engaged in a conversation—particularly if their body language shows that they are very involved in what they are talking about—and interrupting them is rude. (There are certain times, however, when it is okay to quickly say, “Excuse me. I just wanted to say “Hello. I hope to have a chance to talk to you later.” Then walk away.)
- **It is not about you; it’s about the other person.** Focus on the other person and you will be less self-conscious. Focus on the other person and it will make them feel important. That in turn will make you important to them.
- **Be a generous listener.** Truly listening to another person is the highest compliment we can pay them. Listen actively with your ears, eyes, and heart. Give signals that you are listening by nodding your head, smiling—if appropriate—and ask questions that follow up what the person has been talking about.





Mingle with ease and grace

- **Avoid being a “close talker.”** A “close talker” is an annoying person who doesn’t understand the spatial boundaries of a conversation. Speaking in uncomfortably close proximity—never more than 18 inches—makes him or her seem pushy and “in your face.” The comfort zone, or the distance that you keep between yourself and friends, is usually one-and-a-half feet to four feet at social gatherings.
- **Make a graceful exit.** Social events and mingling are not meant for long or serious conversations. We should spend around eight to ten minutes with each person at a social function, according to Miss Manners. We must, however, make our exits graceful, and not just ‘melt’ away from conversations.
- **Table Talk.** When seated at a table, the only people a guest is actually required to speak to are his neighbors to the left and right. Traditionally, one would speak to the person at one’s right; and then speak to the person on one’s left, avoiding with either any unpleasant or controversial topics. At a business meal, keep in mind that business should not be discussed until the conclusion of the main course.
- **Thank the host and/or hostess.** Always thank the host and/or hostess before leaving an event. And, in some cases, depending upon the occasion, a telephone call, or hand-written thank-you note should be sent the next day.