



GET KNOWN,  
GET CLIENTS

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MEETING PEOPLE AT EVENTS

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**24 Tips to Turn Strangers Into  
Friends, Clients, and High-Leverage Connections**

**(Plus 5 Quick Bonus Tips to Stand Out)**

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# HI, I'M SELENA SOO.

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I'm a business strategy and publicity coach based in New York City.

I wrote this free guide for entrepreneurs like you – self-starters who are looking to grow their businesses and turn the people they admire into friends, mentors, and clients.

As we all know, connecting in person can be very powerful. Now that we live in a virtual world, meeting people face-to-face can make a real difference when it comes to developing meaningful relationships.

That being said, I've met many entrepreneurs who have invested time, energy, and money to attend an event in the hopes of gaining new connections and clients... and then walked out feeling like it was a waste of time.

**Can you relate?**

## IF YOU'VE EVER GONE TO A LIVE EVENT AND...

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- **Ended up standing in a corner on your iPhone**, pretending to be doing something important because you felt too shy to approach people...
- **Had big hopes of connecting with the speakers or other influencers** – but then had no idea what to say when they were finally within arm's reach...
- **Collected a stack of business cards** but never followed up with anyone...

... then this guide is for you.

I'll kick things off by explaining how to find events in the first place, and how to choose the right ones.

Then, I'll reveal 24 ways for you to prepare for an event, make the most of your time there, and develop your connections afterward so you can build your business.

Ready to build win-win relationships that will take your business to the next level? Let's get started!

Warmly,

*Selena*

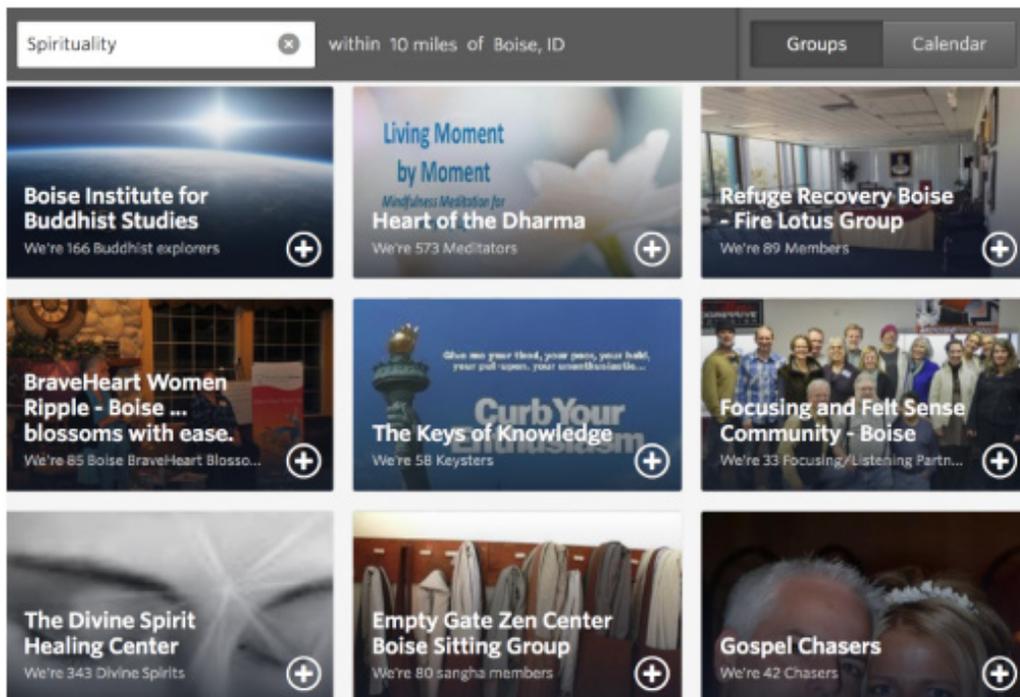
## HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT EVENTS

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Now, you might be saying to yourself, *“I’d love to be going to events... but I have no idea where to find them.”*

Well, I’m going to give you some simple tips to do just that.

A good place to start is to go to Meetup.com and search for groups by key interests. For example: Let’s say you live in Boise, Idaho, and your ideal client is a woman in her 30s or 40s who is interested in personal or spiritual growth. If you do a search for “spirituality within 10 miles of Boise,” you’ll instantly get results like this:



Any of these Meetups would be a great way to connect with your ideal clients.

Another easy way to find events is to simply ask your friends, family, and fellow entrepreneurs. Post on Facebook or email your entrepreneur friends, and say something like: “I’m looking for some great events for entrepreneurs. Anyone have any recommendations?”

To get more targeted with this, you could join entrepreneurial-focused groups on Facebook and ask them the same question.

Additionally, you could brainstorm what other kinds of events your ideal client might like to go to. Think about your current clients or people who would be ideal clients. Where are they spending their time?

So in this example, spiritual women in their 30s or 40s might go to Hay House events, Tony Robbins events, meditation groups, women’s support groups, or a vision board workshop.

## **HOW TO DECIDE WHICH EVENTS TO GO TO**

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You want to be thoughtful and strategic about which events you attend, so you don’t walk away feeling like they were a waste of your time and money.

### **Here are some things to consider when choosing events...**

- What is the size of the event? (Do you prefer going to big events where there are hundreds of people, or do you prefer smaller, more intimate events?)
- Is the event organized by an established group that has experience and success with running events? Or is it run by a brand new organization? (Do you have confidence that it will be a great event?)
- Do people have to pay for the event? Some events are free or only \$10, while others cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. (Insider tip: At events where people are paying a premium to attend, you're more likely to find people who are also willing to invest in premium services.)
- Is this event related to a topic your ideal clients care about?
- Will the event attract other entrepreneurs, experts, and influencers you'd like to connect with?

# 24 TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIVE EVENTS



## PART 1: BEFORE THE EVENT...

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### 1. Write down what you want to get out of the event.

Take time to think through why you're attending, who you want to meet, and what you'd like to achieve.

**Name of Event:**

**Host or Organization Hosting the Event:**

**Why do I want to attend the event?**

**What are my goals?**

**Key people to connect with:**

For example: potential clients, referral partners, or specific people you know will be there). See tips 2 and 3 for more advice on this.

## **2. Decide who you want to connect with.**

While most organizers won't release the full list of attendees, they do make the list of speakers public. And some events have Facebook groups for the attendees to connect prior to the event.

Ask your friends or connections in that area if they know anyone who is going. (You can even post on Facebook, *"I'm going to this event. Anyone else going or know anyone going?"*)

Then, make a list of speakers and attendees you'd like to connect with. (If you can't find specific names, you can still make a list of the types of people you'd like to meet. For example, possible referral partners, podcast hosts, or organizers of other networking groups.)

## **3. Research the people you'd like to meet.**

Once you have the names of people you want to connect with, do some research to find out more about them. Google them. Look up their LinkedIn page. See if they have a personal or business website. Look at their Facebook page or profile to learn about what's important to them or what they're working on. Knowing even just a few tidbits about their lives and business will help you spark a connection right away.

## **4. Reach out to people in advance.**

That's right! No need to wait for the event to start connecting. If there's someone you know you'd like to meet, shoot the person a quick email and say something like: *"I saw you're coming to the event. I wanted to let you know I'll be there too, and I hope we get a chance to*

*connect.*” Or post on Twitter or Facebook that you’re excited to be going to this conference where so-and-so is speaking, and tag the person’s name.

## **5. Consider creating your own event... before the event.**



If you know people who are going, or if the event has a Facebook group, suggest a cocktail hour at the hotel everyone is staying at the night before the event begins. Connecting with people in a smaller setting before the event

can help you make more meaningful connections. Connecting with people in a smaller setting before the event can help you make more meaningful connections.

## **6. Be prepared to talk about your work.**

Because people will likely ask about what you do, it’s helpful to have in mind three interesting or compelling talking points about your business. These should relate to your ideal client in some way and show them how you help people.

Some examples could be:

“One of my clients, a 60-year old Jewish woman, thought she’d never get married. After working with me for just three months, she met a guy. Right now, they’re planning their wedding in Italy.”

“I have a unique approach to copywriting. I always ask my clients, ‘If you could be any character from a TV show, who would you be and why?’”

“I’m a life coach, but I’m also super passionate about astrology. I read my clients’ astrological charts and weave what I learn into our work together.”

These are interesting points you can make, but remember – you don’t only want to talk about yourself. You can use these as jumping off points for back-and-forth conversations. This means asking them questions about what they do, and what brought them to the event. (See tips 11 and 13.)

## **7. Be in-the-know.**

Check the news, Twitter and Facebook to find out what people are talking about. What are your friends and colleagues discussing on Facebook right now? Maybe there’s some fun celebrity gossip, a new Apple product, or a popular new productivity app. These could all be great conversation topics at the event.

Just remember to avoid hot-button topics like politics and religion since people tend to have polarizing views on these areas.

## **8. Prep snacks to take with you.**

Personally, I know that when I’m hungry, I can’t focus. If that’s true for you, too, consider packing snacks in your bag – like almonds, an energy bar, fruit, or a piece of chocolate. If you’re not a coffee fan or you know caffeine makes you too jittery, feel free to bring your own herbal tea so you have an alternative at the coffee station.

## 9. Plan your outfit ahead of time.

Are you someone who figures out what you're wearing five minutes before you walk out the door (and end up resorting to whatever is clean at that moment)? If so, consider planning your outfit at least a day or two before the event so you can put your best foot forward. You want your appearance to send the right message about your business – which may mean leaving the boyfriend jeans and plaid shirt at home and wearing a cocktail dress instead.

Plus, in today's social media-driven age, there's a good chance you'll get tagged in someone's photo or video so you want to look your best.

Some event spaces keep the air conditioning cranked up so consider bringing a cardigan, nice jacket, or wrap to stay warm.

## 10. Have a system for collecting contact info.



One problem that often arises from meeting new people is that their contact info ends up all over the place. You get a business card from one person, a scribbled name and number on a napkin from another, and you write someone else's info on a random page in your event binder.

To keep track of everyone's contact info, it's a good idea to create an organizational system in advance. Have one place where you put people's business cards (like a pocket in your bag, or separate card holder), and use a notebook to take down the info of people who don't have cards (write your notes from the event in the front, and collect contact info in the back).

Also – even if you don't normally carry a business card, people will ask you for them – so consider getting some printed, even if they're simple cards with just your name, email and phone number.

## PART 2: DURING THE EVENT...

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### 11. Participate in the Q&A.

It might sound scary, but going to the mic to ask a question is a great way to become known by others – including the host, speakers, and the entire room of attendees.



Start by introducing yourself: *"Hi, I'm Selena Soo, and I'm a business and publicity coach. My question is..."*

Not only will the speaker appreciate the participation, but now other people will start to approach you (*"Oh, are you the person that asked the question on XYZ?"*)

## 12. Connect with the speakers... but be considerate.



Don't be afraid to approach the speakers at large events. After all, they're there to share their ideas and advice with people. But it's important to be respectful and considerate of their time.

Here's how to do that:

### Tips for Connecting with Speakers

If you meet a speaker before her talk, keep your greeting to a quick hello or something short like: *"I'm looking forward to your talk. Thank you for being here!"* No one wants to get peppered with questions or hear someone's life story five minutes before they go on stage.

In general, connecting with the speaker after her talk is usually best, since she may have more time to speak to you and you'll have more specifics to comment on. Keep in mind, there may be a line of people waiting to talk to the speaker, so try to be concise and to-the-point – no more than a couple minutes if others are waiting.

Also, speakers want to know people enjoyed their talk, so don't be afraid to compliment them!

If you're not able to connect with a speaker at the event, send them a short email or note on Facebook letting them know you enjoyed their talk. (Bonus points if you mention a takeaway or your favorite part!)

### **13. Bring a friend to support you.**

Let your friend know the types of people you want to meet. If your friend has an interest in the event, too (rather than coming simply to support you), ask her what her goals are, and support each other!



If you're not able to bring someone with you, make it a goal to meet someone new at the event you can buddy up with. Also, if you're an introvert, see if you can find a more extroverted person who can help you spark conversations and meet more people. (And let your extroverted friend know you're a bit shy and could use some help – they'll likely enjoy feeling helpful!)

### **14. Connect with the event organizers.**

It's a good idea to introduce yourself to the host and the event organizers, especially toward the beginning of the event. Not sure who the organizers are? They may be greeting people at check-in, or you may notice them talking to the speakers. They may also be carrying a walkie-talkie or wearing a badge that says "Staff."

Because they're in charge of the event, they'll be familiar with the guest list and may be able to facilitate other introductions. You could say to the host: *"Thank you so much for organizing everything, I'm so excited to be here."* And then, *"I'm looking to meet these types of people – do you know anyone?"*



The organizers and hosts are often well-connected and want you to have a good experience. They may be able to give you names – or may even grab you during a coffee break to say, *"Have you met Susan yet? She's right over here. Let me introduce you."*

### **15. Use the breaks to connect with new people.**

Breaks are a great time to meet people. As everyone is milling about the coffee station, you could ask, *"Hey, what do you think of the event so far?"* People are often excited about what the speakers are saying, so this is usually a great conversation starter.



Avoid the temptation to run off to check email on your iPhone, or squeeze in work. You probably paid good money to be at the event. Do your best to take care of things before you arrive, so you can take advantage of it.

(If you notice your energy level is low and you need a break to walk outside and rejuvenate, go ahead and do that. Just remember to come back inside and connect with people.)

## **16. Start with small talk.**

Many of us want to have meaningful conversations, and that's great. At the same time, though, when you're meeting someone for the first time, it might be too much if you dive right into the deeper topics right away. So it's OK to start with small talk.

Here are some simple conversation starters:

### **17 Simple Conversation Starters**

1. What's your favorite part of the event so far?
2. Which speaker are you most excited about hearing?
3. How did you hear about the event? / What brought you to this event?
4. I love your [article of clothing], where'd you get it?
5. Hi, I'm [Name]. I don't believe we've met yet.
6. Hi, I'm [Name]. I think I met you at XYZ event. Were you there?
7. Hi, I saw your name on the invitation list. I'm excited to get a chance to connect!

8. What do you do?
9. How did you get started in your line of work?
10. What do you love most about your work?
11. What are you most excited about in your business right now?
12. What is your biggest need in your business right now?
13. Your business sounds amazing. What are the typical ways you find your clients?
14. Who is your ideal client?
15. Who are some of your favorite experts or authors?
16. What's your favorite restaurant in the city?
17. Are you traveling anywhere exciting this year?

### **17. Join group conversations – without feeling awkward.**

You can jump into a group conversation by saying, *"I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that. How does that work?"*

While you don't want to eavesdrop on personal conversations, you can join in visibly by laughing at a person's joke, nodding your head, or commenting with something like: *"That's great advice,"* or *"What a great story. And by the way, I don't believe we've met yet. My name is [Name]."*

## **18. Introduce yourself and your work in a clear and compelling way.**

I recommend one of two formats:

- I help X-people achieve Y-goal.
- I help X-people solve Y-problem.

For example, I could say: *"I help coaches, consultants, and service providers get more visibility and clients for their business."* It's very clear who I'm helping and the goal I'm helping them achieve. This paints a better picture than just saying, *"I do marketing."*

## **19. Go for quality over quantity.**

You don't want to get stuck talking to just one person during the entire event, but you also shouldn't put pressure on yourself to connect with all 100+ people who may be attending. Instead, set an achievable goal – for example, *"I'd love to connect with 2-3 like-minded people and have meaningful discussions with them."*

## **20. Avoid overindulging in alcohol.**

Some of these events have after parties where people get together for drinks. While having a cocktail can be a great way to connect with people, you don't want to forget what you talked about or say something embarrassing and leave the wrong impression. If you feel awkward being the only person not holding a drink, simply order a club soda with lime.

## **21. Make notes about your connections & conversations.**

We've all been to events where we get home with a stack of business cards and can't remember the first thing about who each person was or what we talked about. So take notes – either on the cards themselves or in your notebook.

To make this easier, create a shorthand code for yourself.

For example:

- “C w/ Mary” = Connect this person with Mary
- “NL” = Permission to add to my newsletter
- “RP” = Potential referral partner

It's also a good idea to jot down notes from your conversation – especially personal details, like the fact that someone's daughter is going off to college. Being able to refer to these details when you follow up will strengthen your connection and help you stand out.

## **22. Follow up... while you're still at the event.**

This is where so many entrepreneurs drop the ball. They get home from an event, exhausted, and then wait a week or two before following up... and then they feel like it's too late.

Sound familiar? Give yourself a head start by following up at the event itself! Here's how...

- **Add the person as a friend on Facebook or contact on LinkedIn. Post a flattering photo of you and your new connection and tag the person.** (Example: *"Loved meeting Richard Jones. Amazing mindfulness coach! Here's his website, check him out."*)



- **Tag the person in a tweet.** (Again, post a photo of the two of you if you have one.)
- **Schedule a call on the spot.** (*"I'd really love to talk with you more in-depth about this. Would you be interested in scheduling a call?"*)
- **Send the person a quick email.** (*"Great meeting you at the event! Here's the Amazon link to the book I was telling you about..."*)

### **23. Schedule complimentary 1-on-1 calls with potential clients.**

If you meet someone at an event, and it becomes clear that you could help the person with something in their business or life, go ahead and set up a one-on-one call with that person. This is much more effective than just saying, "Let's chat sometime" – or, "Here's my card."

## How to Invite Someone to a Complimentary 1-on-1 Call

Say something like: "It's been so great chatting with you about [insert topic]. I've helped lots of clients with this, and I have some more ideas for you. If you're interested, I'd love to share them with you. Would you be interested in a complimentary call later on this week?"

- If they agree to speak with you, be sure to **schedule it on the spot** if you can.
- Instead of saying, "*When are you free this month?*", give specific dates and times. For example, you could say: "*Do you have your calendar with you? If so, would next Monday at 4pm work for you?*"
- Once you pick the time, send a follow-up email the next day to confirm.
- If they don't have their calendar, get their business card and send a follow-up email the next day to schedule a call.

**Remember - you want to take the lead.** If you wait for the person to remember to email you, it may never happen.

## PART 3: AFTER THE EVENT...

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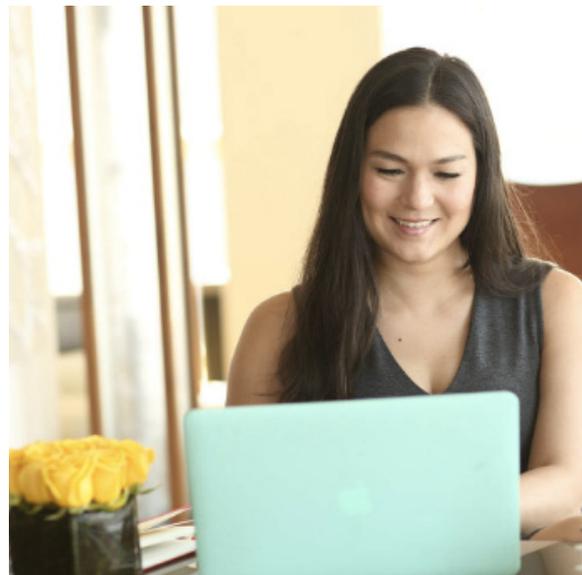
### 24. Follow up immediately.

First, think about the value you can offer the person you've met.

- Add the person on social media. (When making a friend request, include a personal note like, "*Great meeting you at XYZ Event!*") If you haven't yet posted a photo of the two of you together, do that now.

- Know someone they might like to meet? Make some email introductions! (Note: Only connect people after you get permission from both parties.)

- If you have a popular blog, invite your new connection to contribute a guest article or ask to interview them.



- If you write for other sites, mention the person in a blog post (and link back to their website if they have one). Let them know you've featured them.
- If they shared some valuable advice with you, put it into action and let them know what you've achieved – thanks to them.

Next, send the person a follow-up email. Try these useful tips:

## Tips for Follow-Up Emails

- Follow up on things you know the person is interested in based on your conversation with them. (For example, a book you talked about, a video or interview you think they'd find interesting.)
- Don't ask, "How are you doing?" in the follow-up email. (You don't want to make a busy person explain what's happening in her life.)
- Don't ask for big favors right away. (You're still developing the relationship.)

Remember – the person you've just met is busy just like you. Keep your follow-up email simple and thoughtful. When in doubt, follow the simple template below.

## Follow-Up Email Template

Hi [Name],

It was great meeting you at [Event Name].

[Share something specific you discussed, such as a current project or something in their personal life – like, "I loved hearing about the e-book you're writing."]

[Offer value – share an idea that could be useful to them, or connect them to a person or resource.]

[Wrap the email up. For example: “I look forward to staying in touch!”, or “I hope to see you at next month’s networking event.”]

[Sign off – i.e., “Warmly, Miranda”]

[Include your signature, including your website and links to social media]

### **Specific Example of a Follow-Up Email**

Hi Jennifer,

It was great meeting you at the Chamber of Commerce event last night!

You mentioned your big goal this year is to start writing your novel. I just wanted to follow up with two resources you might find helpful.

- *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott – a great guide for overcoming perfectionism and busting through writer’s block.
- The Wealthy Writer’s Online Workshop – I’ve taken this course myself and really enjoyed it.

I look forward to staying in touch. Perhaps I'll see you at another Chamber of Commerce event!

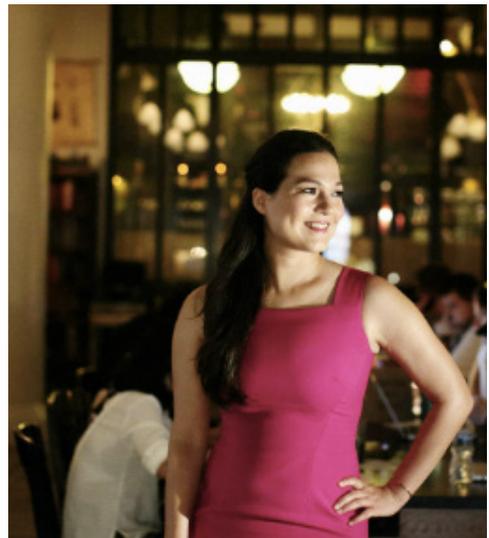
Warmly,  
Miranda

## 5 QUICK BONUS TIPS TO STAND OUT

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### 1. **Increase your energy level.**

Have a healthy, energizing breakfast before you show up at the event. Maybe squeeze in a quick workout, and make sure you've taken care of important business before you show up. The more present you are, and the more positive energy you put out there, the more people will be drawn to you.



2. **Wear bright colors** so you stand out in a crowd. (In the dating world, this is called peacocking.)

3. **Wear an interesting accessory**, like jewelry. This provides people with an easy conversation starter, as they can comment on it.

- 4. Smile!** You create people's impressions of you. Look at people and give them a smile. If you seem like a happy, approachable person, you make it easier for them to come up to you.
- 5. Position yourself in a "high traffic" area** during breaks, like by the door. Don't hide in a corner, slouched over your phone.

## ONE FINAL TIP (MY CHALLENGE TO YOU)

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The next time you're at a live event, I want you to challenge yourself to give 10 compliments.

People find you interesting when they feel like you find them interesting. And paying someone a compliment is an easy way to open a conversation.

Some simple examples are...

- "I love your dress."
- "I love the question you asked during the Q&A."
- "I'm a fan of your blog."



Your compliments don't have to be complicated – but they should always be sincere.

So give it a try! You may be surprised by people's reactions.

I hope you've enjoyed these tips – I can't wait for you to put them into action.