



GUIDE 1: BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH GUESTS

The A.R.E. Method

Creating a connection with a guest doesn't have to mean having a long conversation or knowing exactly what to say.

The A.R.E. Method is one tool you can use when you're not sure how to start or continue an interaction. It's a guide, not a script. Use the three steps in a way that feels natural and authentic to you.

A

ASK

Start by asking one simple question.

A question helps you learn something about the guest instead of immediately giving them information. It can turn a quick transaction into an opportunity to connect.

Try:

- "Is this your first visit?"
- "Who are you visiting with today?"
- "What are you most excited to see?"
- "What brings you in today?"

One genuine question is enough to get the conversation started.

R

RESPOND

Listen to what the guest shares and acknowledge it.

Your response shows the guest that you heard them and are interested in what they said. It doesn't have to be elaborate or overly enthusiastic. A simple, genuine response can make a difference.

Try:

- "That's exciting!"
- "That sounds like fun."
- "Great choice!"
- "I can see why you'd be excited."

The goal isn't to sound scripted. The goal is to show that you heard them.

E

ENCOURAGE

Use what you've learned to offer one helpful recommendation, invitation, or positive closing.

When appropriate, use what the guest shared to make your response more personal.

Try:

- "I think you'll really enjoy..."
- "Be sure to check out..."
- "If you need anything, just let us know."
- "Have a wonderful visit!"

Keep it simple. One thoughtful suggestion or response can help the guest feel supported and excited about their visit.

The words will look different from guest to guest. What matters is the intention: ask, listen, and use what you learn to make the interaction more personal and supportive.



Remember: Connection isn't measured in minutes. It's measured in moments.



GUIDE 2: BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH GUESTS

The One Question Rule

Sometimes, we jump right into sharing the routine information we give every guest before taking a moment to understand what that particular guest is looking for.

We may know exactly where the bathrooms are, which exhibits are most popular, or what time the next program starts—but that doesn't necessarily mean we've given the right information for that guest.



IF YOU ONLY REMEMBER ONE THING...

Ask *one question*
before giving information

A single question can shift an interaction from transactional to relational.

Asking one question gives you the chance to learn something about the guest, personalize your response, and help them feel like you are assisting them instead of simply giving them directions or information.

INSTEAD OF...

"Bathrooms are over there."



TRY...

"Is this your first visit?"
Or: "Are you here with little ones today?"

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- "What brings you in today?"
- "Who are you visiting with today?"
- "What are you most excited to see?"
- "Is there anything you're hoping to find?"

Once you know a little more, you can make your answer more useful and personal.



Remember: You don't need to turn every interaction into a conversation. One question can be enough to create an opportunity for connection.



GUIDE 3: BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH GUESTS

Quick Tips



Connection can be observed, practiced, and coached. The goal isn't for every staff member to interact with guests in exactly the same way. It's to help staff build a toolbox of skills and know which tool to use in the moment.

1. Connection stays the same. Support may change.

Every guest deserves a warm, respectful, and attentive interaction. But the support we provide should depend on what the guest actually needs. Ask before assuming.

Instead of immediately giving routine information, try asking:

"What are you hoping to find?"

"What would be most helpful?"

"Are you looking for a quick answer, or would you like me to walk you through it?"

2. Connection is measured in moments, not minutes.

Connection doesn't mean having a long conversation with every guest. It can happen in a single minute:

QUESTION



RESPONSE



PERSONALIZED
RECOMMENDATION



WARM
CLOSING

Look for small moments that show the guest:

"I see you. I listened. I'm responding to what you need."

Connection is a *skill*—not a personality trait.

| 3. Busy Doesn't Eliminate Connection

When things get busy, we don't have to choose between efficiency and connection. Use **minimum effective connection**: one or two meaningful moments when time is limited.

That might mean:

- Acknowledging someone while helping another guest
- Asking one quick question before giving information
- Personalizing a recommendation
- Letting someone know you'll be with them shortly
- Ending with a genuine, warm closing

| 4. Coach for mastery. Coach for intentionality.

IN TRAINING → Build the skill.

Practice asking questions, listening, personalizing, adapting, and closing.

IN OPERATIONS → Use the skill intentionally.

We don't want staff checking boxes or following a script. We want them to know the toolbox well enough to choose the right tool for the moment.

Instead of:

"I better ask a connection question?"



Try thinking:

"What did this guest need from you in this moment?"

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

The Connection Toolbox

ASK — Find out what the guest actually needs.

LISTEN — Pay attention to the answer.

NOTICE — Look for cues and signals.

PERSONALIZE — Use what the guest shared.

ADAPT — Adjust your support to the person and situation.

CLOSE — Leave the guest feeling acknowledged and supported.

