Introduction

You've heard it before: it's not what you know, but whom you know. But...you hate networking. That's ok, a lot of people do. And networking for introverts is even more challenging. According to Susan Cain's, The Power of Introverts Ted Talk over 50 percent of the U.S. workforce self-identifies as introverts. The good news is that you're not alone and you can learn how to network in 7 simple steps, no matter how introverted you are

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-s-solomon/networking-for-introverts_b_10637306.html

Step 1: Find Meetups & Other Networking Events

Before you go wow people with your cocktail party conversation (or lack thereof), you need to have places to go. Most major cities in the US have tech meetups and other networking events. Finding the right ones can seem like a pain, but you'd be surprised what a little Google searching for "Best Tech Meetups in [CITY]" will bring up. Most local accelerators and incubators will have pitch sessions, demo days and the like.

Step 2: Have a Standard Opener

Ok, you've made it to the 500 Startups Demo Day (or wherever) and you're standing there alone thinking...what should I say? Seriously, just remember everyone is there for the same reason: to meet people. Through my work I've learned something very important about people. We're all insecure; some people are just better at hiding it.

So, what should you say? Dale Carnegie the author of "Making Friends and Influencing People" always said that the best way to meet people is to get them talking about their favorite subject: themselves.

That's right. There's really no better opener than, "So, what brings you here?"

Want a bonus follow-up that will engender you to them as a "great person" forever. Just say, "Sounds really interesting. What are you looking for today? Perhaps I can help." Of course, if it doesn't sound really interesting, you can omit that or try another response to what they said. The last thing our world or you need is more insincerity.

Step 3: Develop your elevator pitch

Networking for Introverts

Step 4: Choose your people

Before the event find a list of attendees and do some online research about them, pick the ones you want to know. If you feel comfortable with it, connect online prior to the event and arrange a quick one-on-one session during a break at the event. This often allows you to have a more substantive conversation since you will know a bit about each other from the start.

Step 5: Pace yourself and be strategic

Before the event set a realistic quota of how many contacts you'd like to meet. For your first couple of events start out with a small number so you can feel proud of yourself and build on that number. Are you a morning person or more alert in the evening? Schedule your meetups based on the time of day when you're at your best. Ensure that you allow time to recharge, whether by taking a short walk, a restroom break or checking out the venue. Resist the urge to try and be in constant 'On' mode..

Step 6: Collect Business Cards and Write on Them

This may seem very 1995, but business cards are still extremely useful for one thing: collecting and writing details of the conversation on. And it seems more polite than taking notes on your phone.
Did someone tell you he's looking for a Node.js developer and you know one? Write it down on his card.

Step 7: Follow Up (a no brainer)

The worst thing you can do, but what MOST people do anyway, is go to a networking event, meet a ton of people, and never have any contact with them again. Why waste their time and yours?
Depending on your goals, you can follow-up in many ways the day after the event:

■ Connect with them on LinkedIn, Facebook or other well known social platforms

■ Sit down with your stack of annotated cards and send everyone a unique email. "Hey [NAME], great meeting you yesterday at [EVENT]. [THEIR PROJECT] sounds really interesting. Let me know if I can be of any help! Best, [YOUR NAME]"

Summary

No matter how many witty jokes and questions you memorize, at some point you're going to have to talk about yourself. This may seem obvious, but it's amazing how many people don't think about how they are going to talk about themselves until someone asks them, and then it's either 20 seconds of awkward silence or 20 minutes of mindless yammering.

Here's a tip: Have a 30 second intro for yourself that you've already thought about and perhaps practiced saying out loud. To learn how to create your own elevator pitch check out this article or watch this YouTube playlist on elevator pitch instructions. After your pitch, then pivot back to a question about them. That's right: Talk about yourself for 30 seconds and then ask them a question, have some well thought-out talking points ready in your head. That's how you get a conversation going and how you avoid that panicky frozen feeling in your gut..

It really doesn't need to be more than that. And it shouldn't be more self-serving than that unless the conversation was squarely about you and your project, and this person was REALLY interested in helping you in someway.