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On Openers

1 On Openers

Maybe you have experienced this scenario before:

Him: "Hey! Why don't you go talk to that cute girl over there?"

You: "She is cute, isn't she!? But gosh, I, I just don't know what to say? I don't want to say the wrong thing and look like an idiot!"

Him: "Just say anything, go, now! Look! She's getting up and packing her stuff..."

You: "Yeah... naw... I don't know, well, she's walking away now. It's too late. Whatever. I'm such a loser."

There may be hundreds of open debates for methods of creating and developing happy, successful relationships, but this one truism is rule number one:

"You can't win, if you don't play."

That is the bottom line of bottom lines. Even the Lottery picked up that tagline. If you stay in your box, you will never form a new relationship. That's for sure. If you go to work, or to school, don't talk to anyone, then just go home to eat and sleep, and repeat the cycle all over again tomorrow, you can be sure you will get stuck in a lonely rut that is difficult to climb out of.

You have to talk to people to establish and build relationships. First just start with talking to people you know, friends and family, for practice. Then, sooner or later, you are going to have to jump the gap and do the unthinkable. Talk to a stranger or group of strangers. That's called opening, or also known as a "Cold Approach".

1.1 Origin of the Opener

The dictionary defines an "opener" as the first event in a series, as in an "opening act" for a play, or an "opening joke" for a stand-up comedian. In terms of starting a new relationship, an "opener" is generally the first thing you say to your partner. An ideal opener does achieve three goals for you:

1. It's an unthreatening approach to open the person or group up for having a conversation
2. It stirs up curiosity and captures the person or groups imagination
3. It's a springboard for additional follow-up conversational threads

Since many openers do not cover all three objectives, you want to memorize and use multiple openers so that you are able to fire off one after the other.

1.2 Examples of Openers

You probably just want to get to the good stuff, and save the theory for later, right? OK, here is a sampling of openers I can remember using recently that have yielded positive results:

- *"Ni shi zhong guo ren?"* (Which means, "Are you Chinese?", spoken in the Chinese Language. This was said as she was walking into a library.)
- *"Ex-Squeeze me, do you know where Caffè Strada is?"* (When I knew full well that Caffè Strada was in the direction we were both walking. I said this on a college campus between classes.)
- *"Marunong ka ba mag-Tagalog?"* (Which means, "Do you speak Tagalog." spoken in Tagalog, language of the Filipino people. This was said in a retail store as she was returning from the break room.)
- *"Gosh! I'm so thirsty from dancing! May I have a sip of your drink?"* (I said this in a night club.)
- *"Hablas Español?"* (Which means, 'Do you speak Spanish?' Spoken in the Spanish language. This was said to a cashier who was scanning my groceries.)

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- *"Nice boots, what's the story behind them?"* (I said this on a busy downtown sidewalk.)
- *"Oh, my God! You are SO incredibly cute!"* (This was said to a waitress while picking up an order.)
- *"Hey! I was reading in Cosmo the other day that drinking eight glasses of water really isn't as important as we've been lead to believe, do you think that's true?"* (I said this in a bar.)

I live in a multi-cultural area near San Francisco, where beautiful people from every corner of the world have come to live, so I have plenty of opportunities to use the foreign language openers mentioned. If you live in a more homogenous part of the world, then I would consider moving.

1.3 Direct versus Indirect Openers

"Going Direct" means directly expressing your romantic interest or sexual intent.

"Going Indirect" means hiding or putting your personal interests aside, and using a more platonic, friendly approach.

Of my sample openers above, all but the "cute" ones would be considered indirect.

On the issue of direct versus indirect, there are several levels of communication that can each separately either be direct or indirect:

Level 1: The words that are said.

Level 2: The vocal intonation used.

Level 3: The type of eye contact, facial expression, gestures, and body language used.

Level 4: The attitude you are feeling, and the energy you are projecting.

If you want, you can mix up direct and indirect styles on different levels. For example, I could use some words that are totally indirect and say them with either a direct or indirect vocal tonality. For example:

Example 1: *"Hey, we are so hot and stuffy in here, you wanna get some fresh air?"*
(Said in a friendly, innocent, matter-of-fact tone.)

Example 2: *"Hey, we are so hot and stuffy in here, you wanna get some fresh air?"*
(Said in a sexy, sultry, lustful tone.)

Remember that we are just talking about your opening statements or questions here, you are free to change the tone of the conversation from indirect to direct and vice-versa at any time that you feel is appropriate later in the conversation.

1.4 Situational versus Internal Openers

"Situational Openers" simply refer to observing something in the current environment and creating a comment or asking about it.

"Internal Openers" are derived from process of sharing something about your internal state of mind and getting feedback on it. For example, my "Gosh, I'm thirsty" opener above.

The situational environment can provide a plethora of conversational topics to open a discussion on:

- **Who is around: Other people in the vicinity or in the news.**
(For example, when a limousine drives up...)
"I told my driver to stop harassing me! Could you please tell him to move along before somebody recognizes me?!"

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- **What she is wearing: Her clothing, accessories, and what she is holding.**
(For example, if she is holding a Statistics text book...)
"You know, I took that statistics class before. Is your teacher Mrs. Smith?"
- **When: Events that just occurred or are about to occur.**
(For example, at a bus stop.)
"Do you know when the next bus is coming?"
- **Where you are: The place where you are together.**
(For example, during intermission at the Symphony.)
"Isn't this the most gorgeous foyer!?"
- **Why you are there: Do you two have a common purpose?**
(For example, in line while registering for classes.)
"Hey, did you hear you can now register on-line?"
- **How things are being done: Is the service good or poor?**
(For example, in a long line at the grocery store.)
"Don't they have a three's-a-crowd policy here?"

As an alternative to commenting or asking about something in the situational environment, you can talk about your internal state and get some feedback. For example:

- *"Did you ever get a song in your head and just can't get it out?"*
- *"I'm so excited; I just started a new job! What should I do to celebrate?"*
- *"I just got this new ring as a gift, what do you think?"*

Make sure the comment is positive, uplifting, and funny, if possible. Stay away from negative topics:

"I sure have a massive headache, what kind of medicine to you recommend?"

This opener is better than nothing, but you are not putting your best foot forward, as you might remind her about the last time she had a headache which could trigger all kinds of negative internal responses. It's safer not to go there.

1.5 Routine versus Flow Openers

A simple search on google.com for "openers" or "seduction openers" or "conversational openers" (all without the quotes) will yield thousands upon thousands of results. Go ahead and read some, and memorize a few that you like. This would be your "opening routine". A routine is simply any material that is memorized or rehearsed. It could be a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, multi-player game, or imaginary adventure.

1.6 Magazine Openers

Also called "opinion openers", these are queries about an open-ended issue that is sure to spark discussion. Almost anything relating to relationships, or fashion are good themes to open with. Anything you would find in a woman's magazine is fodder for a fun, interesting and entertaining discussion. For example, scanning the cover of a popular woman's magazine in front of me now I see themes on:

- Advice
- Makeup Styles
- Relationships
- Celebrities

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- Attitude
- Clothing Styles
- Sex

Like that. Notice how themes like sports, family, and politics are not on the cover. These types of topics are not best for openers because people can have passionate, polarized views which are too heavy for an initial conversation. Think light and fluffy. Here are some women's magazine opinion openers I formulated while reading an advice column in said magazine:

- *"I was reading a magazine yesterday, and it said that it is always better to break up with a guy in person. But I figure, if you met on-line, then you can dump him on-line, what do you think?"*
- *"I heard that to maintain our health we don't have to drink eight glasses of water a day, like I thought. Is that true?"*
- *"I was reading that what time of day you eat doesn't relate to gaining weight, but I thought those midnight snacks go straight to my thighs, what have you heard?"*
- *"I heard that in a new relationship you should wait for the other person to say 'I love you.' first, rather than saying it yourself, but I usually blurt it out at the stupidest times. What do you think?"*

1.7 Ethnic Openers

You may have noticed my foreign language openers in the samples above. During our lifetime, we move an average of eleven times all over this global community of ours, so sharing the varied languages and cultures we have been exposed to can be a fun and refreshing way to start a new relationship. It also offers instant rapport, as your partner feels a little bit more at home, even though they may be thousands of miles from the place they were born and raised.

1.8 Silent Openers

Then there are creative variations of "silent openers" where you approach your partner silently, and then they are the first one to speak. Silent openers are best left for advanced social artists because it requires that you think fast on your feet. But if you want to, feel free to try one and see what happens.

Finally I'm not going to tell you which is best type of opener. Only through open experimentation will you discover which style you like best.

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2 On Generating New Openers

There are many good openers out there, but you still might want to create an opener that fits your personality and conveys your identity better than anything else. Creating a new top-notch opener requires some work, but if you find one that really works for you, it can be your golden ticket.

To create a new opener, follow these three steps:

Step 1: Pick the Perfect Topic

Now what is the “perfect” topic? The perfect topic fulfills the following three requirements:

1. The topic stirs up curiosity and captures the person or groups imagination. You’ll find it in newspapers, magazines, discussions with friends, etc.
2. You are familiar with the topic and can relate to it.
3. The topic can be the springboard for additional follow-up conversational threads.

Step 2: Develop the Perfect Approach

So what is the perfect approach to bring up the topic up? It fulfills the following requirements:

1. This topic is introduced by a number of questions, statements or comments.
2. It is unthreatening to the person or group. For instance: it’s funny, it’s interesting, it’s an advice, it’s you looking for help.
3. It invites a conversation. For instance: it is an open-ended question. Or a statement that invites a response.

Step 3: Take care of the After-Math – What to talk about after the Opener

Let’s assume a discussion around this topic occurs. Then answer the following questions:

1. What are additional follow-up questions?
2. What other related interesting topics to talk about?

Example:

Let’s say you are a **mathematician who studied chaos theory**.

Step 1: You buy a cosmopolitan magazine, flip through and pick Astrology as your topic.

Now, let’s make the test:

1. Does the topic stirs up curiosity and captures the person or groups imagination.
Yes, otherwise it would not appear everywhere. You don’t want to say “What’s your sign?” however. That’s too profane ...
2. Are you familiar with the topic and can relate something to it.
Yes, you are familiar with it. And after some thinking and research you also will find that you can relate to it, because you can find many ways to see chaos theory and astrology being related. Could they be metaphysical and physical counterparts of the same rules? Sounds intriguing to me.
3. The topic can be the springboard for additional follow-up conversational threads.
Big yes – for instance – Was your horoscope ever wrong/right and what happened? Did you ever go to a psychic? And so on and on ...

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Step 2: Developing the Actual Horoscope Opener

The following is an indirect opener (just for the record and credits, it's closely related to the "spells opener") including a time constraints that make it even less threatening:

You: Hey guys, let me get your opinion on something. I'm trying to help my friend and I'd like to get a female opinion.

Group of Girls: What?

You: Okay, I've only got a minute. Do you follow the advice given to you by your horoscopes? I have a reason for asking. Let me just get your opinions then I'll tell you why I'm asking.

Group of Girls: Sometimes this will already start a conversation, but the real routine is then:

You: The reason I'm asking is because my friend met a girl at a party last weekend, who said that her horoscope told her that she would meet her future husband. They actually hooked up. Now, the strange thing is, ever since then, my friend can't stop thinking of her. He always wants to hang out with this girl, twenty by four seven. He says he's in love with her. So do you think it's the horoscope's prediction or just psychology?

Let's make the test:

Obviously this topic is introduced by a number of questions, statements and comments. It is unthreatening to the group because it just asking for advice and will take only "a minute". It invites a conversation and has an open-ended question.

Step 3: Topics to talk about after the Opener

The last step is simple but important – just answering the two questions:

What are additional follow-up questions?

- *Should he consult an astrologer or psychic?*
- *Did you ever experience your horoscope being right?*

What other related interesting topics to talk about?

- *Invisible connections between people and the universe*
- *The universe and chaos theory*
- *Here and now – you and me*

Nice Just like that we have created an opener with a logical structure that starts with a simple intriguing question that takes "just a minute" to answer - to a discussion that includes the universe and chaos theory - and ends up discussing the here and now and the people themselves.

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On Experimenting, Rejection and Your Attitude

It is important to experiment, and try-on all types and styles to see how they feel, and to not be afraid of your partner's rejection. I really don't like the word "rejection" because it has a negative connotation and hurts so many people at an emotional level. I would rather never use the word again and substitute a word like "discovery" or "learning" or "qualification". Learnings may come in many forms from a polite dismissal to a rude blow-out. Any cold approach artist worth his salt has heard these learnings and many more:

- *"Sorry, I have a boyfriend."*
- *"Oh, I'm married!"*
- *"I'm sorry, I'm not interested."*
- *"I have to go."*
- *"We are having a private conversation."*
- *"F*ck off, jerk."*
- *"Go to hell! Asshole!"*

I'm not going to say the game is easy, but I will say that you are going to have to develop some alligator skin. Just remember that a cold approach is not illegal, it's not sinful, it's not wrong, and you have nothing to be embarrassed about by committing this brave act.

When you do hear a response that is not to your liking, it is not a "rejection" of you personally, it is simply a statement that something is not quite right. Maybe she was having a bad day, maybe your delivery needs to be improved, maybe it is nothing you have control over, and maybe you need to go back to the drawing board to re-design a new approach style. All you have discovered is a temporary dead-end, that you can either choose to politely walk away, analyze and learn from, or you might decide to craft a come-back on-the-fly.

Whatever you do, don't take it personally, and don't get your feelings hurt. I know that might be easy to say, and hard to do at first, but I know hundreds of guys who have reached that level of personal integrity, so I know you can too. Just remember the mantra:

"I'm not being rejected; I am only learning that I have more fun games to play!"

The routines we are discussing here are opening routines. If you ever get absolutely, positively stuck, you can fall back on these basic routine openers:

(Don't forget to express a kind and sincere smile and make eye contact that you don't break first.)

- *"Hi!"*
- *"Hey! Hiya' doin' "*
- *"Hey, howzit goin' "*
- *"Hey, wassup? "*
- *"Hey, you got the time?"*
- *"Excuse me, do you know where the bathroom is?"*
- *"Pardon me, do you know how to get to the freeway?"*
(Said to a hottie on the street, while you are driving.)

Whatever happens, just remember:

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2.1 "YOU MUST OPEN."

As stated before, that really is the name of the game. Without opening, or making a cold approach, you will never know if you could have met the girl of your dreams. For me, at least, the prospect of a lifetime of not knowing, and wondering if she could have been the one if I just had enough courage to go up and say "Hi!" is greater than the pain of rejection. It's such an important topic for so many guys, that I'm going to re-enforce it. Try this attitude on for size:

"Getting blown-out is FUN!"

That is an attitude that goes against the grain for a lot of guys, but one that I have learned to embrace whole-heartedly. I LOVE getting blown-out, because it's funny. It really is.

The key is that you have to be able to view the interaction from a third-person's point of view. Imagine there is a video camera watching you two, recording the interaction. Wouldn't it be funny from the camera's point of view!? It would probably be hilarious! Comedy almost always has a victim, and in this case the victim would be you, so this exercise requires you to be able to laugh at yourself. Learning to laugh at getting blown-out will do wonders for developing your sense of humor. I strongly recommend it.

Many people have a goal to go out and meet people and get smiles and kisses and phone numbers and what-not. But how many people go out with the intention of getting rejected and blown-out? Let me tell you, it can be a blast! As a social experiment, just go out once and have a goal to get negative responses from 10 people you meet.

If you think about it, you are more likely to have a higher success rate if your goal is to get rejections rather than acceptances. How's that for twisted logic that works FOR you? You don't have to be rude, but maybe something a little silly that is likely to get a rejection like,

"Excuse me, my mother-in-law is coming to town, and I just don't know where to put her, could she stay with you for a while?"

I doubt they will take you up on your offer, but I'll also bet you have a fun time with it!

There are so many sources and ways to generate openers that you should never have to make an excuse like, "I couldn't think of anything to say", ever again. The first step is to conquer your fear and approach anxiety about opening and just do it. The next step is to learn how to open well. When you start to gain an intermediate-level skill at opening, you will discover that it's not what you say that is so important as how you say it. An opener could be anything really, almost anything. In a noisy club it could even be gibberish!

"Gua biddy-ba gadda obeda, wha? – Ha ha ha!"

Could be an opener if you are positive, fun, in a good mood, and softly touch her just right on the shoulder as you talk into her hear. If she likes you, she will laugh with you to get the ball rolling and break the ice.

Opening well could be a subject all to itself, although we'll summarize the main points here:

- Be positive.
- Smile and laugh.
- Be friendly.
- Have an energy level that draws them up.
- Don't have an energy level that drags them down.
- Don't appear nervous.

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- Don't be antagonistic.
- Don't be negative.

With directed practice, as well as learning from your mistakes in the field, you will be a professional opener in no time, and ready to move on to the next steps of attraction, rapport, and seduction.

By Don Diego Garcia, Cosmo for Stylelife