This handout accompanies the *Small Talk on Small Talk*.

**Why Conversation Matters**

1. **It can increase productivity.**

A study in the Harvard Business Review found that increasing the amount coworkers could talk increased productivity by 8%.¹

These informal conversations are where you build relationships, find opportunities for collaboration, and can learn valuable tips and tricks related to your work.

2. **It can help you find your next assignment.**

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70% of all jobs are found through networking.²

This is true not just for new assignments, but also in roles within your existing company. It’s not what you know or who you know, it’s who knows what you can do.

3. **It can make you happier.**

People with 3 close friends at work are 96% more likely to be satisfied with their lives.³ Not just satisfied with their work, but satisfied with their lives.

Conversation is how you build those relationships, from small talk at the water cooler to deeper conversations over lunch or happy hour.

**The Tenants of Good Small Talk**

Most people have a negative perception of small talk. They see it as awkward, boring, and selfish. To avoid those types of conversations:

1. **Focus on the other person.** Follow the Platinum Rule and make sure your conversation is relevant and relatable to the other person.
2. **Have a plan.** Don’t just “hope for the best,” instead have a strategy for small talk.
3. **Add some humor.** Keep the conversation interesting with some humor.

To accomplish all of the above, follow the Conversation Triad.

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² How to Meet the Person Who Could Change Your Life. Forbes. September 2014
The Conversation Triad

1. **Ask Compelling Questions.**
   - Listen to Understand.

2. **Tell Interesting Stories.**
   - Context + Action + Results.

3. **Continue the Conversation.**
   - Yes And the Conversation.

1. **Ask compelling questions.**
   Learn more about the person by asking questions. To stand out from the crowd and have real conversations as opposed to rehearsed diatribe, ask compelling questions.

   **TIP:** Listen to understand instead of listening to respond.

2. **Tell interesting stories.**
   When sharing more about yourself, don’t just give contrite answers. Tell short, engaging stories that give context to your answer.

   **TIP:** Start with the context of the story, move to what action you took, and then the results.

3. **Continue the conversation.**
   Throughout the conversation, reference people, resources, and material that might be of value to the other person. Offer to follow-up with the person sharing more about that value.

   **TIP:** Use “yes and” to continue the conversation while also keeping it positive.

   *Questions? Contact me at andrew@humorthatworks.com.*