

10 Ways to Be a Good Conference Roommate

Even if you've known someone for years, staying together in a hotel can be an awkward – or awesome – experience. Here are 10 suggestions for making your next conference slumber party the awesome kind.

by Anna Quindlen

In just over a week, I'll be crammed into a hotel room with three other people. None of my roommates know each other, and of the four women, I've only met one.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who's nervous about these arrangements.

Even if you've known someone for years, staying together in a hotel can be an awkward – or awesome – experience. Here are my suggestions for making your next conference slumber party the awesome kind.

Tips for Being a Good Conference Roommate

1. Get the money talk out of the way first thing. Decide early on who's going to put a deposit down for the room, as well as how you're going to divide up the costs. I loved it when my roommates for next week's conference asked if they could write me a check (I'm the one who reserved the room), and I've made sure to keep them up to date on estimated costs per person.

2. Coordinate – or at least communicate – your schedules. At a conference last year, I actually made a spreadsheet of my two roommates' and my plans. That way we knew when the room would be empty and when we could expect to hang out together. (Because, be honest: Don't you need a little bit of both?)

3. If you snore, bring nose strips. Sadly, I am guilty of snoring at times, thanks to a life-long struggle with allergies. I also tend to snore if I'm super tired – and you know how easy it is to get that way at a conference! So, much as I hate sticking those things on my nose, I'll be packing Breathe Right strips just in case my roommates catch me sawing logs.

4. Think about your pajamas from a stranger's point of view. It's possible that you sleep in fairly new, completely modest jammies. But if – like me – you gravitate toward holey t-shirts and stretchy maternity pants, take a moment to think about what your sleepwear says about you. And remember that you never know who's going to stop by your room to say hello or borrow a curling iron.

5. Bring extra hairspray and an extra necklace or two. The odds are pretty high that someone (probably me) is going to forget a crucial item. If you have it on hand and are willing to lend it out, I guarantee you'll have a friend for life. I probably would have claimed Hillary as a forever friend anyway, but loaning me a cute necklace and spraying my hair with whatever it was that held my hair in place for our date with Harry Connick.

6. Never let them see you roll your eyes. You may be completely confident that your blog rocks, not to mention that your black boots go perfectly with your plaid skirt. But the rest of us? We're a little scared. So if we ask you for the seventh time if our shirt-sweater combo looks lame, be kind and reassure us. Again.

7. Don't be a bathroom diva. I'm not saying you would ever hog the bathroom. But just in case you're tempted to revel in the ability to shower without little fingers knocking on the door or even pulling open the shower curtain, remember to be considerate. You might even discuss with your roommates who is willing to take a shower at night, so you're not setting the first alarm for 5 a.m. just to make time for everyone's morning routine.

8. Don't be a stage-five clinger. Even if you and your roomie(s) are BFFs with the exact same interests, try to branch out a little. Split up at a party, sit at different tables at lunch or check out different sponsors. You'll get the chance to meet new people and have even more to share with your roommate when you meet back in the room.

9. Do consider bringing a small gift. At the last minute last year, I decided to make business card holders for my two roommates, as well as a couple friends I was looking forward to seeing. It really didn't take me long (and I've heard that the decorative flower fell off every single one), but it was – if I say so myself – a nice thought. A few ideas for roommate gifts:

- A handmade business card holder from Half-Pint House – Affordable and super-cute, these are the buttoned pouches I took my roomies at Savvy Blogging Summit.
- [A wristlet/clutch from Gussy](#) – Adorable and perfect for carrying your hotel key, cash and lip gloss to sessions!
- Water bottles or mini tubes of lotion – Airplanes and hotels are notoriously dry, so help a sister out and keep her hydrated! I just saw on [CafePress](#) that you can personalize water bottles – perhaps with your blog logo?!
- Baked goods, candy, trashy magazines – Anything you and your blog friends don't normally indulge in at home might be a fun treat at the conference. So, grab a stash before you leave home, and bring enough to share!

10. Stay in touch after the conference. Assuming you bonded with your roommates and had a good time together, make an effort to keep in contact after you go home. Link to your roomies in your conference recap post, remember to RT their Twitter posts and like them on Facebook. The best part of blog conferences is the support network and friendships you can develop in a few days, so nurture those relationships. It will make rooming together next year so much less nerve-wracking!