DO NOT

1. Fold arms or exhibit other closed body language.
2. Bring up old arguments or past indiscretions.
3. Only speak to your friends or spouse.
4. Eat or drink too much.
5. Talk too much (or too little) about yourself.
6. Discuss personal problems.
7. Talk for more than 3 or 4 minutes without including someone else in the conversation.
8. Interrupt someone who is speaking. (My husband does that, and it is sooo annoying.)
10. Make gender or status-based power plays in conversation, or talk condescendingly.

DO

1. Dress well (What they see is what you get.).
2. Keep conversation appropriate.
3. Ask relevant questions – and listen to the answers.
4. Acknowledge new people and invite them into the conversation.
5. Enter into new groups of people ("How does one get a ticket to join this conversation?").

WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A JOB

1. Write upbeat 30-60 second responses to common remarks, plus questions to draw out helpful information from others. Rehearse in mirror or with friend! (Remember that winning sports teams practice!)
2. Have a plan for the event.
3. Never use a party to vent – Idiot boss, etc. It just makes you look like someone they would not want to work with.
4. Establish friendly rapport with sports, events, movies...then ease into the job search discussion. Don't let it dominate the conversation.
5. Respond to platitudes such as "Don't worry. You'll have a job soon." or, "You haven't found a job yet?" Upbeat response: "You're right. I don't have a job yet. I am really reevaluating what I want to do. Here are some of the things I'm
exploring..." (classes, fitness...keeping positive self-esteem and focus usually shuts up critics fast).

DEFLECT AWKWARD PRYING

Q: How's the job search?
A: "I'm continuing to apply for every opportunity I can, and doing some volunteer work and networking as well."

Q: You've been unemployed for a long time, haven't you?
A: "It's gone on a little longer than I'd like, but I've had some good interviews, and I'm optimistic."

Q: Is that really the suit you've been wearing for interviews these days?
A: "These snacks look great. Nice to see you. I'm going to get something to eat."

Q: Someone just keeps on prying.
A: "You know, that's not the happiest topic right now. Let's talk about something else."
Or,
Smile and toss out non sequitur: "Have you seen '________ (current movie)'?"

Defuse the awkwardness of inappropriate request by listening briefly, acknowledge request, perhaps exchange business cards, and then change the subject. Try: "Hey, let's enjoy the party and reconnect next month..."

IF YOU HAVE A JOB, BE KIND TO THOSE WHO ARE LOOKING FOR ONE:

Avoid: "How's the job search going?"
Say: "How are you doing? What's keeping you busy these days? I know this is such a hard time to be looking for work. I wanted to check in and see how you're doing.")" (The job seeker won't feel criticized.)

Avoid: "Why don't you apply for lower-paying jobs in the meantime?"
Say: "I hear this has been the toughest job market in decades. I wish you all the best."

Avoid: "I'm friends with HR manager where I work. I'll get you an interview."
Say: "Would you like me to make a call to my previous employer?"
(Such promises inflate seeker's hopes and often cannot be kept.)