

# YOUR 101 GUIDE TO: LATTE CHATS



 **community**  
connections

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# Transiting the Basics

## introduction to latte chats

**Welcome to the engaging world of latte chats,** an integral part of professional networking. These informal sessions are a platform for more than just exchanging ideas over a latte. **(no, they are not just about referrals);** they're about creating a space of meaningful just exchange with industry professionals.

These interactions are the lines to deeper understanding, offering a glimpse into the professional journeys of experienced individuals. **(Latte chats will NEVER be identical!)**

Each latte chat is an opportunity to cultivate a new connection, to learn about the intricacies of the professions and positions that interest you, and to share your own aspirations in the professional field you are studying in.

As you partake in these chats, you'll discover that they are as much about imparting your unique perspective as they are about absorbing advice. **(before you doubt yourself, yes you are providing something of value to them too!)**

Lets commute to the doors shall we?



# Transiting the Basics

## preparing for your latte chat

- **In Depth Research**

Your latte chat journey begins long before the actual meeting. Dive into your latte chat partner's LinkedIn profiles, published works, and career milestones to arm yourself with knowledge that will fuel meaningful dialogue. (i.e. time to put those stalking skills to use).



- **Curating Questions**

Tailor your questions to show you have done your research. Try covering a breadth of topics – from their career decisions and their views on industry trends to the lessons they have learned from their professional experiences.

- **Strategic Goals**

Before sending out the invite, clearly envision what you want to achieve from the latte chat. The idea of envisioning steers the conversation in the right direction and keeps you focused on your objectives. Whether it's deepening your understanding of a new industry or job application tips, your goals are a filter for a successful chat.

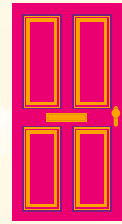
(trust us going in without an envisioned goal is a recipe for disaster, we are speaking from our own failures).





# Opening the Doors

## setting up the latte chat



### New Message:

To: **Latte Chat Partner**

Subject: **Personalised Outreach**

Craft your initial message as a concise yet warm reflection of your professionalism. A personal touch, for example, mentioning something you admire about your latte partner's work, can lay the groundwork for a more receptive response.

Dear [Name]! My name is [Your Name], I am a full-time degree student enrolled at TMU in [program] who is eager to learn more about [profession]. I would love to connect to chat about your position at [company] - I have a long-term goal and passion of becoming a [occupation], and I think your insight would be invaluable.

### New Message:

To: **Latte Chat Partner**

Subject: **Scheduling the Latte Chat**

Propose several time slots while showing willingness to accommodate their schedule (They are busy people!). This demonstrates respect for their time and sets a collaborative tone from the start.

Thanks for connecting! I would love to schedule a call to learn more about your career and gain any advice you have as I try to get my foot in the door of [industry]. Are you available in the next two weeks? I am free [days of the week] any time after [time + timezone], and I'd be happy to send a calendar invite and Zoom link to whichever e-mail address you'd like.

### PRO TIP:

Choose a setting that allows for focused conversation, whether it's a quiet café or a virtual meeting room free from distractions. The right environment is key to a productive and engaging chat.

# Making the Ask

## during the conversation

### **First Impressions Matter:**

Set the tone. Arrive a few minutes early and dress in smart-casual attire that shows professionalism while allowing you to be comfortable. Greet your latte chat partner with a friendly demeanor, whether a firm handshake or a polite nod, to convey confidence and openness.

### **Active Listening:**

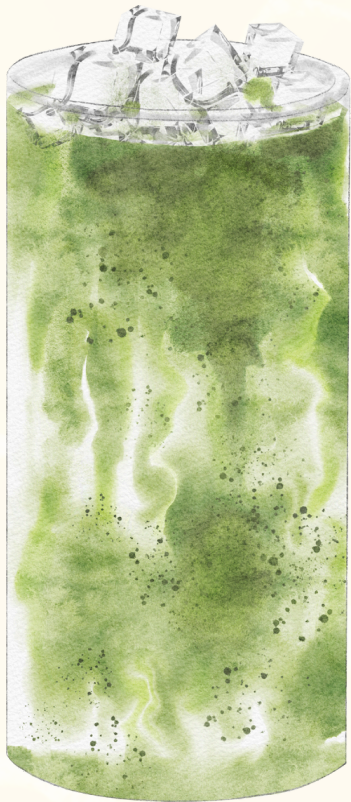
Active listening involves absorbing the speaker's words, tone, and body language. Show that you're in the moment by being fully present, engaging with their stories, and validating their perspectives with thoughtful replies. (people can tell if you are not listening)

### **Flowing the Conversation:**

Navigating the conversation requires finesse—knowing when to segue into more profound subjects and when to step back to lighter topics. (don't worry you will get better with more practice) Use the information you have stalked from your preparation to ask questions that resonate with their experience. Encourage a back-and-forth exchange; it's a dialogue, not an interview!

# Building the Anticipation

## effective communication tips



### **Ask Open Ended Questions:**

Get to know your latte chat partner better by fostering a vibrant dialogue and framing your questions to prompt detailed responses. Begin your open-ended questions with "how," "what," or "why," these are the keys to unlocking stories and perspectives that simple yes-or-no questions can't access

### **Nonverbal Cues:**

Communication is as much about what you don't say as you do. Be mindful of your body language; an open stance, nodding to show understanding, and maintaining good eye contact are nonverbal affirmations of your interest. Mirroring the other person's body language can create a subtle bond and facilitate a deeper connection.



### **Continuity of Conversations:**

Try reheating the conversation with a new topic when it begins to cool! Reheating a topic can look like a thoughtful question about a topic they've shown passion for or an observation from your surroundings that can spark a new discussion. The goal is to weave these in seamlessly, ensuring the conversation moves along naturally and energetically.

### **Storytelling will Get You Places:**

Try to storytell your life through lessons, roadblocks, and successes, do not under value your achievements along the way. In fact you should talk about your dreams to the latte chat partner, and see if they ressonate with you.



# The Art of Latte Chats

## following up after the latte chat

### Follow Up Graciously:

Within a day after your meeting, send a personalized thank-you note to express gratitude for your time and insights. Go beyond a generic thank you; mention a specific topic or story they shared that resonated with you.



### Engagement Continued:

Keep the lines of communication open beyond the initial chat. Now and then, reach out with something that adds value to your connection. (e.g., an exciting article or a quick update on how their advice has helped you) This ongoing engagement shows your interest in maintaining the relationship and can make your connection more memorable.



### Exemplar Message:

Hi [Name],  
Thanks again for connecting yesterday and taking the time to chat about your profession. I loved learning about [story] and am even more excited about what is ahead for me as I start my own career in [industry]. Your advice to [advice] was also constructive and something I hadn't previously considered. Please let me know if you are still willing to [their next steps], and I would be happy to [your next steps].

Hope to stay in touch!  
[Name]



# Mastering the Memories

## the do's and do nots of latte chats

### DO: ✓

#### **Be Punctual:**

It shows respect for the other person's time. During the chat, be attentive, actively listen, and engage in the conversation with thoughtful responses and questions.

#### **Practice Preparedness:**

Come prepared with knowledge about the individual and their industry. Be flexible if the conversation takes a spontaneous turn—balance by sharing your own experiences and inviting your chat partner to contribute to theirs.

#### **Be Genuine:**

Be yourself; authenticity goes a long way in establishing trust. Respect the other person's opinions and experiences, even if they differ from your own. (Don't fake a response just for the sake of it; it is pronounced on the other end)

### DO NOT: ✗

#### **Think Latte Chats Are Interrogational:**

Refrain from dominating the conversation with your questions. Avoid making it feel like an interrogation with rapid-fire questions. Allow the conversation to flow naturally, and give them space to think and respond.

#### **Go Overtime:**

Be mindful of the time you've agreed upon for the chat. If the conversation is going well, respecting the initial timeframe is still important unless your latte chatter suggests extending it.

#### **Talk about Sensitive Topics:**

Steer clear of controversial topics or personal matters that may make the other person uncomfortable. Keep the conversation professional and focused on your shared interests and goals.



# The Aftertaste

## troubleshooting common issues

### **Nervousness:**

It is 100% normal to feel anxious before meeting someone new. Try deep breathing exercises, visualize a successful chat, or even practice your talking points out loud to ease your nerves. Remember, the person you are meeting will likely understand and remember what it was like for them for their first latte chat.

### **Stalled Conversation:**

Having a few anecdotes or insightful questions in reserve can help jump-start the conversation if you hit a lull.

### **Handling Curveballs:**

When faced with unexpected questions or topics, view them as chances for growth rather than setbacks. It is **okay** to admit you do not have the answer, but most importantly, demonstrate your willingness to engage in mutual learning.



# Savouring the Experiences in conclusion

We hope you feel more equipped as we wrap up our Latte Chatting 101 Guide. **Each chat is more than a simple conversation over a beverage;** it is a step towards broadening your professional network, gaining industry insights, and developing lasting relationships.

Remember, the essence of a successful latte chat lies in the blend of preparation, genuine engagement, and thoughtful follow-up. **A good chat is like an iced latte;** it should leave both parties feeling invigorated and looking forward to the next one.

**Embrace the nerves, the excitement, and even the occasional awkward pause.** (cheesy, but it's true) These are all part of the natural ebb and flow of a conversation between two individuals getting to know each other. With each chat, you'll find your confidence brewing stronger and your conversational skills becoming richer.

Keep this guide handy as you navigate your future latte chats, and remember, you will get better with practice! **Latte Chats are part of your learning journey; enjoy!**

