



Planning your party guest list

14 classic party personality types

by JEFFREY ROTIN

The festive holiday season is fast approaching. Maybe this year you're planning the ultimate "Dawn of the New Millennium" bash. As you draw up your guest list, rather than figuring out whether friends from your various social circles will mix amiably, think about the personality types you will invite. Some are desirable. Some are not. Many are requisite party staples. Here's a handy guide to help you with your party planning:

1. THE CHARISMATIC MAGNET - They hold court. Charming and vivacious, people swarm around them like worker bees to a queen. They never have to move from their spot at a party; loyal subjects attend to their needs. If this doesn't happen automatically, they tactfully ensure that it does. A party must, Charismatic Magnets are witty conversationalists and an excellent means of drawing people together. Everyone knows them, wants to know them or wants to be them.

2. THE EFFORTLESS SCHMOOZER - A good friend once arrived at a party I was hosting and immediately approached a group of people, striking up an animated conversation. When I expressed surprise that she knew these friends of mine, she replied, "Oh, I've never met them before", and introduced herself. After talking with them for 20 minutes. Impressive. The Effortless Schmooser is also a party must.

3. THE SERVILE SIDEKICK - Empties ash trays, refills wine glasses, chops vegetables, serves food, and stays behind after the party has ended to help with the clean-up. The Servile Sidekick falls under one of 4 categories: a) Suffers from feelings of inadequacy. Needs to feel useful; b) A best friend who is unwillingly recruited; c) A sycophant who just wants to please you. Makes a nice accessory; d) An obsessive-compulsive A-type who is uncomfortable if things are disorganized or messy. Always make sure you invite at least one Servile Sidekick to your parties.

4. THE SHAMELESS OPPORTUNIST - Only chats with people who can do something for them: often involved in the film industry, or a wannabe. Will only remember someone's name or face if they can help advance their career. Watch how quickly s/he brushes off your other guests when s/he discovers they work as graphic designers, social workers or political lobbyists. You thought your job was meaningful and interesting; now you know it isn't.

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5. THE DESPERATE CRY FOR ATTENTION - The loudest, flashiest, most outrageous person at a party. Often dressed in some outlandish costume, hell bent on standing out from the crowd. The novelty wears pretty thin after a while. Still, the D.C.F.A. is good for a laugh or two and provides free party entertainment. This is the person you can count on to do something that people will talk about the following day. Be forewarned: if more than one D.C.F.A. is invited to a party, competition can get fierce and you may have to break up a fistfight or two.

6. THE VICIOUS GOSSIP-MONGER - Sees every party as an opportunity to gather more grist for the rumour mill. They have an uncanny ability to catch your guests in compromising situations. Watch their eyes light up with devilish glee when two halves of a recently-separated couple unexpectedly show up at the same party. More than likely they have orchestrated the surprise "reunion". Like the D.C.F.A., the Gossip-Monger is a free source of entertainment, plus they can later spread your reputation as a great party thrower.

7. THE PATHETIC WALLFLOWER - High maintenance: needs to be baby-sat. Unadventurous, insecure and socially inept, the Pathetic Wallflower can be a party downer. On the odd occasion anyone actually notices them hiding in the shadows of a corner, the look of discomfort on their face (not to mention that big "L" on their forehead!) can make other guests ill at ease. If you must invite a Pathetic Wallflower to your party and you don't want to spend the entire night ensuring that they're having a good time, make sure you have friends who will.

8. THE DISCO QUEEN - Wants you to put on an ABBA CD and get everyone to dance. A bit annoying when you've planned a dressy cocktail party with a suitable mix of lounge music, though in the final analysis a godsend. The ABBA CD gets everyone to cut loose and really party into the wee hours of the morning.

9. THE INTELLECTUAL SNOB - Does not have a clue how to have a fun party conversation. Can usually be found in the kitchen, presumably to avoid the blare of ABBA in the living room, which is not conducive to serious discussion. Recoils in horror when s/he overhears people talking about the latest episode of "Ally McBeal". Though intimidating to some guests, s/he can potentially add some refinement to a party. Will adamantly refuse to dance to ABBA.

10. THE PARTY FILLER - Sadly, most guests fall under this uninspired, unspectacular category. If your party is a dud they won't help matters, but if your party is a hit, they'll revel in it. They don't create excitement but rather wait for it to happen. Still, they are essential to any successful party. You need them to flesh out your guest list.





11. THE EMOTIONAL BASKETCASE -

Very messy. For some reason sees all social gatherings as an occasion to get trashed on a variety of substances which don't mix well with Prozac or any other combination of medication they might be on. Alternates between uproarious laughter and a compulsion to share the details of their latest bout of depression with anyone within earshot. When their mood is on the upswing, they will obligingly get up and boogie to ABBA.

They have, however, an irritating habit of drinking too much and vomiting on the bathroom floor, then passing out on your bed. Needs supervision.



12. THE UNINVITED FRIEND OF A FRIEND - The Uninvited Friend Of A Friend is invariably unattached, with a limited social circle. Brought by someone who is prodding them "to meet new people", they always have that fish-out-of-water look. Not to be confused with the Pathetic Wallflower, the U.F.O.A.F. makes valiant and admirable attempts at circulating. Prefaces introductions by saying "I'm a friend of." They will then ask you who you know at the party. Do not be duped by this innocent question: this is a crafty ploy to meet more people.

13. THE SEXUAL PREDATOR - Hang onto your dates! Cool and calculating with the instincts of a hawk, the Sexual Predator is an excellent source of after-party gossip, especially if s/he leaves with one of the halves of that recently-separated couple. Usually not a great mingler or conversationalist, unless hitting on someone. Common modus operandi is to follow his/her prey into the washroom; this can create long line-ups.

14. THE LATE-ARRIVING BON VIVANT - Unlike those guests who merely arrive fashionably late, the Bon Vivant always seems to have a slew of party invitations on her/his plate, collecting followers at each pit stop. The entourage is typically comprised of parasitic hangers-on who are looking for free food, booze and drugs. A sure-fire way to determine if your party is a success is how long the Bon Vivant stays or, even more desirable, if s/he stays for the rest of the night: either your party is the hit of the social circuit, or the Bon Vivant is a fraud.

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Even if you're not planning a party, next time you're at one, see how many different party personality types you can identify. Or better yet, turn it into a fun party game and stick labels on people once you've classified them. A great way to meet people, and guaranteed to stimulate party conversation.