Hey baby, got any good pick-up lines? [1]

Dear Alice,

Know any good pick-up lines?

? Line-less

Answer

Dear Line-less,

How 'bout calling them conversation starters? This more general term may take away negative connotations that someone might have with being "picked up," (i.e., the only reason you're saying hello is so you can say goodbye an hour or two later? after you've had a romp in the sack). If starting a conversation is your goal, you might chat it up, hoping simply to make a new friend or contact. And, since conversation starters can be used in both social and professional situations, your question and this answer can apply to a wide variety of situations.

Now, try not to sell yourself short by only listing lines that will leave them wanting more. It's good to remember that your appearance, the way you deliver your lines, where you stand, eye contact, voice volume, tone, speech speed, a handshake or bow, and a smile can all convey self-confidence, maturity, intelligence, charm, respect... or the lack thereof. Think of these elements as determinants of whether your introduction is presented in a beautifully wrapped gift box, or a soggy brown take-out bag. That is, your words might be Pulitzer Prize winning, but if you quickly mumble and transmit them in a fog of tuna breath, they may not even be heard.

One more thing before the starter suggestions: consider the place where your approach will occur. Loud bars and Times Square on New Year's Eve will make it more difficult to be heard ? unless you know sign language. Who else and what else is around that may distract you and your audience, and is there enough time for a response and some meaningful dialogue?

If you're really feeling adventurous, take cues from the person you wish to speak with. Perhaps what s/he is wearing, drinking, eating, looking at, and/or laughing about provide you with your verbal entrée.

Finally, however and wherever you start a dialogue, BE YOURSELF! If your message is not coming from the real you, you may not be taken seriously. If you put on an act and use "lines"
instead of talking genuinely, you are offering someone other than yourself. For example, it might help to watch or imagine how Brad Pitt might talk to Julia Roberts, but acting like a sexy actor could win you laughs and disdain, and no Academy Awards. If you stay true to yourself, there's a better chance that someone will want to be with you? especially if you want to relate long-term.

Okay, here are some "lines" that may land you on both feet?and then a few that may leave you standing there all by yourself:

**Box Office Hits:**

"Hi, I'm ________. Do you live/work/go to school around here?"

"Wow, those are really cool shoes... I'm _________."

"Is it always this crowded here?"

"Hi, I'm ________. I'm a friend of your friend ________. S/he suggested that I say hello."

"Hi, I'm ________. I saw you make a presentation at the ________ conference? your speech was great!"

**Straight-to-DVD:**

"Do you have the time?"

"I'm ________. Can I buy you a drink?"

"Did anyone ever tell you that you look exactly like Phil Collins?"

"Haven't I seen you here before?"

"Shall we shag now, or shall we shag later?"

"Is it hot in here, or is it me?"

"Hi, I'm ________. Can I give you my card?"

"Do I have broccoli in my teeth?"

If you can swallow the nominees, or if you have your own standbys, you can practice saying them out loud to yourself, try them out with your friends, or even act them out with your dog. And remember? no one, not even Brad or Julia, always get the reaction s/he's hoping for. A lot of factors (having nothing to do with you) may influence how a person reacts when called upon. Knowing that, try your best not to take a rejection too personally. So get started on your lines! The more you try to get up close and personal with new people, the greater the chances that you'll find a co-star.

Alice!

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