Introducing Yourself at a Panel or Networking Night

When planning to attend an event – it’s always a good idea to review the backgrounds of the speakers or guests you will be meeting. If there is a Guest Directory you can review before attending, a great first step would be to request a copy and pick out 1-2 people you’d like to meet at the event.

For the purposes of this exercise, choose on person you’d like to meet and use the model below to prepare an introduction and some basic talking points to help the conversation go more smoothly.

You won’t have to use this as a script – but a framework can help reduce anxiety and nerves when you’re ready to approach a guest and strike up conversation.

1. Step One: “Building a Bridge” between you and the other person
   Let your conversation partner know what attracted you to them based on what you learned about their background, field of interest, or any other things you may share in common:
   - (handshake) Hi! My name is _______________________________________
   - I was excited to come and meet you tonight when I learned you were…
     - Doing work related in an interesting Role/Job Function I’d like to learn about
     - Saw some of your previous work experiences are also interesting
     - See that we are both interested in similar subject matter
     - We may know some of the same people
   - (Give your conversation partner a chance to respond before sharing something about your own background – see below)

2. NEXT: Looking back on some of your reflections from the other side of this worksheet – share something about yourself that explains how you became interested in their role/field/area of interest.

   TIP: Personal details can be unique and better yet…memorable! When the event is over and you want to follow up with that person to maintain the connection – reminding them of these unique and memorable details is an anchor to them to remember you from the other students they spoke with.
   - “So nice to meet you!”
   - Choose 1-2 of the following to elaborate on:
     - “A little about me: I’m currently a (class year) at Emory University studying (major)”
     - “Some of the influences/reasons I became interested in (field of interest) are….”
     - “Being able to do this work matters to me because…”
     - “I see my strengths relating to this area as being:”
     - “I’ve recently had an experience that really motivated me…” [BRIEFLY SHARE]
3. Let your guest respond. The bridge has now been built and you can settle into conversation:
   - Something I really wanted to ask you about is….”

That’s all it takes. Test it out on a friend! Does your introduction intrigue or invite them to learn more?