

ProjectFun 2011

The 21tiger guide to the greatest social network ever.

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Preface

The drumbeats throb and pulse, and the strobe lights flash, as my choppy robotic steps past the bar catch the eye of a few young partygoers. One of them sticks out her tongue and stops me in my tracks. The house music approaches a climax, decibels are sweaty high--there is no talking allowed at this club. The girl starts flailing her arms as she spins and spins, making a flip book animation of herself. Pink. Yellow. Deep Blue. Her eyes flash as she checks me again, and starts dancing in front of me, more aggressively. Hm. My friends can wait--this girl is fun, but I can't focus on her, or her friend will get lonely. Ah, decisions, decisions.

I used to loathe these people, I used to mock people who came to these kind of places. Why am I here? Have I sold out, for a few phone numbers or some rydalin and ecstasy fueled bender with some Fake ID-toting teenybopper? I haven't sold out at all. This is me, having fun, and meeting people. I never thought it could be this easy. How did I do it? How did my attitude change?

The paradox is that we've focused on work up to this point, and strolling into a club to talk business is a boring move. You need to have that stuff handled to get to this point, but once you enter a house party or bar, you have to leave that stuff at the door. It's like a raft that gets you across a river. Once you cross, you can leave the raft by the shore. This is about having fun, and sharing that with others. For short term relationships and one night stands, just the two nights books are needed. For the long term fulfilling relationships (like marriage), both days and nights are needed.

When we picture ourselves as wealthy, we're always imagining spending money on gifts for our friends and loved ones, taking them on trips around the world. You don't see rap videos with 50 Cent partying alone, right? Of course not. The message is clear: first you get the money, then you get the power, then you get love. Well, it turns out Scarface was never intended to be a role model back then, so where do friends come from? They don't fall out of the sky. They're attracted to the most obvious thing in the world: small talk.

Jerks, A-holes, and other Famous People

Imagine a group of kids waiting at a bus stop: they are mostly loners, and a few pairs of friends, and then on the side there's a group of four guys-- they're laughing and telling stories, maybe they're playing on the basketball or football team. A high testosterone group. How are they affecting the other dozen people waiting for the bus?

The male students behind them think they're loud and annoying, and one English quiet boy think to himself, "In 5 years I'll be a lawyer and you jerks will be shining my shoes," but what that angry kid doesn't get is that social skills mean power everywhere. Even if those guys don't have law degrees, they'll probably have social power wherever they go. Furthermore, they'll probably say, fuck it, and just get a degree in something like music, art, English, and get a decent paying job with that. They'll find other ways to make money, maybe start a business (like a snowboard company, etc)-- it doesn't matter. To them, *the only power is social power*.

You see, it's not that cool guys are trying to be *dumb*, its just that the under-confident guys *try hard to be good* by reading and being smart-ass. It's about confidence, its not about brains. Being cool means naturally being cool without lifting a finger. And being uncool, means working super hard to overcompensate (and that can be done in many ways).

Back to the scene: the women are stealing glances at the four guys. Maybe these women have heard of these guys, maybe not. But there is a definite testosterone vibe coming off these boys, and that's what is having such a huge effect. The men are having fun, and that's even more attractive. The women know that these guys have something called social status (social value) because they know people, are good with people, and have fun social lives. These are the guys girls love, because they bring with them so much social value. The men are basically loudly advertising that they have high energy levels, high social value and interesting lives; those energy levels, socially, mean more than any car, salary, or six pack. That's how we're wired.

As the women steal glances, the quiet men in the background take note. As the girls are getting more interested in these jock/social guys, and the quiet guys are silently freaking out: "*Oh... she keeps looking at him... aw.. She's so hot! Damn! What can I do to get her...It's not fair*"

The 'it's not fair' complaint is not just for men, everyone who doesn't understand social dynamics will do this. Let me break down a few of the best complaints and how I would respond to them. The truth is, whether it's a man or a woman, it comes down to a very academically intelligent person who gets A's in school, but doesn't know the first thing about social value. It's their inability to ask questions on this subject (or find answers in textbooks) that hurts them the most.

Geek Myth	Reality
<i>"It's not fair that the women are randomly attracted to those guys"</i>	<i>It's not random at all. The cool guys are doing something, and offering something very valuable</i>
<i>"It's not fair that the guys are so physically bigger/strong"</i>	<i>It's not luck, they're just eating more protein and working out more than you are</i>
<i>"It's not fair that those guys are considered cool, and I'm not. Is it my clothes? My hair? What??"</i>	<i>They're not 'cool,' they're just more fun to be around than you are. That has nothing to do with genetics, and almost nothing to do with appearance.</i>
<i>"Why are women attracted to assholes like that? I've heard stories of the awful things that guy's done!"</i>	<i>The guys aren't assholes, they just have such an abundant view of the world, sometimes they cheat on their girlfriends. They make mistakes too, but are just as self-interested as you are. Their treatment of you is just a male version of what women are doing to you</i>
<i>"Ah...Women are crazy bitches"</i>	<i>Women see little social value in you, so they don't spend their valuable free time on you. Any kind of resentment or hatred of women is misplaced. Instead of hating Art History, you learn it. When you've learned it, you start to like it. Same thing applies here.</i>

Because the angry guy fundamentally misunderstands value in a social context, he never gets the girl (or the social life) he always wanted, and usually settles for hanging out with other like minded folks. Nothing wrong with that, except, it's a lack of education, that leads to unneeded pain and frustration. Be very careful how you treat those 'cool people'... they're probably not that bad, but in your view, they are caricatures of TV show characters ("Hi, I'm Football guy...Durrrrr" or "Hi, I'm shopping girl! Tee hee!") because that's the only way you can understand the amazing social intricacies that are going on here. Understanding the social interactions take a new perspective on value. The goal is fun.

Habits

Where did you meet your top 5 best friends? Were you classmates, or members of a fraternity? Did your parents introduce you? Maybe you were the only two kids on your street growing up. Write down 5 friends, and what experiences led to your friendship.

Say Yes.

In 2008, there was a goofy romantic comedy called “Yes Man,” (based on a great book by Danny Wallace) in which a bum of a dude, played by plastic funny man Jim Carrey, turns his life around by saying ‘yes’ to every invitation or question asked of him. This was, of course, the opposite of what he’d been doing before (much to the bummertude of his friends). So in George Kostanzian fashion, he ends up turning his whole life around.

Of course this is taken to extremes for comedic effect, but many moviegoers came out of the movie, with a new look on life. I wonder if it’s possible to throw caution to the wind and just say ‘Yes’ to everything. When we say ‘No’ all the time, what we’re doing is giving in, and realizing (literally, making real) our negative thoughts.

When we go out and have a good time, we’re realizing our positive thoughts. So who do you think has more fun, positive people or negative people? Right. Negative people are poisonous to be around. So when’s the last time you said No? What was it? Did you cancel dinner plans with someone because you were too lazy? Did you not go to a party invite, because you suspected that someone you don’t like would be attending? It’s real easy to justify these things, just like it’s real easy to justify them in a positive way too.

Justifying our emotional decisions is a major part of the brains processing of emotions! In a sense, since there’s a logical reason for *doing anything*, logic and reason are meaningless. You literally could come up with any number of reasons for going outside right now, stark naked and jumping into your neighbors Swimming pool. It’s a matter of which side you intentionally listen to, that matters. You’ve made a strong decision either way. As it turns out, people who do goofy pranks, and hold crazy parties, aren’t necessarily affirming that they love to swim naked, or love to play Poker naked, what they’re affirming is that *they all love to say yes*. The conditions, and the manner in which they express it are just details. Everyone knows the rational reasons behind a yes and no argument, they just insist on being positive.

So what about you? I’m going to assume you have some friends from work, or some friends from school. Everyone does. It’s a matter of how we treat these people. It’s funny, so many people grow up looking at the ‘beautiful people’ with envy, resentment, but if someone invites me out to a party and I say no, they’re not the assholes, I’m being the asshole. Just remember, your current social life might not necessarily reflect all the opportunities around you. Start saying yes.

Habits

No matter how much we love our friends, and want to be popular, if we’re siding with our negative brain, we’re going to end up pushing them away. Try to go for a whole hour today without saying No. Remember, there are conditions and circumstances to justify either a yes or a no, it’s just a matter of insisting on being positive.

B.Y.O.F (Bring Your Own Fun)

So if self-reflection and changing some of your negative tendencies allows you to get back to a *normal perception of other people*, what is it that tends to attract people to you, because it isn't, "Let's invite Mike, he's normal/average." This may be a totally new concept (it was an alternate reality for me!), but you need to bring something to the party. You need to bring a fun mood, and ideally, some fun people with you.

In much the same way that you can't donate to charities without money, you can't participate in a party without bringing fun. Fun is the currency. Fun is the juice.

So here's the paradox. Just as much as it feels great to give money to a charity you care about, it feels great to empower and enable fun amongst your friends (and total strangers). It's an incredible feeling, some kind of crazy math, when you can make others feel great, or introduce two people who are totally on the same wavelength, and they just hit it off (romantically or as friends).

It's paradoxical, because it's tempting to go to, say, a house party, and just think about yourself (people often say, "We'll go for 20 mins and if it's lame, we'll leave" not "We'll go for 20 mins and if it's lame, we'll make it more fun"). If you're just focused on taking, taking, taking, then the people around you don't benefit at all from your presence. In fact, if you go to a house party, or a birthday party, just to collect phone numbers, people are going to catch on pretty quickly. Do that long enough, and people will stop begging you to come.

If you're known as a guy who makes events more fun, or activities more engaging, then you'll get invited out, because the host and the other partygoers *stand to benefit* from you being there.

Of course, showing up to a party and being fun and friendly can only be surpassed by, showing up, being fun, and bringing lots of cool fun people with you, (and energy/ alcohol/food/games/stuff to do). In sports, there's a stat called Plus Minus (denoted as +/-) which means, when a certain player is in the game, does the team's score go up or down. It's a great way of holistically measuring all the little things a player does, whether it's offense or defense, to improve the odds of success for his/her team. Think in terms of Plus Minus: when you're at the party, is the party improved, or does it suffer because of what you're doing or saying. Up your Plus Minus, and you'll start getting invited to a ton of cool parties.

So how to get started? You start by giving kindness, as an extension of the Charity and Philanthropy work you did in the previous book. People will gravitate towards you. No matter where you are, if you're going shopping, if you're in an elevator, people will say, "Oh yeah, I know that guy, that's Mike, he's cool, a great guy." Just think of yourself as getting more energetic and warm everyday. Think back to the work you did with Passion--you found something you love to do and you made it part of your daily or weekly routine. That is the source of your energy and charisma, not the jeans you're

wearing, some new tattoo you just got. The reason you feel great going out is because it's fun to share that energy with the world. You are not meant to be an enlightened hermit but carry that light with you. If you don't have that passionate energy, you must go back and read *Passion*, and cultivate that. The main reason some people feel clueless, or uncomfortable in social settings, is because they aren't bringing energy with them.

When someone of very low energy approaches us at a party, we feel cold, we want them to leave because they're bringing us down. The most polite way to do that is to ignore or at least not encourage those of super-low energy levels. Don't let that happen to you! As long as you have that reliable source of passion, having more fun when you're out, is about taking care of people. Don't just focus on the few people you know, make a point of meeting everyone in the venue.

There's a great line from the 1995 Vegas Mob movie *Casino*, describing the voluptuous hustler Ginger (played by Sharon Stone):

"She was one of the best known...best liked and most respected hustlers in town. She knew how to take care of people, that's that Vegas was all about."

We like people that enable us to have a good time. Those are our friends, and when someone stops enabling that, they stop being our friend. While Ginger was going around giving her friends money, your goal is to give people a good time. Enable people to have fun by enabling them to talk. How do your friends want to have fun? They want to party with hot girls and fun guys. Be fun. Play games. Call up your friends and say, "I wanna hit the Go Karts tonight after work, let's grab some more people." Put out mass emails to fun people you already know, and urge them to bring guests, to events you're putting on. In that list include the coolest, most attractive, highest quality men and women in your area. Use that as a base, and as you meet more people you can add them to that list.

When you go out, go out with the intention of having fun, and letting other people have fun, and sharing your energy around, not just with people you think can 'help you become popular,' but with everyone. Remember the following phrase: no strings attached. When you tell a joke, don't get 'angry' if people don't laugh their asses off. Doing so reveals quite obviously that you are only doing stuff to get their approval. Don't compliment people when you don't mean it. Don't use your words, and your personality to manipulate people into being around you. Instead, use them as a platform for giving fun, energy, and love. This way, it's not an if/then equation, you always win. Also, with all this talk of energy levels and love, I almost forgot something massive: don't say a single negative word about people, no matter how 'uncool' you may think they are. Putting other people down is lame, because bystanders will suspect that when they're not around, you'll say bad stuff about them too! Here's a thought, say positive things about people who aren't around. Let them hear the good news from someone else--it'll mean more to them.

One of the best exercises you can do, is think back to your high school days, and think about the guys that were the most popular. They probably played sports, but they also goofed around too. None of those guys were 100% jocks. None of them were 1-trick ponies. They had a few different things going for them. For me, there were guys that were involved in the school (e.g.. school politics, class president, etc), and guys that were great at sports, and guys that were funny, and good at telling stories, and making people laugh. The most popular guys in the school did all three.

At the time, I was kind of a class clown, I liked to kid around, and make smart-ass comments in school, but I was nowhere near these guys when it came to sports, it always baffled me why that made such a difference. A group of guys fighting over a football? Come on. I love sports, but, why did not having that make me less popular. Basically I had one of the two aspects. I was funny, and for that, I met people, and we liked to joke around, but I lacked the leadership quality, the pure macho testosterone that all the sports guys had. I was too soft.

The gym rats and jocks with no personality were pretty much the opposite: they were pure testosterone, which can get a little crazy sometimes. Being in between those two extremes is the key. Being a strong leader, and knowing what you want, and expressing it, while still knowing how to have a good time and be playful. Combining those two is key. Yes, you can tell people what to do (instead of ask) they'll like it if you soften it with a fun personality. That's the subtle balance. You must have both. Remember, all laugh and no leadership, and you're a clown. All leadership, and no laughing, and you're a steroid-infused monster. In the middle, you are a fun cool person to hang out with.

Go out and focus on having and maximizing the fun you have. Do not engage in approval seeking behavior. No matter how subtle you think it is! Make a conscious effort to detect when you are saying something to seek approval. Instead, just focus on doing whatever makes you happy. Smile, laugh and Enjoy interacting with people. Fun is the secret ingredient, that overly logical geeks like me forget! Always have a plan of fun places to go that night.

Habits

On the scale between funny (humor) and dominant (leadership) where do you put yourself? Where did you put yourself in high school? How do you think that affected your social life?

Blah Blah Blah...is Everything

Back in University, I registered for a 'Economics Discussion' course. No one knew what the course was about, but we registered because it fit into our schedules and we, of course, needed the credit. When we sat down on the first day, the Prof revealed the topic we'd be studying for the rest of the semester: Social Economics.

We were puzzled. What did the things have to do with one another? I think that was the point. Over the next several weeks, we discussed why various elements of pop culture have social value, and why certain professions pay more for this value (e.g.. basketball star, Hollywood actor).

One of the fundamental insights I got from this course was that we are social creatures. Much of our social behavior is dictated by our need, our want, to talk. Believe it or not, all the talking you do with your colleagues and friends, is one of our most basic needs. And when we're deciding what to do for fun, we end up choosing things that can propel us into more engaging and interesting conversations. Who knew?

So what are people talking about? Is it interesting? It is intelligent? Are people debating the nature of existence, or sharing their favorite Shakespeare quotes?

Not quite.

Beyond my own subjective view of 'interesting topics' I thought I'd look to the masses to see what was 'interesting'. On the microblogging site Twitter, of course, the trending topics give us a clue. At the time of this writing, this was trending on Twitter:

#lasttimethecavswon (The Cleveland Cavaliers had just lost their star player the year before and were now in rebuilding mode. Sports.)

#idontunderstandwhy (people were asking ironic/funny crazy questions that everyone seems to ask, like, 'I don't understand why guys cheat on their girls, only to hook up with someone 10 times worse', or 'I told my GF to call me 15mins ago and she still hasn't called me. Relationships. Funny Seinfeldian observations)

#iheard (users get to drop some knowledge, by sharing speculation about the future or gossip. Since it's the future, no one's right and no one's wrong. 'i heard if you tweet it, it will come true' "I heard that if a girl can dance, she's great in bed'. These are almost like urban myths, the point is comedy.)

Femme Fatale (Pop Idol Britney Spears had a new album out. Her army of supporters were putting the word out. Music has social currency. But why?)

BornThisWayFriday(Another Pop star, Lady Gaga, would be releasing a new single this week on Friday. Once again, people feel the urge to tell all their friends about music they love.)

Rock Chalk Jayhawk. This is in reference to the University of Kansas Basketball Team. They'd just played a game against Missouri Tigers. I guess they won.

Angelo Reyes. The passing of a politician from another country (Philippines) made headlines, and millions heard about it first on Twitter. The circumstances of his death were debated by many. File this one under Tragedy and Drama.

So what is interesting? What are some threads in all these stories?

- Sports. We love talking about sports because of the characters, the extreme personalities and the conflict.
- Human Psychology. We all find it interesting, because we find ourselves interesting. Especially mysterious/funny quirks that we all do, but don't quite know why. Again, Seinfeld made his fortune tapping into this inward looking curiosity we all share.
- Gossip. Gossip becomes gossip when you have unsubstantiated news. Gossiping about your friends is considered in poor taste. Gossiping about celebrities is almost as bad. But people find it irresistible.
- Music. Old music is interesting, but new music is extremely interesting, especially if it's new sounds or new artists. Music is popular because listening to music and dancing to music (and everything else) is fun. Music that is dark, depressing need not apply here.
- Rivalries. We see a lot of these in Sports and Business. Rivalries are interesting because they give color and plot-lines and characters to otherwise meaningless activities. Without story, there would be little interesting about the Lakers versus the Celtics. Rivalries are great, because the stories are great, and the latest bouts are always exciting. Here the tension and conflict is key.
- Controversy. Why is controversy so interesting? Because there's no one right answer. There are groups on either side of an argument, debating something very complex. Just ask a few people about abortion and you'll see amazing differences. Don't do this unless you're ready for a fight. One of the reasons it's hard to 'end' an argument like this, is because you're debating something either theoretical, hypothetical, or moralistic. Since the argument is so ethereal and nebulous, coming to a 'right answer' takes a while. But that's okay, because people love to talk, even when they're fighting.
- Celebrities. The great thing about celebrities is that they're famous. I know, that sounds self-evident, but it turns out the most interesting thing about celebrities is that everyone knows who they are, making them great topics for conversation. All we need is for a celeb to *do something interesting* (not as common as you might think), and suddenly you have a great story, and an audience that wants to hear it. Suggestions include Charlie Sheen, Sarah Palin, or Lindsay Lohan.

Again, anything that gets people talking is interesting. This may seem obvious (why would I talk about something boring), but it's actually the talking part that's interesting, the act of talking and sharing ideas, not the topic itself. Interesting topics are only interesting because they are the basis for long hotly-debated super engaging conversations.

As such, you may love your stamp collection, but socially it has zero value, because it's not interesting to talk about. What about a TV show? Well, if the characters are cool, funny, crazy, unbelievable, then it's worth talking about. If no one you know is watching that show, there's nothing interesting to them about it, because they can't tell you what they think of it. People don't want to hear you talk, *they want you to give them something to talk about.*

Yes I'm implying here that when you go to a house party or barbecue, you should enable people to talk. And no, 'What's up?' doesn't really count. Also, getting good at story telling is huge. I recently started listening to a podcast by Adam Carolla (formerly of 'The Man Show'). Carolla's superpower is the ability to talk and talk and talk with almost no 'material'. He goes around the country, doing standup, but doesn't really prepare his set, or do 'bits', he just rants and raves about things he thinks are funny and interesting. It's all in his head. Why do people pay to see him? Because he's a master storyteller. Regardless of the subject matter, he knows how to slowly set up the premise, build tension, and deliver a killer ending. Do that, and your friends, relatives, lovers, and 7-11 checkout girls will respond.

But to be a great story teller, you gotta get out of the house. You gotta get out there and notice interesting people, interesting things. You gotta notice new buildings and new stores in your neighborhood. You gotta notice changes, and try to understand them, to comment on them. That's what people do.

One of the themes that came up in the Twitter search was Sports. Why the heck are sports so popular anyway? *Because sports are really about stories.*

Obviously no one cares about the physical act of putting a ball through a hoop, or hitting something the size of an Orange over a fence. None of these things matter, but become the backdrop for *tremendous athleticism*, strategy and charisma. Without story, Sports would be meaningless.

A typical sports conversation with my brothers/friends starts off like this:

"So we didn't get a chance to talk about the Deron Williams trade."

"Oh yeah! Well Utah needs some size up front, and DW hated it in that town anyway."

"Well putting him in Jersey means he's a lock for the All Star Game..."

"I wouldn't be too sure about that..." and so on.. *Backstory is everything.*

See what's happening here? "*We didn't get a chance to talk about the XYZ*" you have to fundamentally understand that the way people (mostly men) relate to sports is by talking about it. We love talking about it. We like playing it, and enjoy watching it, but mostly, we just love to talk sports. We love to speculate, we love to argue, we love to compare obscure stats, and debate which team deserved to win, and which player meant the most, and who's going to be big in 5 years and who's overrated, and hasn't earn a dime of his new \$80 million contract.

These are stories, and in talking about this stuff, we get to be experts, we get to be managers, we get to be statisticians, gamblers, and underdogs. *We get to win*, without lifting a finger, and feel the drama of a playoff series without putting on a jockstrap. We predict the future, and if we were wrong, our friends will rub it in our faces, and if we're right, we'll be champions. For men, watching sports is not a distraction or a waste of time, its where we go to get social currency. It gives us ammo to continue the discussion.

Outside of sports, there are great characters and great personalities all over the world. If you want to be popular, if you want to be fun, you have to give people something to talk about. Instead of talking to people about their jobs (most people are bored by this), their background (ditto), get people to tell you a story. To do that, you have to be sincerely and genuinely interested in other people, and ask the kind of setup questions that lead to those stories. It's that easy. The story is already there, you just have to say the right words, to help discover it. This is the secret to being a great conversationalist.

Habits

Your homework is to start listening to funny and interesting radio shows/podcasts. Go pick up standup DVDs from George Lopez, Russell Peters, Jerry Seinfeld, and Dave Chappelle. Notice how they set up the joke. Notice how they *continue* the joke. Notice the transitions between sets. Each of these stories/jokes has been told thousands of times, and has been *honed to perfection*. How and why are the jokes interesting? Note the audience, and the racial background of each. How does it make the joke more or less funny? How can you learn from that, and use it when hanging out with your friends or meeting people for the first time?

He knows lots of Chicks.

It's very tempting, when you start going out to bars and clubs, to flirt. In fact, there are some people (are you sitting down?) who only go out to flirt. Flirting, collecting numbers, moving people to the dance floor, and getting some action, is a natural fun part of life.

But I have to insist, while working through this book, that you try to meet friends. One of the reasons I wrote this book was because it was much easier for me to find a one night stand than it was to meet platonic friends.

Especially female friends. For some reason I found the 'female friend' baffling. How to joke around with her. If I wasn't attracted to her, I reasoned, what's the point? I was so singularly minded (as are millions of young people) that I just couldn't justify chatting up some girl I didn't envision myself sleeping with. Either she was too tall, too short, too nerdy, not nerdy enough, there was a huge portion of women that fit into this category. And I was being a total snob to them. Not cool. Especially when you meet your friends' new girlfriends. How to maintain good rapport and actually give value to someone like that? If you don't figure this out, you will be useless at a dinner party or social event.

Let's assume, for a moment, that these are single women you're not attracted to. One way you can really perk them up, is by flirting with them in a fun way, giving them compliments that don't in any way suggest you want to take them home. Also, you can put up one of your male friends (say something nice about one of your buddies to impress him with other women) who you think would like her. This is how men help each other out.

[Note: Not only can this advice be applied to women who have platonic male friends, it can be applied to any combination of men/women and sexual orientations. Just change the roles around.]

As for men/women who already have boyfriend/girlfriend or are married, there should be no sexual tension, and no 'concern' on your part that they're attracted to you. They're not. They'll be sleeping with their spouse in a few hours. Just practice your storytelling skills on them, and when you're done, practice asking good questions, to prompt her to tell you a great story. That's your job. That's your role. For this exercise, consider a tattoo that reads, "Just because you're not going to be having sex with this person, doesn't mean they are meaningless to you, you monkey". But seriously, make her climax with laughter, and you'll be all the better for it. Who knows, maybe if she likes you she'll introduce you to someone who *is* your type.

Anyway, one more thing I want to mention here: the fact that I (and many others) viewed members of the opposite sex as sexual opportunities, might explain why we could be having trouble meeting platonic friends. You know. The friend you don't make out with at the movies? If you know some girls, just pocket them as platonic female friends. Don't

worry, there are plenty of other girls out there. And you're gonna need all the female friends to be vouching for you later on. And you'll need them to introduce to some of your guy friends.

Resist the urge to hit on these girls. Because even if you do try to hit on them (before you have a full social life in place), here's what's going to happen: you'll go on a few dates. The usual. Movies. Walks. Games. Food. Drinks. Dancing. And after a while (e.g.. 2 dates), she's gonna start wondering where your boys are. Where are your friends? Are you hiding them from her? If you don't introduce them to her (in her mind: either because they're nuts, she's not special to you, or you don't have any friends), the energy level in the relationship is gonna nosedive, and very quickly her friends are going to tell her to lose you. Here's the thing: if you don't have any platonic friends (buddies, e.g.. a life), she won't be your girl, she'll drop back to just being a friend. She wants to join your fun life, not be the centre of your nightmare.

Habits

Scroll through your phone contact list and see if you have any platonic friends of the opposite sex. You do? Great. When's the last time you saw them?

The Online Social Networking Diet

So what comes first, the chicken or the egg? The party or the party animal? Actually it starts with going out solo. Pushing yourself to go out. This sounds crazy to most people.

*Who would you talk to, if you went out alone? Other people.
How can you possibly have fun by yourself? Doing fun things.
Won't people laugh at me and pick on me for being there alone? No. You're more likely to come across as rude than 'a geek' for being there solo. However, you've made the effort to leave the Xbox controllers at home and get out of the house. So the combination is intriguing, not pathetic.*

We're also going to put a stop to social networking (Facebook, MySpace and 300 other online friend networks) for a while. Why? Because you're getting the illusion of being social without actually doing anything fun. It's making you boring, and giving you the false sense of what it means to do fun things and be social.

For each of your accounts, log in, and shut off the email notifications. This means you won't get any 'reminders' on the social network sites. Delete accounts on sites you barely use. Look, Social Networking is draining your desire for real friendship, so just cut it out altogether. If you're lonely, get out and meet some friends, hit a networking event, or just hit the bar or coffee shop. Too much time spent on (admittedly addictive) social networking sites will screw up the way you view real people. Not only does it desensitize you to being 'rude' to others, it actually gives you the hint of 'social' without the experience, putting you in the awkward position of spending countless hours with 'people' when you can't tell any fun or interesting stories about it because there's nothing exciting or engaging a story of a few friends chatting on MSN. Time to Unplug.

Habits

If you're having trouble finding cool cafes restaurants and bars in your area, check some of the local listings, pick up the Lifestyle section of the local paper, and go check out some of the places that sound cool to you. I want to emphasize here, it's only cool if it's cool *to you*. If you don't like the place, don't go back. You want to be hanging out in places that suit you, and that you enjoy.

ProjectFun

Many new graduates and young workers these days relocate to bigger cities and bigger markets. Imagine if you got a job offer to manage a new office in Osaka, Nanjing, or Chicago. Are you going to turn it down, because all your friends live in your hometown? Look, there are amazing opportunities out there and amazing people for you to meet. You can't pass up the amazing career move, so you take the job, after a few crazy weeks of settling in, you start going out for dinner and drinks with a few staff at the office. They're a little nervous around you and make stilted conversation. You call home to talk with your old friends, and you feel a little homesick. Your social circle has effectively shrunk to 1.

This happens all over the world, and it's not a problem as long as you know how to build your social network again (ahem, I'm talking about real people here). Just imagine if you could drop into any city in the world, and very quickly build a social circle, and have a core base. From there you could start networking and build a life for yourself. This is why I wrote this book. It is an amazing skill, and can be done.

So let's start from scratch and do just that. If you are new in town, you can use that as an opener (e.g.. "Yeah, I just moved here from Seoul, Vegas, Transylvania, etc..I'm new in town.."). No one will give you shit for it. In fact, it's an awesome conversation starter.

In fact, despite living in China for a number of years, I decided to rebuild my social life as well:

It was New Year's Day. I woke up, and rubbed my eyes. Sure I slept in, and sure I had some wine the night before, but there was no story to tell. I was invited to a legit NYE party by a girl I'd talked to a few times online, but found a way to weasel out of it. I thought it would be uncomfortable if people asked 'how do you know each other'. My actual plan was to go for drinks with this other girl, but she called me about an hour before to explain that she had made plans. She thought we were going out *New Years Day*. Argh. I felt like such a fool to have left my New Years Eve plans up to such pathetically frail and meaningless odds. Hanging out with two women I barely knew. I could have walked into any bar in the city, and got pissed, and met some cool people, (or ask where my friends were going and tag along), but I didn't. I had some food and watched Michael J. Fox hit puberty in the 1986 classic *Teen Wolf*.

I wish I was joking.

As I lied there in bed, I was faced with the Captain Obvious sledgehammer coming down on top of my head like a ton of bricks (how many metaphors is that?): I had an overly negative view not just of nightclubs, but of going out and meeting people in general. Even the people that I knew, I didn't want to go out with, I was always worried they'd ask me some question, and I'd be embarrassed with the answer; something like, "What'd you do last weekend?" or "Who do you usually hang out with?" The problem was that I was fundamentally thinking in terms of *pleasing people*, by trying to give an

impressive answer. When the prospect of going out sounded like work, I opted to say in my warm apartment, watch movies, have some wine, and try to make the best of it.

I was uncomfortable with the prospect of going to a club, or a bar. Obviously I'd been to bars and clubs a million times, but almost never felt 'at home' in one. I kind of looked down on people who chased women in bars (yet I was content to do the very same online). I felt like somehow, I, as an intellectual was great at dating women, but sucked in bars/clubs. But truthfully, my only 'success' in dating women was that of volume. I generally took women that I met online, out to restaurants (yawn) or playing pool, and then if things went well, great. But my batting average was pretty horrendous. And worst of all, if I wasn't getting sex, and wasn't having fun, then I viewed the night as a waste.

There's that word again: if I could have *fun*, my 'batting average' with women would go up, I knew that. Going out for dinner isn't something you do because it's fun, it's something you do because you think that's *what I thought people were supposed to do on dates*. More importantly, and more germane to this eBook, if I could actually have fun in a nightclub or bar, then that would fix my other problem too-- wasting time online looking for dates (e.g.. social networking sites). I had to come up with a way to motivate myself to go out more, and with the express focus on having fun. If I could do that, everything else should fall into place.

I figured my problem was that I had no motivation to go out. After all, I'd been meeting women on dating sites, and in day to day life, I considered the bar/clubs as 'not worth the energy/effort.' After all, why go to a fun place, when you're just trying to collect phone numbers. My social life was an efficient machine, but the design sucked.

I also decided that the people going out to bars and clubs are often in huge groups of friends, and the fun they're having would naturally go up depending on the number of friends they're with. We've all been out to a restaurant with one friend, or on a date: the conversation is linear, and very private. When you go out with a bunch of people, there are almost always 3 or 4 conversations going on at the same time, and people jump in and out of them. It's totally ADD. And it's loud because you have to talk over other people. And it's fun because as people jump into your conversation, you can bring them up to speed and crack jokes, and get more opinions, etc. I decided that the key to having a ton of fun was to *go out with a lot of people*.

Wait, it's a Catch 22. How can you do that if you don't know anyone? You can't. You just have to go out and meet people. Well, as long as we're trying to stamp out a bad online addiction, we may as well prop up a good one.

Much like my 21tiger blog was based on a Wordpress Engine, and was motivating me to read and write (the original purpose of the blog), perhaps I could use that model for something more nuanced: fixing my social life? I thought about doing another blog, using a similar model, which would track my social experimentation, but instead of posting book reviews, I would post field reports (whilst maintaining anonymity of my friends, and toning down the locker room brag of PUA field reports). Instead of posting

them chronologically, like a standard blog, I would group reports of similar venue types together, and try to show the difference between going out solo and going out in groups of various sizes. It was an experiment. The objective therefore, was to do a report in each of these different venues, and learn to feel how to create these experiences wherever you go. Solve that, I figured, and you'll never be socially stumped again.

Enter 21Projectfun.wordpress.com

For several months, I forced myself to go out, checking out various clubs and restaurants and other venues around the city, and writing reports on what I did, and who I was with. Here's the key: I don't care about the name of the club, I don't really care where the venue is. All I care about is what category of venue it is, and how many people I was with. I could go out solo, meet a couple people, and then go home alone: that's a 3some.

What is the point of these reports? Well I set out to prove my original theory: that the same guy who's bored at Club X, can be mildly amused if he's with a friend, and having the time of his life if he's with 8 people. It seems so obvious as to be a pointless exercise, but here's the thing: most people use this self-evidence as an excuse to never go out alone. And the point of the Blog is to get you out of the house. Systematically get you out of the house, and in a good mood every time, whether you're alone, or with friends.

So if I check out 21projectfunblog right now, I see a few short reports, for each venue, if you scroll down, it looks like there's only about six posts. Each one generically titled, like 'Bar', 'Coffee Shop'.

If you don't know where is 'hot' to go, let me give you a hint. All Coffee shops are basically like all other coffee shops. You only really need to know one good one. Grab whatever fun book you're reading now, and go to your favorite coffee shop. 'Where' your going has never been less relevant. By going through this process, we are setting out to prove that.

If it's a nightclub, same thing. Got a favorite place? Just go. Certain places are good on certain nights, eventually you'll find out where's good. There should be ONE place you want to go. And go. If you don't know anybody, just go alone. That' brings us to our next point.

If you don't know who else is going send out a text message (via multiple recipient texting, mass texting) telling your friends where you're going. If they're already out somewhere you can join them. If they're not, just invite them to join you. If they come, great, if not, no problem. Either way, you can still have a great time. I'd put it this way. If your friends can't come. Then for this night, you effectively have no friends, because they're not with you. When this happens, you can't feel helpless. You shouldn't be scared of talking to new people. In a way, actually knowing people doesn't matter,

because you're totally surrounded by people (especially in a huge city like Shanghai or New York).

The difference between knowing someone and not knowing them, often comes down to a single word: "Hi". Once you go to a bar, or coffee shop and start meeting people, you realize that all the people you met before, in the previous 20 or so years leading up to this day, they don't really matter right now. This is the breakthrough that separates the introverts from the extroverts. Introverts think they need a sparkling "social resume" every time they meet someone. The truth is, meeting someone in such a context is boring, and conversation about all the stuff you did (job, school, etc) is mind-numbingly boring. If you meet someone who basically lives in the moment, you feel alive and energized. That's the kind of impression you want to have on people. If you focus on that, don't worry, in time people will be drawn to you.

So you grab a book and head out to the Coffee shop a few blocks down the street. You walk in and notice a few things:

There are solos everywhere. Some people come to coffee shops because they're fun places to relax. Some people come to study. Some people are reading novels, etc. And some people actually come for the coffee. Some people are there with their friends, and some are there with business associates (a popular place to have introductory job interviews).

Here's the thing: if I know my friend from work, we're most likely not talking about weekly sales reports. If we are, we are incredibly boring people, and you wouldn't want to know us anyway. People are naturally averse to discussing (after a full day's work) such mundane topics. People want to talk about things that are passionate. In other words, the context of the relationship is way overrated. Guys love talking about sports. If I meet someone who works in the auto industry and I'm working at Pixar, we should be able to have a conversation, despite neither of us being experts in the each other's respective field.

You go in, and grab a drink (I'm assuming you're eating healthy, go easy on the double chocolate muffins), and sit down with your book. Now here's the thing, you're seemingly doing something slightly anti-social (reading) in a very public and social setting. But there's something else going on. The people seated around you are noticing you.

They noticed your clothes and your haircut when you walked in. They noticed the expression on your face. They noticed the way you spoke to the girl at the counter (in my case, they noticed I could speak a little Chinese, or maybe they heard my accented Canadian English). No matter how hard you try, you're putting signals out. Check out 21projectfun.wordpress.com for a detailed guide, and examples of a few of my reports. You can get started in just a few clicks. Totally free.

Habits

Write down the last three times you remember speaking to a stranger in a social setting. How did it go? If it was in any of the following venues--Pool Hall, Restaurant, Movie Theatre, Coffee Shop, House Party, Bar/Night Club--enter those reports on your own 21project fun blog (picking a name, and design you think is cool, of course). No need to use actual names, and of course you can make the blog private (it won't even be picked up by search engines, etc). You may choose to 'open it up' later.

Networking Events.

In addition to all the various places you can go, as you start filling out your ProjectFun page, there are countless work-related events that, on the surface, seem to be incredibly dull and even cheesy. These “Networking events”, seem to be a ‘fake’ party, because as soon as you walk in you notice, it’s a room full of strangers, rattling around trying to find a business connection. You look down at your drink, “What did I just pay 30 bucks for?”, your eyes dart to the rapidly evaporating cheese tray.

Rest assured, these networking events can be awesome, they can be very profitable, and yes, they can be a ton of fun. The best way to approach these is with the knowledge that *we all want to do business with our friends*. When it comes to branching out, this could be a great place to start. Let’s take a look at a few highlights

- Many people are uncomfortable in night clubs, and networking events are much more relaxed
- There is nowhere near the noise in a nightclub. You can have great conversations, and get drunk. It really is the chattiest place on Earth.
- The people there are looking to talk to anyone. they will talk talk to you. they’re not (necessarily) looking for a date, so as long as you’re well dressed, they will enthusiastically talk to you
- these things happen every week, you can probably go to a networking event every night if you can afford it, and have the energy. You can meet a ton of people in just a few events--ideal for moving to a new city.
- You can actually get job offers, new clients, etc.
- It’s customary to give out and receive as many business cards as you can, there is absolutely zero ‘meaning’ behind getting a guy or girl’s name card (e.g.. their contact info), whereas asking for a phone number in a club has obvious implications.

Now the trick here is that while you’re going to be talking a lot about business and work-related subjects, you can try to have fun, and be yourself. These are great places to make friends and meet cool ambitious people. Remember, everyone has work to do, but that doesn’t mean they’re just business robots.. they’re people too, and if they’re good at what they do, they’re cool funny, and able to hold great conversation.

Now, even if you consider this ‘clubbing with training wheels’ there’s still a few pointers I can throw your way. Remember, it’s essentially a big room, and a bunch of well dressed men and women chatting and drinking. Within that context, you can pretty much do anything you want. Here’s a few suggestions:

- These networking events have themes, sometimes it’s wide open, but usually there’s some kind of theme (e.g.. fashion, marketing, social media). Pick one that you’re at least somewhat interested in, or has to do with your industry.

The conversations will be a lot longer, and you'll find people way more interesting if there is a shared knowledge/interest.

- Get Business Cards made. Really this is so easy to do. If your company has issued you some, great. If you need to make your own, there should be no problem. A print shop will do it at very affordable rates.
- Smile, and look like you're having a good time. I know it's easy to look like James Bond in that dashing Sport coat, but it's kind of putting people off. Just assume that anyone around you is dying to talk to you. If you smile, they might even approach you. ;)
- Snacking and Talking. Yes there's food. And its usually pretty decent, and you can get your first few approaches done, right in the line. Have you ever been to a part where you know 10+ people there? It's a blast right? The goal here is to get to that 10th contact as fast as you can. When you've done that, then the rest of the night is just a blast. Talking to people about the food (funny comments, like recommending snacks for people beside you, "I recommend the yellow Danish.. its egg flavored, very healthy".. the idea is to be playful, equally playful amongst men and women. Everyone has a sense of humor, and they'll respond positively.
- Once you talked to a handful of the guests in line for food, see if you can spot some of the 'special guests'. Usually these kind of events have a handful of VIP guests (usually indicated by special colored name tags), who have a lot to offer. They're experts in their field. Go thank them for coming, and ask a few thoughtful questions. See what they say. These people are successful and very interesting. They're really fun to talk to.
- Anyone who's alone wants to talk to you. Anyone who's in a group doesn't want you to jump in like a bull in a China shop. When in down, go for eye contact. You can pretty much walk around looking for people who are solo, smile and say, "Hi". Again, unlike a night club, there's pretty much zero chance of rejection here.
- Curiosity comes from the knowledge that you know nothing about these people. You can look at the haircut, the shoes, the bad teeth, the glasses, but at the end of the day, you're fooling yourself if you think any of those things will tell you about a person with any depth. This ends up being a real savior, because it means rather than being in a room full of stereotypes, you're in a room full of amazing stories. Especially when you're in a foreign country, just think, everyone here has a story of how they got here. And the first time you meet someone, you get to ask them about that. And they'll ask about your story too. Have fun.
- What's the goal of these interactions. The goal is to make friends with these people, and maximize the number of cool people you can meet in a fixed amount of time (these events usually go for 2-3 hours). That means once you've established that a guy or girl is interesting and fun, get their card, and let them know you'll contact them later. Go meet more people. It's not about

the number of cards you get, necessarily, that determines whether this was a successful night--its *the number of people you like*.

When you get back home you can go through your cards and see if you can remember the conversations you had. You'll probably feel quite a rush in the first couple events. To meet a ton of people in a short period of time is like social overload. But it makes you better. I remember going to a Speed Networking event a while back. Not only was there chit chat before and after the event, but the actual 'speed networking' part was much like those 'speed dating' nights you see on TV: two rows of love seats, facing each other, every 5 minutes a bell rings, and people switch seats. After doing your own person intro 6-7 times, you will be exhausted! But you are exercising social muscles and becoming more fun and interesting to talk to. It's that simple.

Habits

Do you have interesting stories related to your work? If you do it's probably because you have an interesting 'voice' or 'perspective' about the event. Storytelling skills, once again, are huge here.

How Not to Make New Friends

A while back, a friend invited me to a pickup game of basketball. This was great, because I'd stopped playing ages ago, and wanted to see just how much skill I had left. This guy was an acquaintance at best, and I didn't know any of the guys we'd be playing with. He gives me the address and I make the trek across town to where they were playing. I get in there, and right away, I'm spotted (such are the benefits of being tall and white in Asia benefits). My friend meets me and tells me to hit the bench, I'd get to play shortly. I unpack my things and sit down. The guys are a little buzzed to see a white guy, but after 30 seconds of chatter, they go back to the game. 5 minutes later I was in the game, and just wanted to help out, chip in with a few assists and rebounds. I don't want to be selfish and just start jacking up threes. So I make the extra pass. The game progresses, and I make a point of going over and cheering on the guys, even guys on opposing teams. Then the whistle goes. "Switch!"

I hit the bench. I can feel the tension mounting. It's me and a few guys, I grab a protein shake from my bag, and sip it slowly. Not saying a word. No intro. No nothing. If I don't say anything soon, it's going to start to get awkward. I'm all up in my head now. Over-thinking things. I didn't come here to play basketball, I came here to meet some new people, and now I'm suffering from a hilarious and pathetic case of...performance anxiety. On the plus side, I already had like 8 assists and a few easy buckets.

About 2 hours in, I let my friend know I'd take off early. Just getting my butt out of the house and on that court was big for me. I told him I'd see him next week. I was already planning to go to this for a couple hours and then meet some friends at a cafe a few minutes away at 3pm.

So I was starting to get 'busy'... Perhaps the difference between a shy introverted person who's all up in his head, and a gregarious 'wow is he always this friendly' fun guy, is a sincere interest in other people. Where does that come from? Well, it's actually the natural state of things. It's how humans usually behave, just look at a baby, or young toddler. They are always staring at new faces, new people, and infinitely curious about new people, new eye colors, new hairstyles, new clothes. It's the shy people who've done something to stamp out that curiosity. And they've done it with prejudice.

Here's how the shy guy thinks: *all white/black/asians/business majors/skaters/real estate agents are the same*. So because the shy guy has met one of these 'group members', he thinks he knows how every member of that 'group' is like. He assumes (for some reason) that they're all the same. It's a conclusion that seems to not have a ton of research behind it. In fact, it's downright lazy.

For example, say, like my Chinese basketball friends, saw me, a tall white guy, and thought, "Oh, you know what white people are like." that stops the conversation. They think they already know me because they noticed one thing about me (race), but there are so many other things about me *they could have generalized* (being right handed,

having blue eyes, being skinny, wearing Nikes, being Canadian). If they had generalized about my race, then they would feel no need to ask me further questions.

And here's where it really gets out of hand: If you can generalize about one trait, and each of us has anywhere from 10-100 traits and group associations, who's to say which of them, the shy guy will choose to generalize. The assumption that the shy guy makes is fundamentally flawed, and ensures that *no one around him will ever be interesting*. As a result he doesn't ask questions, and people will say he's 'quiet, timid' as he switches on his PSP and tunes out the rest of the room.

The generalization of certain traits to define someone's entire personality can lead to drastic misunderstandings. Do people from Los Angeles have common traits? Sure, some. But only in some dystopia scenario where the government controls your mind, would that affect your entire personality. So you see every new person you meet is a whole universe of interesting things, funny stories, memories, experiences, ambitions, addictions, flaws. You get the picture.

So the interest in other people absolutely requires you to not think that all black women are the same, all writers are the same, and all badminton players are the same. Once you stop viewing the world in oversimplified terms, people start getting way more interesting to you. And that leads to intense Listening Ability

When you talk to people, you don't just listen. You engage them. You look in their eyes, and wait for each word as it comes out. We all know how it feels when we're talking to a know-it-all: they cut you off, they rush to the next point, they think they know what you're about to say, and as such, multitask (either checking their phone, or checking out the coeds who just walked by). Don't be that guy/girl. Focus. Again, thinking you know what someone is going to say, is the same as thinking you know what all [arbitrary group of people] are like. You don't know. Even if you do know, you shouldn't be thinking about the next 30 seconds, you should be engaging and listening. You have so much to gain here.

In addition to the friends you meet at school, the friends you meet at work, the friends you meet at house parties, and nightclubs, I strongly urge you to pick any sport, and play it weekly. This ties in to the Passion and Health stuff, of course, but it's such a great association to have with someone: you compete against them, you work together, you communicate, you develop respect and support for each other. And after the game, everyone's hungry, and everyone will go out for dinner.

Habits

Sometimes we find talking to neighbors or family member irritating but don't have the heart to tell them. List three things other people do in conversation that annoys you. Now watch yourself over the next week: is it possible you do that stuff too?

Old Friends

On top of meeting new people, just about everyone makes a point to connect with old friends. We don't need an excuse to call our best friends. We just pick up the phone and start yapping... an hour later, you're laughing, and its almost time for dinner!! That's what we want to do everyday, or every weekend... They'll probably end up inviting you out for drinks later, or maybe to go see a movie or a club. That's how people go out. That's how people go to clubs in groups. Not the other way around
Be social, for the sake of being social, not for the *sake of getting laid*. When you cold approach, don't think about 'cold approaching'. Instead, just think about sharing good vibes and meeting new people for the hell of it.

Optional Tool for growing your network (Facebook Account Required)

Go on Facebook and do a search for the TouchGraph Application. You may have seen these kinds of tools before. It graphs the relationships between you and all your friends: mine's pretty simple, a bunch of people in the city I live, a bunch of people I went to Grad School with back in Canada, and my High School buddies (revealing, sadly, that I was a total hermit in Undergrad, when I basically went to school 12 months a year and worked a PT job at the Grocery store at night. Who knew?)

What's the point of this social graph? Firstly, you can spot randoms (anyone who doesn't fit into any of the groups neatly) and delete them. Secondly, you can spot who are the real players in your current group (TouchGraph will scale the bubbles to the number of mutual friends). Those are the people who you want to hang out with. Don't 'hang out with them on Facebook', but send them a message asking where they're going this weekend. Go out and Drink with them. These are people that know people. They must be interesting and cool people. Meet their friends. Have fun.
Having fun is vastly more important than meeting a LOT of people, and vastly more interesting than meeting a lot of naked people. Seriously.

Habits

I once heard a great tip for almost any social situation: pretend everyone else in the room is shyer than you are. In such a case, you wouldn't play it cool and wait for someone else to approach you, and you wouldn't wait for your old friends to call you either. Make the first move. Be the leader, you'll enjoy it.

Goals

Take out a sheet of paper and think about your goals. Consider your performance at work, and the way you act around people socially. How did you do in school/college? Anything you'd like to improve or get handled? Mentally, you might have trouble getting away from negative thoughts, or maybe you procrastinate, or maybe you just want the will power to read a ton of books every year, right after this one! Write down 2 super ambitious goals, and add them to the goals from the previous book...Stumped? Here's one I wrote, ages ago:

"I have high social value because I GIVE to every man and every woman in the venue. I have so much to give ---I'm an enabler of fun cool experiences."

Habits

These goals-turned-affirmations are brilliant because you can control them. Notice how strange they feel the first time you say them, and how natural it feels in the coming weeks. Get into the habit of reading these a couple times, after your morning meditation. As the weeks go by, your behavior will change. From time to time, consider the wording and revise it, as your goals evolve.

In Closing

Over time, as you go out more and flesh out your own 21projectfun blog, people will start to recognize you around your new area. You absolutely must force yourself to go out. It's going to be tempting to stay in, because you're meeting so many more people than you were before, that your ego starts kicking in and saying, "ok, it's enough, I've had enough socializing. I'm exhausted from all the hand shaking." You don't have a realistic 'baseline' for this stuff, so you have to push past this. With each day, and each night, just remember that projecting into the future, and having anxiety about the future does absolutely nothing for you. It serves only to inflame your ego. It causes hesitation, stammering, and over-analysis of something cavemen did thousands of years ago: they socialized largely with body language.

So what's the goal here? Just to fill up your schedule with clubbing and house parties? The goal is to have fun. Going out is (usually) more fun than staying indoors and watching Jeopardy, so we do that. Sharing fun activities are (usually) better with more people, so we push ourselves to do that. It's not about looking cool or popular, it's about fun.

If you haven't filled out all of the blog entries (several entries in each venue type), you're not done! See if you notice trends in your 21projectfun reports. See what happens when you walk in with a smile on your face, or walk in and sulk. What's the difference between coming to a club a 11pm and coming at 1am. What's the difference between drinking and not drinking? What's the difference when I come alone or with friends. Forget about what you think might happen. Just do it. Try a few different things out. You'll improve slightly each night, each week. And one day, when someone comes up to you and tells you they like you, and they're not sure why, you'll know that you've come a long way.

In the last book, I was hesitant at first to go to volunteering activities. I came up with many reasons why I shouldn't do it, or wasn't wanted there. And then I realized, like a ton of bricks coming down on my head: the reason I'm going isn't just to help those young kids/elderly, I'm going to prove to myself that my ego is wrong. I'm going, in effort to prove my ego wrong. So when it comes to house parties, and business networking events, go ahead and prove your own ego, your fears, your anxiety, wrong. And over time you'll expect to have fun. That's success.

In the next book, Hooking Up 2011, we'll tackle the invariable romantic relationships you'll be tempted to jump into, with all this fun you're having. By being fun, warm, passionate and outgoing, men and women are going to be throwing themselves at you. How far can you take a quick fling? Keep checking www.21tiger.com to get your hands on it.