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# « TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF! »

*The art of  
conversation,  
the key to a  
successful  
customer  
experience*

*Masterclass by*

CONSTANCE CALVET



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# « Hello, »

*For more than 10 years, I've had the privilege to accompany some of the world's finest luxury and craft brands train their teams.*

*Since childhood I have loved and practised **conversation** thanks to the teachings of my grandmother, the wife of an ambassador and well-versed in this wonderful exercise.*



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# « Today, »

*I'd like to tell you about the origins of this subtle and useful art, before sharing a few secrets with you to help you have successful conversations with your customers. As you can see, this particular chair is for me the perfect illustration! Let me tell you its story.*

While engaging in various design projects involving copper, that she imagined a 'cell' composed of several interconnected pieces of tubular furniture.

A confession without concessions, or a passionate conversation, this is the desire that this object inspires the artist, and thus the reason that it has become the emblem of her art studio.

*It is called a 'confidant' or 'confidente'.*

« you and me »

*Now obsolete, it was all the rage during the Second Empire, when an emerging bourgeoisie was accumulating wealth and furnishing their homes, and develop a different way of living and entertaining, focused on conversations that were useful as well as futile. The result was the creation of a seat ideal for the art of conversation, here by transformed by a talented young artist, Juliette de Ferluc.*



Juliette de Ferluc, designer of the 'Conversation' armchair - 2014.

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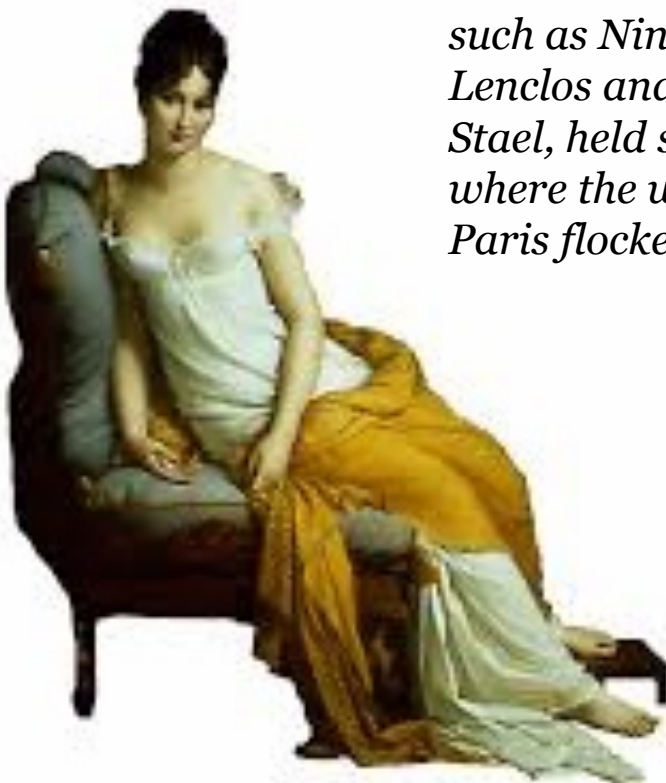
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# «The Art of Conversation»

*is a pure product of  
French culture.*

*From the 17th  
century until the  
Revolution, the  
'Salonnières',  
'Salonnières',  
cultivated women  
such as Ninon de  
Lenclos and Mme de  
Stael, held salons  
where the whole of  
Paris flocked to.*

*This practice  
continued in the 19th  
century before dying  
out altogether. One  
of the last to hold a  
salon was [Juliette  
Récamier](#), whose  
hotel, just a stone's  
throw from my  
office, is a meeting  
place for famous  
celebrities from the  
world of politics,  
literature and the  
arts.*



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*Madame de Sévigné,  
queen of the  
epistolary style, used  
to say that an hour's  
conversation was  
better than 50 letters!*



*An hour's  
conversation is  
better than fifty  
letters!*



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« SO... »

*In the age of digital technology, social networking and instant communication, is conversation still relevant? More than ever! **In a world that has become incredibly connected and yet so distant, reciprocity and***

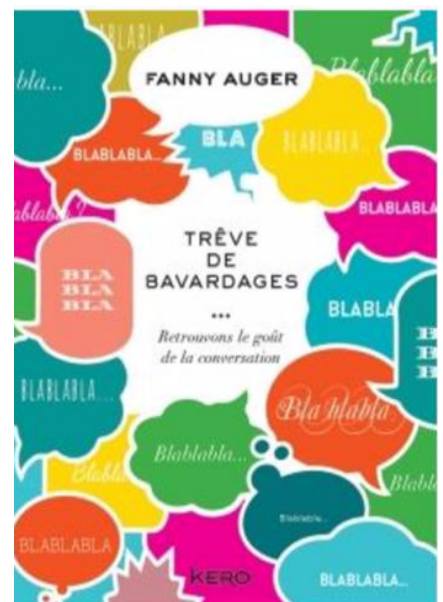
***humanity has become a necessity.** Let's take a brief look at its etymology: the Latin word 'Conversatio' comes from 'Conversor', which originally meant 'to converse'. 'Conversor', which originally meant*  
*« **living with** »*

*Not with the small screen, but with others.*

*Over time, the word 'converse' has become synonymous with civility: conversing is not just talking to others, but above all knowing how to live with others!*

*Fanny Auger, Director of The School of Life, a great specialist in the subject and whom I was lucky enough to meet, says this in her book 'Trêve de bavardages', which I recommend to you:*

*« **Conversation is an adventure: a journey on which we set off lightly, but which makes us richer upon arrival.** »*



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# « A GAME... »

Now you understand how necessary conversation is to our social lives, and to our relationship with our customers. In fact, it is one of the foundations of the relationship. You may be familiar with the saying: **"Tell me about myself, it's the only thing that interest's me"**. Well, I can assure you that, whatever the culture of your customers, they will appreciate it when you talk to them about themselves.

*I remember one day when the dreaded, typically Parisian, ultra-busy, ultra-hurried president of a fine leather goods company gave me a few minutes to introduce myself. I had two choices: the first was to give a standard presentation of my firm and its services, and the second was to tell her all about myself.*

*So I did, once she'd hung up the phone with her daughter, with whom she'd obviously just had a row, involving me in the conversation in spite of herself. I started talking about the difficulties of communicating with teenagers. A little surprised at first, she ended up confiding in me about her worries as a mother, then invited me to lunch and the deal was in the bag, no pun intended!*

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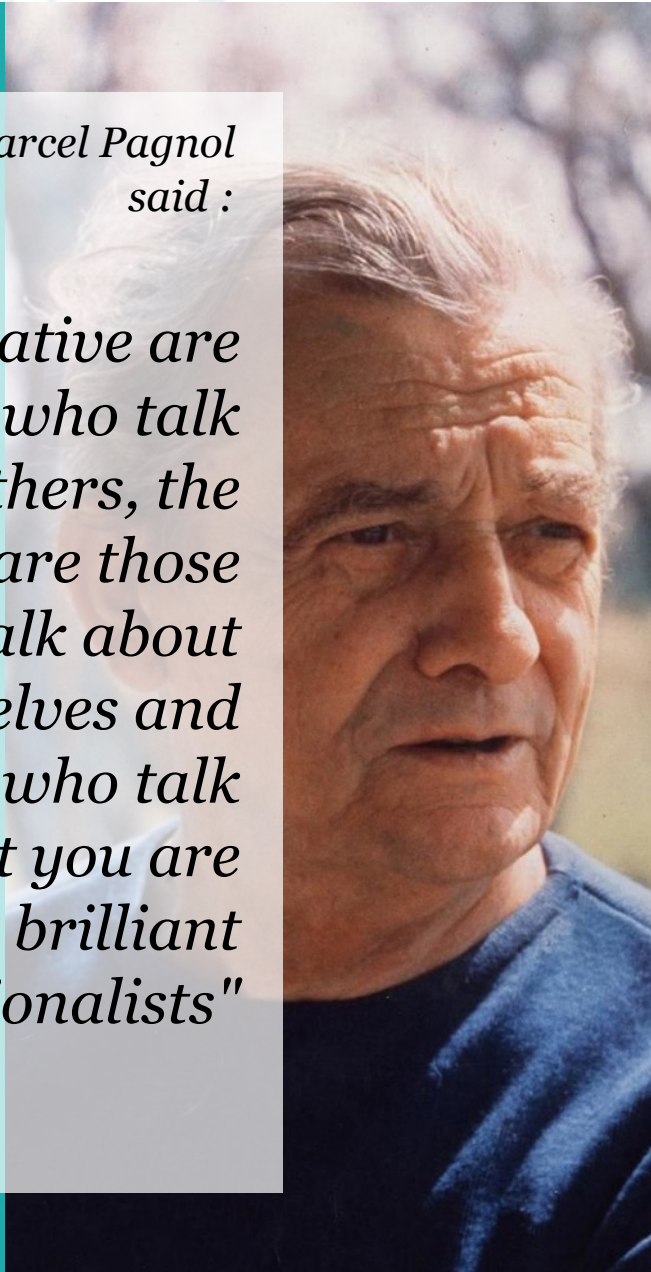


# ... OF SEDUCTION



*Marcel Pagnol  
said :*

*" The talkative are  
those who talk  
about others, the  
boring are those  
who talk about  
themselves and  
those who talk  
about you are  
brilliant  
conversationalists"*



*Conversation is a  
game of seduction,  
let's face it. It  
follows the same  
pattern as the dance  
of love. From the  
very first seconds of  
a meeting, whether  
it be personal or  
professional, from  
the frightening  
moment where we  
have to break the  
ice, **the secret is to  
talk to the other  
person about him  
or herself.***



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# « SPEAK... »

*So say little or nothing about yourself, and above all don't talk about what you're trying to sell! Take an interest in your customers and compliment them, without, of course, indulging in flattery.*

***How do you get started?** Well, ask them about their country of origin, the length of their stay in France, their family, their place of residence, the hotel where they stayed, their passions, their hobbies, the brands they like to wear, take an interest in their cat and ask them its name!*

***Demonstrate your emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills:***

*Listen to them with curiosity, humanity and empathy, without ever losing your smile or your presence.*

*Try not to follow your own agenda in the questions that you ask your customer, but follow their logic. Let yourself be surprised, let them take you where they want to go. You'll find out so much about them that the sale will be child's play and a simple consequence of the conversation !*

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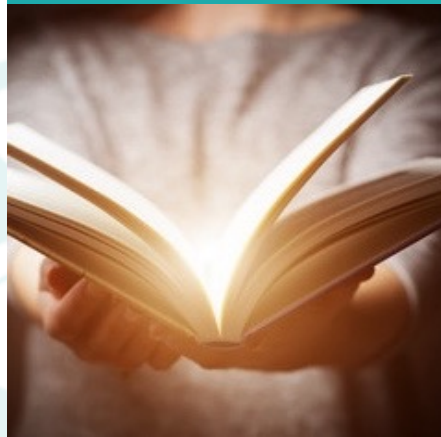
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# « ON THE DAY, »

during a training course on this subject that I was running for a very fine jewellery company, someone told me their secret: whenever a customer sits down in front of you and it's up to you to take the lead, simply start with :  
"Tell me about yourself" or "Tell me everything!".  
This very simple formula is magic, like a key that unlocks a safe.

*The customers, under the effect of this benevolent injunction, open up, revealing their desires and giving us access to their dreams.*



You've got it:  
**converting a client depends on the quality of your your conversation.**  
A good salesperson has good answers, while a great salesperson has great questions.  
Focus the conversation on the customer, not the product, this is the key to a memorable customer experience.

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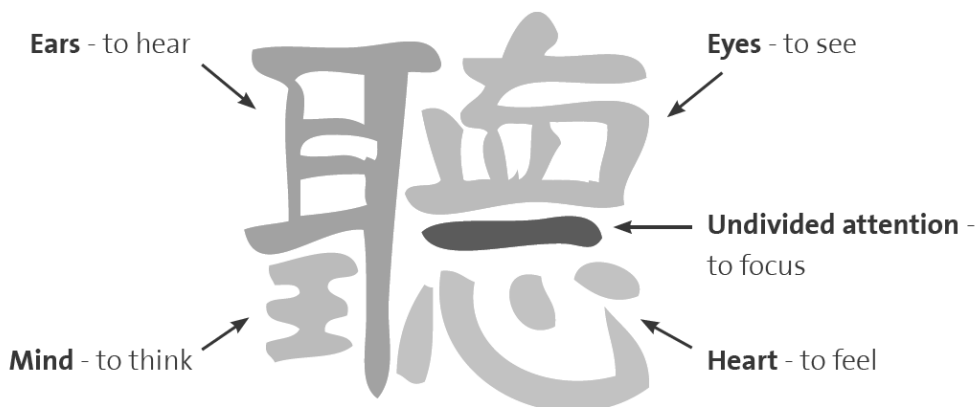


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# « LISTEN TO »

*The Chinese language is the only one in the world to have captured in a single word, a single ideogram, where there is everything you need to do to listen properly. You have to use your ears, your eyes, your mind and your heart all at the same time, to listen to the other person with undivided attention.*



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# TO CONCLUDE



**remember these 3  
requirements to  
excel in the art of  
conversation:**

**1**

**CURIOSITY**

**2**

**FOCUS ON THE  
OTHER PERSON**

**3**

**ACTIVE  
LISTENING**

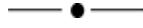
*And don't forget to  
ask the name of the  
cat !!*

*See you soon for  
another master class!*

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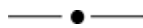
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LinkedIn post by Tristan de Fommervault published on 2 June 2016

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'All authentic conversation plays a creative and transformative function'

•  
Conversation - How Talk Can Change Our Lives - Theodore Zeldin

•  
Soul Trader - Rasheed Ogunlaru

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Trêve de bavardages - Fanny Auger



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