

HOW TO TALK TO STRANGERS

*Learn small talk techniques, how to make
friends and maintain relationships*

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Overview

Introduction

Hi! My name is Pavel but people call me Curious Pavel. That is because I love asking questions. I am curious about travelling, history, sports, videos, but mainly I am curious about people. It fascinates me when I learn something new from someone else's stories. Their culture, food, country or even a curious story from their past.

Well, that wasn't always the case. I spent my teenage years playing Counter Strike at a semi-pro level. Sure, I was meeting new people at tournaments and meet-ups but I wasn't the type that would bring them together. Even the fact that I was part of a folklore dance troupe from 7 to 18 years of age did not do much. But this comes as no surprise to me now. I was happy the way it was and I did not need a constant flow of people in my life. This is in complete contrast with nowadays, as meeting new people makes me feel energised.

Things started to change for me when I went to university at the age of 18. The summer of my 20th year I went for a work-and-travel program in Alaska for 3 months. The following summer I started working as an entertainer in a hotel. These were the stepping stones that turned around my perspective on human interaction. The biggest one being the hotel entertainment. As an entertainer you have to communicate with everyone in the hotel, no matter how happy or grumpy they are! I worked in entertainment for 5 years and each year was opening my mind more and more.

Fast forward, so far I have changed jobs more than 10 times in my life. When I say jobs, I do not mean positions. I am talking about industries. All these changes I have done to favour the happiness in my life. I was rarely after the "big money" but instead preferred the job I would love. We spend loads of time at work so why not be in a happy place?

All this change helped me discover new interests. It also got me close to many people. People from different nationalities, speaking different languages, with different backgrounds. All these changes taught me how to befriend people and how to do it fast. So now I would like to share this knowledge with you.

Welcome

I am thrilled that you have chosen *How To Talk To Strangers And Become Friends* to be your assistant in this journey. First of all, when might you need new people in your circle? The obvious times are when you move to another city or start university. But it can also be when you begin a new hobby, or add a habit to your routines, or when you take up a new job. For the record, I think you should always be looking to add new people to your circle. Oftentimes, this makes you see the world from a different perspective and opens a lot of opportunities. So, congratulations on choosing this book!

Disclaimer

Before we begin, I would like to add a few disclaimers. First of all, the purpose of this book is not to teach you how to flirt. Although there are things you can transfer to your "pick up game", this is not the subject of the book. The second thing is that this book will not help you

turn anyone into your friend. In fact, there is no book out there, no course, seminar or video that will help you do that. But that's a good thing because you don't want just anybody in your circle. You want the right people. Alongside positivity, there is a lot of negativity in the world and trust me on this one... you do not want negativity. And negativity is something you should not ignore. You should aim to reduce it as much as possible. And lastly, all these tips and techniques I will share with you are tested and proven to work. I am living proof of that. However, none of this will matter if you do not put in the work and go out of your comfort zone. Like anything else, making friends needs practice.

The Formula

For the second chapter I picked this name because when going on that road of making friends, there are not just one or two things you need to consider. There are way more! And just like in a formula equation there are many variables you need to consider.

How To Deal With Rejection

Maybe you have heard the following expression before: **"HOPE FOR THE BEST, EXPECT THE WORST"**

This is such a powerful sentence! In that spirit, before you start talking to people, it will be good to be prepared to get rejected and consider how you will deal with it. The secret is in your mindset. Now, this is not a **HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR FEARS** book. You have to figure this out for yourself but here is how I do it: I see the person I want to talk to and I ask myself: "What is the worst thing that can happen?".

- *They can ignore me completely*
- *I can run out of things to say*
- *He/she/they might think I am boring, stupid, or overreacting in the things I am saying.*

But then I remind myself that I live in London. It's a massive city and the chances of seeing that person (or people) again is almost 0. Then I am ready to go and talk to them. And even if it does not go well, every talk you have is a practice for the next one.

- *But Pavel, I live in a small town where everybody knows each other, you may reply.*

That's even better! Let me explain it to you using the following example. You really want to add Jim to your circle in a place where "everybody knows everyone". First thing you can do is ask your friends to introduce you to Jim or to others around him. If that is not an option or your initial talk goes bad, eventually, people that know you will chat with Jim about you and if you are cool, the conversation will be something like:

- *(Jim) Hey, have you met Pavel?*
- *(Vanessa) Yeah! Funny guy. I like him.*
- *(Jim) Really? Don't you think he's weird?*

- (Vanessa) Nah, he's cool.
- (Jim) hm...

Alternatively you can always go and try again. That was my way of dealing with rejections. I say WAS because it is so deep in my mind now that I don't really think of What May Happen. I would recommend you try a few times with this method, and if it still does not work for you, search for an alternative method. But you have to deal with those rejections because you're going to get some.

That's it for rejections. Now, **let's see where to meet those people.**

Who are the right people for you (the LA rule, step 1)

Ok, we are not afraid of rejections! Time to find the right people. Once again I say the right people because believe me, you don't want random people in your circle. What I would like to introduce here is something called the LA rule. Don't look for this rule online because you won't find anything. I just came up with it... just now. I made this up hoping it will help you visualize things, so here it goes. What LA stands for is Look Around and it's in 2 steps. In the first step it transforms itself into Look At Yourself because this is all you have to do in order to find the people for your circle. Think about it, if you enjoy making videos, then it makes perfect sense to go out and look for others with the same interest. So go ahead. Think about things you like to do and make a list. Things that spark your curiosity. Once you know who you are, you will know what to look for. And once you are ready with this, go to the next chapter.

Where to meet people

So where to find the right people? A big chunk of the world lives on the Internet. This is where you have to go first. Here is an example of a website that will suit your purpose. It's called **Meetup.com** and it works really simply: people who like taking initiative create groups depending on their interests and once they have like-minded people in those groups, they organize events. You join these groups and eventually go to the events. Some are for free. Some you have to pay for. On this website you can find almost everything: business, salsa, crypto, football, movies, photography, badminton, Spanish and many more. Don't see your interest on the website? If you are confident in organizing events, then why not create your own group? Or, team up with somebody who can organize events. Where to find that person? Keep on reading!

And there's not just Meetup.com. Here are more ideas:

- **Nearify & City Socializer** are similar websites to Meetup.com
- Have a dog? There is an app called Meet my dog. Your dog's going to make a friend and so will you!
- Also... Get into local **Facebook groups** and become part of the community
- And more... Hang around at the common rooms and kitchens in hotels and hostels you stay at
- Talk to your AirBnb host

- And finally, a great website/app is **Couchsurfing** where you are basically surfing through other people's couches while travelling. And by "surfing" I mean sleeping, not actually "surfing". With this website you get numerous benefits like:

- 1) you make a friend
- 2) most of the time you will have an open minded person as a host who will share with you the culture, food and maybe history of the place you visit. This makes your travel experience richer!
- 3) it's for free! Although, be nice and buy your host some drinks and dinners. Maybe prepare something from your own cuisine.



Tony and I in Helsinki, chilling after sauna

Thanks to Couchsurfing I met Tony when I visited Helsinki. I learned about how important saunas are for Finns, ate a reindeer and more importantly, I made a friend. I am still in touch with Tony.

The reason why you go on these websites and applications is because there you will find people with which you have something in common. Of course there are other options. Talk to your colleagues at work or other students in your university. The people you play football with. Other salsa dancers. Whatever you are attending, there are other people at that event, so you already have at least one thing in common.

Let's take a moment and appreciate the times we live in. Sure, there is a lot of "evil" out there. The reason you may think the world is getting worse is because people are documenting more. That is why you see more bad stuff. Before the internet and mobile devices, not all events were reaching the mass audience. If you play that in reverse you will realise that now it is way easier to reach people. In contrast to that, only a few decades ago people were way more limited in the ways they made friends. These days joining a Facebook Group can connect you with hundreds of like-minded people. Commenting on a post from

Will Smith on Instagram can send your message in front of many eyeballs. Appreciate the Internet and Social Media and use them to your advantage.

But let's not ignore the fact that one can end up in endless scrolling lying on the sofa. Sure, social media helps but the true interaction happens in person. It is up to you to track and control your addiction.

Before you go to the next chapter I want you to think of:

- 1) The whole concept of what you have read so far
- 2) When you are looking for that connection with the person you are talking to, don't "close your ears" to the subjects you don't know much about. **To grow we need to step out of the comfort zone and learn new things.** What better way to do that than with a stranger. Keep asking them questions and get that win-win scenario. You learn new things and a nice conversation flows at the same time.

What to talk about (the LA rule, step 2)

For our entire childhood, we are taught not to talk to strangers but when you are an adult, you work with strangers who become part of our lives. We meet strangers when we start a new job, when we start university, etc. Most of the time you have to talk to strangers in order to progress.

So what to talk about with complete strangers?

Here's the secret: They are not complete strangers.

Remember the LA rule? The 2nd step will help you with that. While the first step was **Look At Yourself**, the second and last step is called **Look At... Them**.

What you are looking at is just another version of you!

Think about this. You meet up with George and you start digging for subjects that are interesting for both of you. So you start talking. You like swimming, he likes basketball (not really helping the case). You both like reading (that's great!) but you read 30 min a week while he does 1h each day (oops, not so great). You both watch Game of Thrones (oh, we are onto something), you both have watched each season (boom, something to talk about), and imagine if you both did not like the final episode... You are now set to have a long conversation. And while this talk is happening, you are actively listening and looking for other points where you may connect.

If you go to an event like "grow your business" or "YouTubers networking", you already have at least one subject to talk about. Start with that.

"How do you find the event?", "Is this your first time here?", "Are you working on something exciting at the moment?". Use one of those lines if you are not sure where to start from.

Make a note of this: building a business takes time. Building a career takes time. Building a meaningful relation with someone also takes time. Be patient and careful! I have something interesting for you up next!

Have a joke to spare

In this chapter I would like to share a story with you. Something that happened to me in 2017.



I was already living in London back then and one day I boarded a bus. I head to the second floor (of course) to enjoy the ride better and just as I finish climbing the stairs, I see a lady sitting by herself, crying. I do not know how the sight of crying people affects you but me, personally, it makes me very sad. Having a background as an entertainer, I sit down and I start to think what I can do to take her mind away from her problems, at least for a bit. I am thinking, and thinking, and thinking, and after a while, the bus stops. I have to go down! It is my stop. The lady is still there. Still crying and I cannot do anything. I say to myself: *Next time I see somebody crying, I will go and speak to them.*

Not even 2 weeks pass, and this happens:

I go to use the underground (metro) and as soon as I board the train, I see a lady crying. It is a bit crowded (hey, it's London). Imagine this picture: she is sitting (and crying, you could hear her), while I am in the middle where there are quite a few people. I know that plenty of

people will go out of the train at the next stop. So the plan is to move towards her when this happens. I am determined to go and talk to her. The problem is... I still have no idea what to talk about. I had not thought of anything in those two weeks between the incidents. I am caught by surprise but determined to do something.

So the next stop comes and surely, many people leave. I shuffle down and take a position just in front of her, standing. The train leaves the station. I am still thinking what my opening line should be. "Hi, how are you" will not work well in that case. You can clearly see she is not in her best condition. As I am thinking, the guy next to me, who's also standing, says "Hey!, would you like to hear a joke?". She look sup, wipes her tears away, smiles, and says "Sure".

I am speechless! **That guy is a genius!** I don't really remember what joke he told. It was not one of those that will make you laugh hard, but it was enough to make her smile. Brilliant!

Silence follows. I think he had not thought about how to continue the conversation afterwards. I jump in with "*Do you have more jokes?*" to which he replies "No, how about you? Do you know any?". Darn! I did not expect that! "No, I say". He leaves at the next station. I sit down next to her. We chat for a bit and then it is my turn to leave the train.

Did her problems go away? No. Did she have her mind distracted from her problems for a while. Yes, and I think that is a good thing.

Why do I tell you all this? I do not encourage you to go and talk to crying people. It's a difficult thing. I just felt obligated to do it. What I want to encourage you to do is always to have a joke with you. At least one. Because you can always go "Hey, here's a funny joke I heard last week" or like in this case... "Hey, would you like to hear a joke".

Feel free to pick up any joke you like telling other people. If you can't find a joke you like, here is my joke:

A woman got suspicious of her husband. She calls him one day and asks:

- Are you home?

- Of course! Where else can I be?

- Hm... turn on the blender.

The husband turns on the blender and the woman hangs up the phone.

A few days pass. The wife decides to check on him again.

- Are you home?

- Of course!

- Hm... turn on the blender!

The husband does what he is asked and the wife hangs up.

One day, the wife goes back home earlier than usual and finds their child at home, alone.

- Where is your father?, she asks

- Oh, I don't know. He took the blender and went somewhere.

Ba Dum Tss!

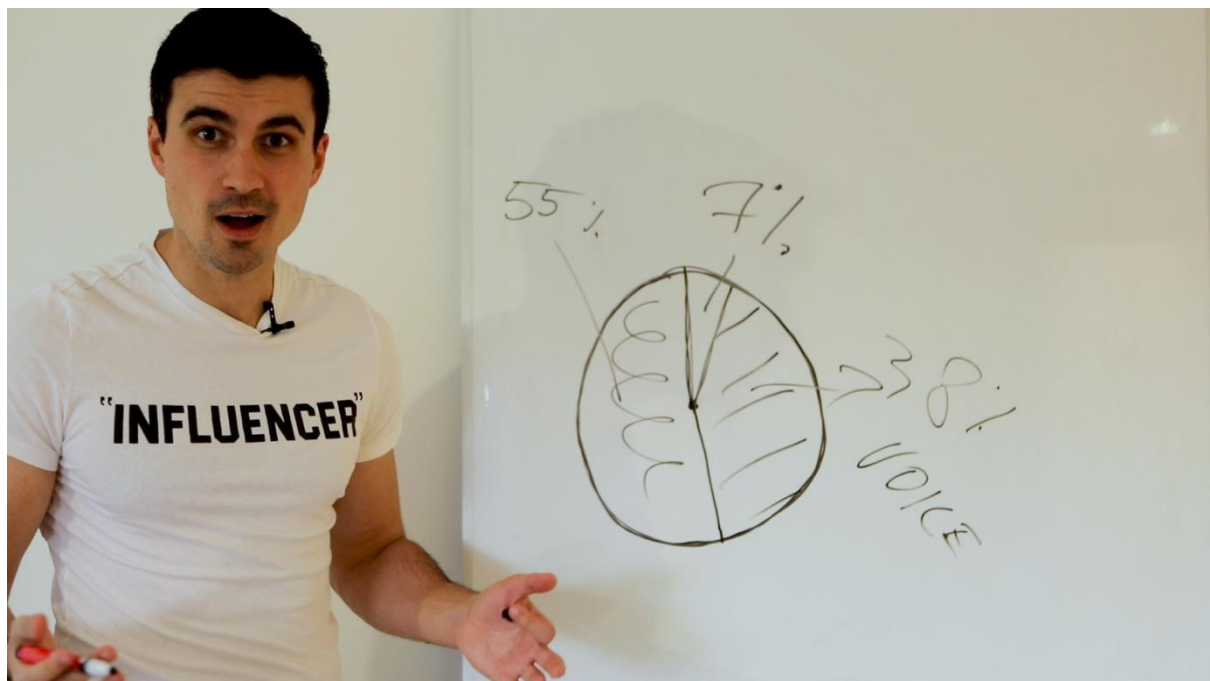
Ok, I admit it, this joke is not something wow, but it is easy to remember and exactly what I want. Plus I am sure it will be more fun if I tell this to you in person. You are free to pick any joke and I am curious to find out what your joke is. I would love it if you share it with me. You can find me on any social media platform as **@curiouspavel**.

Unspoken Words

OK! You now know what to say but remember...

It is not only important what you say but how you say it.

Here I am in action, explaining the different channels of communication and their influence on other people.



There's a study which says that when you are communicating with somebody, only **7% is verbal communication**. 7%!

Where did the other 93% go? **55%** is "reserved" for the **body** and **38%** is for **voice and intonation**.

In this segment I'll give you the most important things you need to pay attention to:

First Impression

The first impression will not happen when you start talking to Maria, it will happen when Maria sees you for the first time. So, any time you are about to talk to somebody, watch out for these things: keep your shoulders back and make your hands visible.

Don't put them in your pockets, not behind your back, not holding your purse.

Your opening line: your smile! It warms people up. Don't complicate things when it's time to open your mouth. When it comes to words, research shows the best opening line is simply **"hey, how are you"**, or you can add your name like *"hey, I'm Pavel. How are you doing?"*.

Shake hands

Give a nice, firm handshake. Try not to have sweaty hands. For a bigger impact, add your other hand.

Hands

The more you integrate your hands, the more memorable you become! Here are few techniques:

- Any time you mention a number, show it with your hands. 1-10. That's easy (e.g. all 3 of us went to the concert).
- Use hands to measure what you talk about (e.g. when you are talking about really big growth or a little/big problem).
- If you are talking about something emotional, gesture in your heart area. With that gesture you are saying to the other person "Pay attention. This is important to me" .
- Use your hands for *You, Me, We* (e.g. point to the person in a polite way when you talk about him/her/them).
- Be careful with pointing. It is an aggressive gesture.

A Few More Tips

- **Eye contact!** Eye contact is super important during communication. It indicates that you are focused and paying attention. It means that you are actually listening to what the person has to say.
- **Nod while listening.** Here is a conversation tip you must try! When you speak to somebody, you smile and you have good eye contact. Once they finish, don't say anything, just nod 3 times. This trick is called the Triple Nod and studies show that most people will continue talking and they will talk long.

- **Groups.** If you are in a group meeting and there are people chatting everywhere... Who should you approach? If you see people facing each other with their toes aligned, they probably do not want anyone else in the conversation.



You need to look for open positions when their feet are pointing away from the other person.



And one big NO-NO

When in group meetings, don't take out your phone pretending you are texting just because you have no one to talk to. Instead, do this. Take a drink (it always feels more comfortable when you have something in your hands) and position yourself at the exiting spot of a bar or buffet. That is the sweet spot because people are leaving the buffet with food/drinks and are usually like "ok, who should I talk to" and then you jump with "Hi, how are you" or "Hey, what are you drinking?". "Hey, how are you? This is my first time at this event. How about you?". They will respond and now you have a conversation.

- **Use different questions!** The "usual suspects" are "How do you know the host?" & "How's work?". Do you want to talk about work all the time?? Probably not. Here are 2 different questions:

***What has been the best part of your week?
Working on any passion projects at the moment?***

- **Conversation Sparks** (engaging curiosity). Across cultures and nations, this is universal: the eyebrow raise. Dig into topics and look for this eyebrow raise because that would mean your conversations is not going just "eh", but "heeeey".

- **Exiting!** Believe it or not, your last impression is just as important as the first impressions. You don't want to come across as negative or rude so if you want to end the conversation, try to shift the focus to the future. You can do that by asking

- "Hey, what are you doing next weekend?"
- "Oh, next weekend I will go skiing"

And then you add "well, it was nice meeting you, I hope you have a great time skiing". That is how you can end a conversation in a way that is not seen as rude.

Remember, only 7% is verbal so practice your nonverbal communication.

How to maintain the relationship

Imagine you start going to the gym two times a week. Three months pass and you see some results. You are happy! But then you see somebody who's been going every day for the past 3 months and you see the difference. It's the same with making friends. You can't expect to have the same relationship with someone you see once a year versus someone you see twice a month or once a week.

The solution? Arrange salsa Thursdays. Or bimonthly wine Wednesdays.

Make the first step if you have to.

Summary

In conclusion, let's go through the steps once again, really quickly:

- Find your way to deal with rejections.
- Who are the right people for you? Remember the LA rule. Look at yourself!
- What to talk about with them? Second point of the LA rule: Look at them. They are a version of you.
- Where to find the people? Look for the websites I told you about and also the alternative options - Keep a joke in your pocket.
- Practice your body language.
- Maintain your relationships with regular meetings It's actually really simple. Just follow this formula.

Don't forget that finishing this book is bringing you closer to your goal of talking to strangers freely. However, **the next step you have to take is crucial** and that is to go out there and put into practice what you just learned. For some reason you may be restricted from getting outside (due to a global pandemic for example). That should not stop you! You should always try to turn any negative situation into a positive one. There are plenty of online networking events that will be happy to welcome you so take advantage of that.

Meeting new people can teach you a lot of things! One of the things I learned is that humans need to be held accountable. This helps big time when it comes to productivity and getting things done. I would love to be that person to you. Allow me to keep you accountable. Allow me to be the person you come to share your experience with. To kick this off I have a gift for you. IT IS A CHALLENGE! Here's what you need to do:

- 1) find a way to introduce yourself to 10 people. Join a networking event, find them on Facebook or stop them on the streets if you have to!
- 2) have a second and third conversation with at least two people. Do that a few days after your first meet up. If you can't get to those 2 people from the 10 you talked to, then keep looking.
- 3) give me your joke. I want to hear it!

You are only a few minutes away from finishing this book. From the moment you finish it, you will have 10 days to complete these challenges. **DON'T CHEAT! I WANT TO HEAR YOUR EXPERIENCE.** Share with me how you felt. What did you find the most difficult? Where do you find it easier to meet people? How was the conversation? Ask me any questions you may have. You can find me on any social media platform. My handle is @curiouspavel.

Thank You

In this chapter I want to give 3 Massive THANK YOU. But before that I quickly want to thank everyone I have ever met. Not just my primary school teacher, my childhood buddies or my co-workers from the restaurant in London where I used to work. I also want to send my gratitude to people that I have barely met. To the boyfriend of my colleague that I saw at a party only once. To the lady in the local grocery store near the flat I rented in Varna. To the cyclist who crashed with my bike when I was working in Mallorca and left without saying anything. To the ship crew I worked with for a month when I was in Alaska. All these people helped me see who I am, who I want to become and. Some helped me see who I do not want to be which is equally important.

Time for my big 3!

First, I would like to thank my family! As cliché as it may seem, all my father, mother and sister have helped me a lot in life. While we can choose our friends, family is something we cannot choose and I have been fortunate to be in a good one.

Second, I would like to thank Michael Gask. Michael is from New Zealand and even though I have met him in person just a couple of times, it is easy to see that Michael is one of the good souls in the world.

The story of how we met online is quite curious. Sometime in 2017 I was making a research on a topic I was planning to make a YouTube video on. Went on YouTube to see what other creators have done with this topic. One of the videos had a lot of comments and I turned SAVAGE mode ON! Everyone who had a question in that comment section got an answer from me. The ones I didn't know I Googled and went back to write a reply. It just bothers me so much when creators do not reply to the comments they receive! So I replied to almost all of these comments and Michael was one of those people. He not only wrote a reply on my reply, but also went to check my YouTube channel. Michael was so intrigued, he decided to watch every single video from the beginning of my YouTube channel. This is unheard of! Since YouTube is not the best platform to exchange messages, I talked to Michael and told him he needs to share his message with the world. You can now find Michael on Instagram where he is doing pretty good (@michaelgask). You would have been reading a book full of spelling errors if it wasn't for Michael's English language skills. Thank you for checking this book, Mike!

And lastly but not least, my third THANK YOU goes to my girlfriend, Selena. She is a true definition of a strong lady that supports her other half in his crazy ideas.

I would also like to thank **YOU!**

Thank you so much for choosing this book. I hope you not only learned useful tips and techniques, but that you also had fun. That's really important to me!

If that's the case, then please take an extra 52 seconds and leave a review or please help me spread the word and share this book. It will mean the world to me.

To your success
Stay Curious