

Don't Care

I haven't gone to a cocktail party in over 10 years. Granted, perpetually watching Seinfeld reruns on Friday and Saturday nights makes for a dull boy, but the alternative is excruciating. Uh, which would I prefer – solitary confinement or water boarding? I lean strongly in the direction of a warm bed and peace as opposed to a glass full of tinkling ice cubes and a room resonating with high- decibel blather. I suppose the parties wouldn't be so bad if there was something original to be said, or if "you" had a genuine interest in "me" as opposed to "you," but let's face it folks, no one does. The only reason any of us really cares about cocktail conversations is to quickly redirect someone else's stories into autobiographies that we assume to be instant bestsellers if only in print. If not, if the doe-eyed listener seems simply *fascinated* by what you're saying, you can bet there's a requested personal favor coming when you finally shut up. "Say Bill, I was wondering if you knew somebody at...that could..." Yeah right! But, as my chart shows, 90 seconds into a typical conversation, no one gives a damn about you and your problems – maybe those shoes and that dreadful eye shadow you're wearing, but not anything audible coming out of your mouth.

During that unbearable minute-and-a-half, however, you're likely to have covered some of the following topics:

Cocktail Party Empathy Chart

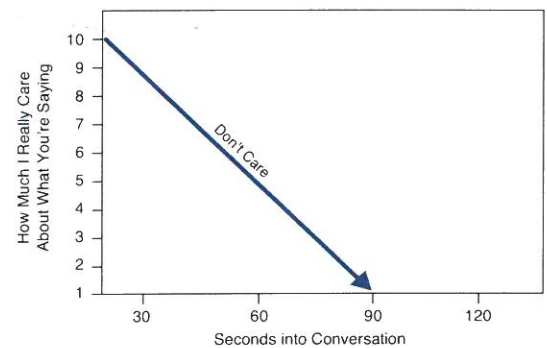


Chart 1

- 1) Where are you from? (If it's not a place where I've been or have a distant second cousin – don't care.)
- 2) How's the family? (If Johnnie is in advanced placement courses and my kids aren't – don't care. Don't care about your kids' soccer games either or that upcoming wedding.)
- 3) Medical problems. (Unless you're dying from cancer – don't care. Your artificial hip and kidney stone stories are important only to let me tell you about mine.)
- 4) How's work? (Forgot where you work, but it's a good lead in. Don't really care though unless you can direct some business my way.)
- 5) Can you believe Tiger? (Now there's something I care about, but the wife is only five feet away.)