

People hate small talk so much that some hosts have started banning it from their parties

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We'd just left a crowded birthday party when a friend told me he admired the way I made small talk.

It's painful for him, he said, to do the idle chit-chat thing with every new and old acquaintance he meets.

Well, thanks, I wanted to respond. I've been watching the Weather Channel all week?

I should have been more sympathetic to his plight. The prospect of making small talk is paralyzing for many people — which is why parties outright banning it are sprouting up across the globe.

The inspiration in many cases appears to be a 2016 [article in Wired](#), in which behavioral scientists Kristen Berman and Dan Ariely write about a dinner party they hosted in this vein. The hosts provided guests with index cards featuring examples of meaningful conversation starters, like suicide prevention and dominatrixes.

According to the authors, “everyone was happier” without the obligation of talking about such trivial topics as the weather or the latest sports game. (The party apparently led to two dates as well.)

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Small-talk-free party organizers often cite a [2010 study](#) as evidence that their method is preferable. The (small) study, published in the journal *Psychological Science*, found that college students who held more meaningful conversations were happier than those who engaged in more small talk.