

CHAPTER 9 · LEADING THE CONVERSATION

STEERING *the conversation*

You can change the subject without anyone noticing. You just need a bridge.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Interactive version: attenglish.com/talk/9

PHRASE BOX SAY IT
LINK

That reminds me...
Speaking of ...
That's a bit like...

CHANGE GENTLY

By the way...
On a different note...
Can I ask you something completely different?

BRING IT BACK

Anyway, as I was saying...
Going back to what you said about...
Sorry, where was I?

LINK, CHANGE OR RETURN? SORT

Transition phrases do three jobs. Sort them. Tick one column for each.

	Link	Change	Return
That reminds me...			
By the way...			
Going back to what you said about...			
Speaking of holidays...			
On a different note...			
Anyway, as I was saying...			
That's a bit like...			
Can I ask you something completely different?			

BUILD A BRIDGE BUILD

Choose a bridge, then fill in what they're talking about, your link, and a question that takes everyone to the new topic.

What they're talking about

Your link

Your question

Put it together and write your line

STEER THE CONVERSATION **PLAY**

Your colleague is complaining about work. Your goal: get to weekend plans in three moves, without being rude. Write what you would say at each turn.

Chris: “This week's been a nightmare. Three deadlines and the printer's broken again.”

Chris: “Definitely. I just want to sleep.”

Chris: “The Friday one. But once that's done, I'm free!”

SMOOTH OR ABRUPT? **CHOOSE**

Choose the smoothest way to move the conversation on. Circle your answer.

1. Your friend is talking about her new kitchen. You want to talk about a cooking class you've joined.

- a) Speaking of kitchens, I've just joined a cooking class!
- b) Stop. I want to talk about my class.
- c) Kitchens are boring.

2. You've been talking about the weather for too long at a work event.

- a) By the way, which team are you in?
- b) Let's talk about something else, this is boring.
- c) Say nothing until they leave.

3. Someone interrupted your story and the topic changed. You want to finish it.

- a) Excuse me, I was talking!
- b) Anyway, as I was saying about the trip...
- c) Forget it.

4. Your neighbour mentions his new dog. You want to ask about the local park.

- a) Do you walk him in the park by the river? I've been meaning to explore it.
- b) I don't like dogs. Where's the park?
- c) What's your dog's star sign?

SAY IT ALOUD **SAY IT**

Practise your bridge so it sounds natural, not planned. Tick a box each time you say it aloud.

Line	Said it
That reminds me of the trip we're planning to Seville. Have you ever been to Spain?	☐ ☐ ☐
Anyway, as I was saying...	☐ ☐ ☐
By the way, can I ask you something completely different?	☐ ☐ ☐
My own line:	☐ ☐ ☐

Focus: Keep your voice light and quick on “That reminds me”.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON **REFLECT**

Which topic do you often get stuck in?

What would you like to talk about more?

Write a bridge from one to the other.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- ☐ Find a word in what they said and link from it.
- ☐ “That reminds me...” is the easiest bridge.
- ☐ “By the way...” is for a gentle change.
- ☐ “Going back to...” brings a lost topic back.
- ☐ End your bridge with a question, so they follow you.