Starting Conversations and Engaging in Small Talk

Have you ever read the children's book, "If you give a mouse a cookie" by Laura Joffe Numeroff? Socializing is a lot like that. If you compliment someone's shoes, they are going to want to tell you where they got them. When they tell you where they got them, you are going to want to go to that store to check it out for yourself, "I've never been to that store. I'll have to go check it out sometime. I typically shop for (*shoes*) at (*name of store*.) Have you ever been?" Keep this in mind as you read the following strategies for starting a conversation and engaging in small talk—

Compliment an article of clothing, their shoes or an accessory they are wearing.

Mention something you have seen, read, heard, or done recently**. Then Ask questions**:

I just watched the movie (*name of movie*.) Have you seen it?
I just finished reading (*name of book/magazine*.) Have you heard of it?
I just went to a (*name of artist/band*) concert. Have you ever seen them live?
I just ate at (*name of restaurant)* for the first time. Have you ever eaten there before?

Be an attentive listener. Sometimes all it takes to be successful at starting a conversation and having "normal" small talk is taking cues from the other person and staying present in the moment. **Stay present** and really **listen** to what the other person says. Do not allow your mind to wander or focus on what you will say when it is your turn to respond. If you do that, you are more likely to miss the question they ask you- and that question would have been the dead giveaway for how you are supposed to respond!