

Be interesting

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An Essay: Be Interesting

Generally, I wouldn't say I like meeting new people. It's not that I'm antisocial or anything. I just value my energy more than others. Most people aren't worth the energy to meet. They're not interesting people.

I find the gap between interesting people and the least common denominator is vast. That gap is almost always represented by the difference between consumers versus problem solvers.

Problem solvers go deep. They know a lot about a problem and have multiple hypotheses about it. They seek others' opinions on it, and they're clearly more focused on the problem than any one solution.

On the flip side, the least common denominator is a consumer who loves others' creations. They like discussing what they like about those creations. Their opinions are others' opinions, and they don't see any alternative.

Even if a topic is new, I can learn a lot from problem solvers. I can ask deep questions and feel like I get a shortcut through the trial and error of deep work by meeting them.

By contrast, consumers know headline-level detail, and I don't find out anything more than I can with a quick Google search. Their knowledge is shallow and untested.

The best way to avoid wasting time on consumers is using this chronologically ordered set of filters.

Be interesting
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Be interesting

I was interviewed for a book about immigrants to Japan who made careers here. I actively tried avoiding this because I don't like unwanted attention and don't think I've "made it" as the book alludes to. But finally, I relented to help the person with their own pursuit.

They asked how I networked. They wondered what meetups were best. They asked about my approach.

What I next said surprised them and made them defensive.

"Only losers go to networking events."

They were taken back because their recruiting profession depended on meeting new people. They immediately suggested otherwise and tried to build a case against my thesis.

Unconvinced by their reasoning, I doubled down.

"The only people you'll meet at events are people who want something from you or aren't meaningfully engaged in a pursuit of their own. Bored people are losers."

You see, \$20, \$40, or even \$100 isn't a strong enough filter for meeting interesting people because interesting people value their energy far more

than that.

The easiest way to meet interesting people is by having accomplished something yourself. Do something that makes you someone worth meeting; interesting people will reach out.

However, doing something interesting one time isn't enough. You have to continue being interesting, or your time on the shelf of interesting people will have expired. Nobody likes a has been. And being a has-been means the rate at which you're contacted by other interesting people goes to zero.

Imagine meeting the founder of America Online, Steve Case, today vs 30 years ago had that been all they accomplished. Instead, Case stayed interesting with his investing, books, and other work.

The grind never stops, no matter how big you strike it.

Other people

I've met many accomplished people and generally, when I meet them, they're also meeting equally accomplished people. It's self selecting. Interesting people want to learn from others with something to offer. They want to meet other interesting people. They want to hear their perspectives to see how they can better themselves or make further progress in their pursuit to solve problems.

I have a few friends who index high on the distribution of interesting people connections. Generally, the invite I get from them is "Interesting Person is in Tokyo, and I told them about your story. They want to hang out. Do you know their {company| book| blog}?"

Tying into the first point about being interesting with accomplishments, every interesting person you meet is an additional series of intros to more interesting people.

Every new person you meet may be the key to helping you in your pursuit or you helping them in theirs.

Exclusive groups with a paywall

The final step to meeting interesting people is being invited to clubs, groups, investing rounds, and associations. To join these groups, you need to complete the first two steps. Be interesting. Then get invited by other interesting people.

This is the most powerful step because suddenly, you're even more interesting by being associated with these people. People may not even know what you've done, but by being in the group, you immediately pass filters.

The downside is you'll meet more sociopaths than average that abuse these social accreditations. The additional volume of people you meet can add some extra work on your side, too.

I belong to only a few of these groups and think they're optional to meet truly interesting people.

So to wrap up, here's what I always tell myself: Be someone who's good at fixing problems. Don't worry about small, unimportant things - look for deeper and bigger things. That's how to keep life interesting.

Why?

Everybody likes a good story, and stories start with problems. If I continue to work hard to make my own story good, I'll continue to meet others who are doing the same thing. #time #growth

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