



How to Work a Room: The Ultimate Guide to Making Lasting Connections--In Person and Online

Susan RoAne

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How To Work A Room is the classic bestselling self-help book on improving communication and socialization skills in business and life, giving you the confidence and tools to walk into any room and shine. The 25th Anniversary Edition is fully revised and updated, incorporating new research on interaction and the role of technology and social media in networking, with RoAne's proven tips for using digital strategies to your advantage. RoAne lays down the fundamentals for savvy socializing, whether at a party, a conference, or online, with practical advice for starting conversations and strengthening rapport with strangers. *How to Work a Room: The Ultimate Guide to Making Lasting Connections—In Person and Online* will continue to be a vital tool for business professionals, job seekers, and career changers of all ages.

How to Work a Room: The Ultimate Guide to Making Lasting Connections--In Person and Online Details

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Tom says

This book was not bad and it offered some nice nuggets of advice, but the vast majority of what is offered one already knows through the use of common sense. I think this book would be great for high school or college graduates. For that demographic it offers some sage advice.

At some points in the book the author was repetitive and she contradicted herself at one point, but these are minor flaws.

Overall, this is an easy read, but one that is more geared toward those who are entering the workforce, not the seasoned professional.

Rob Slaven says

I started reading a book in the vicinity of this day. It's completely out of character as it's called, "How to work a Room." Yeah, yeah. Get back on your chair. After 50 pages I'd gleaned a couple of useful facts. By 100 pages I was just about ready to tear the book in half just to guarantee that one copy of this bullshit out of the millions available would not poison another impressionable mind. Anyway, let's start with the good and useful things I was told. Yes, I know, they're obvious but I'm not sure anyone had told me these things specifically:

* If you go to a party and you're uncomfortable, then other people are too. When I mentioned this to my wife she reminded me of the July 4th party I 'ruined' about 13 months ago. It went something like this. We went to some distant friend's house where we were in company of several other people who were good friends with the hostess. They all sat about drinking heavily, talking about nothing and I sat quietly and waited for the party to end. This, apparently, was enough to ruin the party and it certainly ruined my attitude for the rest of the day. The lesson learned here is a simple one I think. If you're not enjoying yourself then just leave so you don't screw it up for everyone else. Fair enough.

* 93% of people in the world consider themselves shy. I think most of the time that I consider myself shy but really I'm not. If you wander into a topic that I know something about, I will talk incessantly and I'm always blabbering on about my innermost thoughts on here so I'm certainly not shy about talking when I have something to say. The important bit here though is that the hard part for most people is approaching others. So, if you approach them then you've done 90% of the work and you can go about the conversation. Amusingly, evidence for this was right at hand. I often talk to people at random in stores or whatever and people almost always react positively to what I have to say so people want to talk to you. People are, in general, ready to have a conversation. The key is getting over that initial hurdle and breaking down the initial barrier between people. Now that, I think I can try to do more effectively. At this point, I can't imagine people will think me any MORE of an ass no matter what I say so I have that going for me. The down side here is that I typically just DON'T have anything to say on most of the common topics of conversation. You want to talk about the science or mathematics or literature or computing or religion then I'm your man. Let's

set a date. You want to talk about what diet Cher's on or what happened on American Idol last night.... um, no, not so much.

* People can sense what your real intentions are so you can't schmooze just to get something. Now this, I thought, was a damn interesting little tidbit and hopefully true. The author tells bits about how she's gotten all sorts of random perquisites from her smoozing. Tickets to shows, free crap, discounts, etc because of some incident she had in an elevator. That's all well and good and a nice thing to look forward to I suppose but really just random gravy. What I guess pisses me off most is that there are people out there who have to be told, "just don't do this to take advantage of people" while I sit here on my own with absolutely nothing going on. It's damn frustrating to try to put yourself out there for people and get blank stares in return. I take cookies across the street to the old couple at Christmas but I'm not even sure they eat them. I'd be happy to help the neighbors get their yard in order so maybe they could sell their house but they won't even acknowledge my greetings. We're just such isolationists in this country. Either that or I'm just too damn scary. Whatever the case it's annoying. It's not that I WANT to get a call at 4 a.m. from some friend who has a major problem but it would at least be nice if that were a possibility.

So the first 50 pages went about like that. I was relatively upbeat on the whole process but it was clear that the book was geared for sales types which I most definitely am NOT a sales type. Then we start getting into the 'how' phase. How to make contacts and break the ice and get the free flow of information going. Sounds good doesn't it?

* The book recommends practicing a self-introduction. OK. Here's the best one I could think of:

**** Hi! I'm Rob! Now, I'm only here as part of a court-order. 'Socialization re-adjustment phase' of my parole they call it. Anyway, when we gone done talking there are some forms the judge would like you to fill out if you could.... Ma'am? Where are you...

* Practice your smalltalk. Look through the news and find 2 or 3 interesting stories and read them so you'll be prepared. Read People magazine so you can be aware of all the latest goings on.

It was at this point, that I measured the book to see if it could fit down the toilet. So basically, the key to successful smalltalk is to go read something you wouldn't ordinarily so that perhaps you'll have something to say that people might find interesting. Well I'm sorry but that's just a bunch of horse shit. If the idea of socializing with other people requires me to read fvcking People magazine then I'll just sit quietly and leave when I think it's no longer rude to do so. What the hell kind of lasting relationship is based on that sort of? Am I going to have to read People magazine every week/month/whatever for the rest of my life to sustain such a relationship? I'm looking for people to be friends with, to have interesting conversations with. Not sell them stool softener and rubber cane tips.

The first person to express a desire for this book gets it. Assuming, of course, that they can catch it as I hurl it at them.

Dominic says

good, but lots of common sense, and sometimes I didn't like the style

Scott says

Good reminders and suggestions

S lot of good ideas how to meet greet and converse with people. Didn't realize most people were as uncomfortable with it as I am.

John says

Disclaimer: I met Susan RoAne on a Southwest Flight from SFO to LA on December 30, 2013 enroute to the 2014 Rose Bowl game in Pasadena between Stanford and Michigan State. Susan and I spoke for the duration of the flight about Stanford University, its football team and the exploits of her grandson Shayne Stov (who was a key leader on the Stanford defensive team).

I am a third generation Stanford graduate (Class of '76). Near the end of the flight, Susan informed me she was an author of business books. She shared the planned cover of this book with me which featured a prominent endorsement by another best-selling business author/guru, my Stanford '76 classmate, Guy Kawasaki. I was not given a free copy of the book but put it on my GoodReads "to reads".

Admittedly, the author and I share common passions and acquaintances. I have read nearly all of Guy's ground breaking books (Reality Check and Enchantment more than once) and worship the cyberspace he inhabits. Susan bowled me over with her narrative on that flight but spent more time asking about my background. When she learned I lived in Singapore, she rattled off a names and found mutual friends.

We only had one serious disagreement - over the Stanford Band (she grimaced, I smiled). Susan not only knows how to work rooms, she can work planes and connect with people. She certainly pushed the right buttons with me. But then I might be slightly biased.

This is a book for all ages. From those nervous high school wallflowers and freshly-minted graduate school greenhorns to those weathered, scarred veterans (like me), there is a wealth of experienced-based, practical tips and knowledge. I wish I had this book 30 years ago as it would have save me quite a few faux pas and embarrassments. Technology has changed everything so dramatically with online tools, data and social networks but the interpersonal skills and techniques that Susan lays out in this book will always be useful and relevant. Working a room is real work. If it comes across as forced, superficial and rehearsed it can really backfire. Some of her recommendations reminded me about a Guy Kawasaki sayings about ingenuine, cosmetic smiles versus the authentic "crow's feet" ear to ear grins. If you fake it, people know. Those who can socialize and engage, converse and befriend and leave a lasting positive memory on their audience will always have an edge. If you can enjoy it and execute it naturally (following the lessons of this book), all the better.

Stanford lost the Rose Bowl to Michigan State a few days later. The team acquitted themselves well against a top 10 ranked squad. At the post-game conference Shayne Stov gave an eloquent tribute to his opponents as well as his teammates. Listening to the broadcast, I sensed he had learned a thing or two from his grandmother.

Kenny says

To put it simply, this book is about putting yourself out there to meet strangers. Amongst other topics, it covers possible sources of personal apprehension, the mindset to develop, behaviors to adopt (and avoid), strategies for different scenarios and events, and lots - so many - anecdotes. I haven't read any of Susan's other writing so maybe that's just her thing.

Jake says

Excellent!

I learned many tips that were relevant to today's atmosphere. Will read again in the future~ tips for every occasion.

Mandy Havert says

Practical advice

This book is direct and an easy read. The rubber hits the road, so to speak, when you make a plan and put the content exercises to practice.

Frances says

Reading this was quite helpful.

A few things that I've learned about great communication:

- Be a host = make other people comfortable
- Be prepared = reading the news, preparing your own introduction
- Be genuine and respectful

If you want to go through the quick tips of the whole book Susan RoAne writes two great segments at the end to summarise the book.

Julie says

Second time reading this. While some parts seem repetitive or obvious there is a lot of really great ideas and info in this book for anyone looking to be more comfortable in a room full of strangers or mostly strangers.

Michal Stawicki says

This is a great textbook on working a room. On this particular subject it may be even THE ultimate textbook. Susan RoAne covered everything from exhibits via high school reunions to funeral services. Wow, what a tremendous experience! Susan was on schedule for more meetings than I changed diapers (and changed a lot of them).

But this is not some boring textbook which can substitute for a soothing lullaby. Not at all. This book is packed with both fun and interesting stories. Most of them came directly from Susan's rich array of experiences. That makes the book far from the dreadful image of a textbook.

First some areas where it may have fell short for some users. As a representative of a (relatively) young generation I found her explanations of different social platforms boring. I skimmed through these and went straight to more "meaty" parts. But someone in his sixties may feel exactly opposite.

I also find the book a bit repetitive, but I'm not the kind of guy who shun from repetition. It helps to retain the lessons longer.

Connecting is hard, but she makes it easy

Susan also writes vividly. When she admits that mingling and talking to strangers is hard, I wholeheartedly agree with her. I was a shrinking violet who transformed into a confident person, so I went through quite a lot. 30 months ago I couldn't say "Hi" to a stranger.

When Susan explains how to make it happen, it sounds fun and easy. I vote for her methods. I verified everything she teaches; every trick from her arsenal, which I knew and used worked as she prescribed. And I got some interesting results too. Since "shrinking violet" times I built a couple of deep friendships by starting conversations on a train to work. I also spoke with strangers about life-death issues.

Working a room mastery

But it was just the introductory part of the book. From there the author goes into room-working and that's where her mastery really shows. She has a knack for breaking high plane ideas into actionable items. Susan has also a tendency to make a list whenever possible. There are an enormous number of lists and action steps included. And after each chapter you will find a quick summary, again in bullet points or the form of list, which makes for easy reading.

It's really amazing how she was able to systematize and distill such intangible topic as human relationships.

Her ideas comes down to common sense. You won't find there any backbreaking manipulation techniques which can be mastered only by years of training. I appreciate that because of the following reasons:

Common sense is nowadays uncommon

I don't really know what common sense calls for in many situations; for example I have never been on reunion or a trade show.

I loved Susan's advice on working virtual rooms. I'm not too bad in working them myself. I've been noticed by several people with 6 and 7 figure income businesses and obtained their help. I recognized in her advice my approach: just be genuine.

Not one-read kind of a book

I'm sure I'll be going back to How to Work a Room time after time. The structure of book makes it easy to find just a particular kind of "room" and refresh the lesson in your mind. Now, before any new event I'll take this book and skim an appropriate chapter.

If you are thinking about any career involving face- to-face contact with people (and most of careers demands at least basic social skills) How to Work a Room is a must read.

Austin says

Incredibly basic information. This advice is strictly for an individual that is absolutely clueless on how to even speak to anyone. If you need this type of simplistic advice, then you have literally never been in public ever! Hey Susan, the way you deliver this information is that of a child receiving lessons from a parent! This book should be in the children's section.

Francisca Painhas says

Based mainly on sense and sensibility, and bringing nothing new to the table after reading the classical books on people. Maybe useful for shy people or people who need some push to start interacting.

Also, the author goes on way too much on her experiences, and some of the times, in a very judgemental way.

Mike Landau says

Found this book in my apartment building's shared library. Thought I'd peruse for useful hints. I found no insights. Instead... I found the author to be humblebragging throughout the book about speaking with audiences in the thousands, speaking from a pedestal to her readers who just don't have her experience. To me it felt like I was being lectured to by a parent on how to grow up.

Charmin says

Highlights:

1. Give the benefit of what you do rather than your job title.
2. Self-Introduction: begin with your name. Include something about yourself that establishes what you have in common with the other people at the event. Lasts about 7-9 seconds. Tag line that tells other people who you are and gives them a way to remember you.
3. What people remember are the warmth, interest, and enthusiasm they feel from you.
4. Good Guests: The good guest is an interested listener, notices guests who are standing alone. Brings something (stories, news, anecdotes). Read the newspaper or content curators like the Daily Beast and the

Week. Thank you email and follow up by a handwritten note.

5. OAR: Observe. Ask. Reveal.

6. Write Thank You Notes: handwritten. Lasting impression. Memorable. Distinguish self from the crowd.

7. Manners: common sense and kindness.

8. Act like a host so guests feel welcomed.

9. People notice how we speak to our own spouses and guests.

10. Manners and character.
