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


on lifetime tv




Recipe for a Perfect Christmas

Think you've got holiday stress? Wait till you see what J.J. has to deal with this season when she's forced to juggle a demanding new job, a rocky romance and an unexpected visit from mommy dearest! Don't miss this festive flick, starring Christine Baranski, Carly Pope and Bobby Cannavale. Re-airs Wednesday, December 14 at 9 pm et/pt.

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feature

Be the Life of the Party
Here's how you can be the belle of every ball!

by Rachel King



You know what they say: Money can't buy love or happiness. Well, it can't buy you a great party either. So what is it that makes some events memorable — and others best forgotten? "Warmth," says Susan RoAne, author of "How to Work a Room." "It transcends food, music and weather." So skip the expensive canapés and read on to turn your next big night — whether you're a guest or the hostess — into a smashing success.

Cultivate Your Inner Charmer

You know her, you want to be her: the popular party girl on everyone's guest list. Just how does she do it? "Guests always worry about whether they will be comfortable," says RoAne. "Instead, make it your goal to make *other* people comfortable." And that little secret is the essence of true charm. Try the following:

Keep your eye on the time. Be prompt, and offer to help. It's easy to approach strangers if the host has asked you to take coats. And since guests form conversation groups early on, it's harder to mingle when you're late.

Make the first move. Go ahead and introduce yourself. Waiting for others to approach you is a common mistake. "Think of a few words that tie you to the event and tell people why you're there," RoAne suggests.

Bring your best stories. Every get-together is a conversational potluck. Share details people can't tell by looking at you but that are offbeat and intriguing — you teach a woodworking class, for example, says Robyn Spizman, author of "Make It Memorable." "People relate to real stories, not jokes," adds RoAne. "Stories are better than a bottle of wine or a box of candy."

Find common ground. Avoid asking "What do you do for a living?" (which only works for the happily employed) and focus on open-ended questions such as "Tell me about yourself." There's no better spur to chitchat than genuine curiosity, says Spizman.

Brush up on current events. You don't have to know the score, but it can't hurt to be aware of who's in the playoffs, says RoAne. And if your conversation partner

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brings up politics — and holds opinions opposite of yours — enjoy the opportunity to hear another viewpoint. Say, "I never thought of it that way." Remember: It's a party, not a debate.

Share kind words. If someone is wearing your favorite color, let her know! Compliments make people feel great, and they spark conversation, says Spizman. Talking fashion and being fashionable don't hurt either. Pin your great-grandmother's brooch to your lapel and you could end up in a great discussion about antique jewelry with a new acquaintance. But remember that eye-catching doesn't mean over-the-top. Dress appropriately!

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