

How to ENJOY Your Class Reunion

Here are 10 indispensable tips for making the most of your next reunion, even if it happens to be your first.

1. IF IT'S YOUR FIRST TIME

Make plans to go with a friend. It helps to have someone who can serve as "home base" as you overcome any nerves (most people experience a bit of nervousness) and reach out to your former classmates.

2. PERUSE YOUR OLD YEARBOOK.

If you're just ten years removed from high school, chances are pretty good that you'll recognize everyone at the reunion, but after forty years, not all the faces will be familiar. Or you may struggle to recall someone's name. A little time with your yearbook before you go could help alleviate both problems. Bring your yearbook along to the reunion. Your friends will thank you as they sneak a quick peek at it.

3. USE FACEBOOK TO (RE)CONNECT.

Facebook and other social media offer you the opportunity to become more familiar with the basic circumstances of many of your classmates' lives. You are more able to quickly move beyond the typical catch-up chatter (and perhaps avoid asking awkward questions) and spend some quality time together.

4. BE PROACTIVE.

Don't sit at a table waiting for classmates to approach you. It's perfectly normal to feel shy or be nervous. Find a familiar face or two and say hello.

5. INTRODUCE YOURSELF AS YOU GREET CLASSMATES YOU'VE NOT SEEN.

Don't put people on the spot by asking them if they remember you. They may recognize your face right away, but still experience momentary difficulty in recalling your name. Simply state your name when saying hello. Your former classmates will appreciate it.

6. IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ASK OTHERS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES.

Learn about the paths your classmates have followed through life. Laugh, cry, be inspired. You'll be reminded that everyone goes through good times and bad. It's one thing we all have in common.

7. LOOK AT EVERYONE WITH NEW EYES AND A FORGIVING HEART.

If you encounter someone who hurt or offended you in high school, try to let bygones be bygones. Chances are, they don't remember the incident and if they do, they are very likely now sorry for their behavior. Give everyone you encounter at the reunion a pass on the past and you'll be pleasantly surprised at how decent and kind most of your classmates have turned out to be.

8. DON'T COMPARE YOUR INSIDES TO ANYONE ELSE'S OUTSIDES.

With each passing year, the social pressures of high school fade away, but many of us are still tempted to compare our lives with others'. After a decade or more, it's a good bet that every person in the room has experienced setbacks and heartbreak as well as good times, so be happy for those who appear to be doing well, sympathetic to those who might be struggling, and embrace your own journey, wherever it has led you. And most of all, don't worry about your weight, your hair (or lack thereof), your wrinkles, or what you're wearing. Before you know it, you and your classmates won't even notice the changes the years have wrought.

9. SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE YOU DIDN'T KNOW VERY WELL BACK IN THE DAY.

This can be very rewarding. Take the opportunity to become better acquainted with former classmates you were only casually acquainted with before. You can reconnect with old friends at your reunion and maybe make some new ones.

10. FOCUS ON THE MEMORIES, NOT CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS.

Who needs friction when old friends have convened to celebrate the bonds they share?

We hope you'll find your reunion to be positive, interesting, rewarding and fun!