Making a Great First Impression!

It takes just a quick glance, maybe three seconds, for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time. In this short time, the other person forms an opinion about you based on your appearance, your body language, your demeanor, your mannerisms, and how you are dressed.

With every new encounter, you are evaluated and yet another person’s impression of you is formed. These first impression can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo, making these first encounters extremely important, for they set the tone for all the relationships that follows.

So, whether they are in your career or social life, it’s important to know how to create a good first impression. This article provides some useful tips to help you do this.

Be on Time

Someone you are meeting for the first time is not interested in your “good excuse” for running late. Plan to arrive a few minutes early. And allow flexibility for possible delays in traffic or taking a wrong turn. Arriving early is much better that arriving late, hands down, and is the first step in creating a great first impression.

Be Yourself, Be at Ease

If you are feeling uncomfortable and on edge, this can make the other person ill at ease and that’s a sure way to create the wrong impression. If you are calm and confident, so the other person will feel more at ease, and so have a solid foundation for making that first impression a good one. See our section on relaxation techniques to find out how to calm that adrenaline!

Present Yourself Appropriately

Of course physical appearance matters. The person you are meeting for the first time does not know you and your appearance is usually the first clue he or she has to go on.

But it certainly does not mean you need to look like a model to create a strong and positive first impression. (Unless you are interviewing with your local model agency, of course!)

No. The key to a good impression is to present yourself appropriately.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and so the “picture” you first present says much about you to the person you are meeting. Is your appearance saying the right things to help create the right first impression?

Start with the way you dress. What is the appropriate dress for the meeting or occasion? In a business setting, what is the appropriate business attire? Suit, blazer, casual? And ask yourself what the person you’ll be meeting is likely to wear - if your contact is in advertising or the music industry, a pinstripe business suit may not strike the right note!

For business and social meetings, appropriate dress also varies between countries and cultures, so it’s something that you should pay particular attention to when in an unfamiliar setting or country. Make sure you know the traditions and norms.

And what about your personal grooming? Clean and tidy appearance is appropriate for most business and social occasions. A good haircut or shave. Clean and tidy clothes. Neat and tidy make up. Make sure your grooming is appropriate and helps make you feel “the part”.

Appropriate dressing and grooming help make a good first impression and also help you feel “the part”, and so feel more calm and confident. Add all of this up and you are well on your way to creating a good first
impression.

A Word about Individuality

The good news is you can usually create a good impression without total conformity or losing your individuality. Yes, to make a good first impression you do need to "fit in" to some degree. But it all goes back to being appropriate for the situation. If in a business setting, wear appropriate business attire. If at a formal evening social event, wear appropriate evening attire. And express your individuality appropriately within that context.

A Winning Smile!

"Smile and the world smiles too."

So there’s nothing like a smile to create a good first impression. A warm and confident smile will put both you and the other person at ease. So smiling is a winner when it comes to great first impressions. But don’t go overboard with this - people who take this too far can seem insincere and smarmy, or can be seen to be "lightweights".

(*Author Unknown)

Be Open and Confident

When it comes to making the first impression, body language as well as appearance speaks much louder than words.

Use your body language to project appropriate confidence and self-assurance. Stand tall, smile (of course), make eye contact, greet with a firm handshake. All of this will help you project confidence and encourage both you and the other person to feel better at ease.

Almost everyone gets a little nervous when meeting someone for the first time, which can lead to nervous habits or sweaty palms. By being aware of your nervous habits, you can try to keep them in check. And controlling a nervous jitter or a nervous laugh will give you confidence and help the other person feel at ease. Again, see our section on relaxation techniques for help with this.

Small Talk Goes a Long Way...

Conversations are based on verbal give and take. It may help you to prepare questions you have for the person you are meeting for the first time beforehand. Or, take a few minutes to learn something about the person you meet for the first time before you get together. For instance, does he play golf? Does she work with a local charitable foundation?

Is there anything that you know of that you have in common with the person you are meeting? If so, this can be a great way to open the conversation and to keep it flowing.

Be Positive

Your attitude shows through in everything you do. Project a positive attitude, even in the face of criticism or in the case of nervousness. Strive to learn from your meeting and to contribute appropriately, maintaining an upbeat manner and a smile.

Be Courteous And Attentive

It goes without saying that good manners and polite, attentive and courteous behavior help make a good first impression. In fact, anything less can ruin the one chance you have at making that first impression. So be on your best behavior!
One modern manner worth mentioning is “turn off your mobile phone”. What first impression will you create if you are already speaking to someone other than the person you are meeting for the first time? Your new acquaintance deserves 100% of your attention. Anything less and you’ll create a less than good first impression.

**Key Points**

You have just a few seconds to make a good first impression and it’s almost impossible ever to change it. So it’s worth giving each new encounter your best shot. Much of what you need to do to make a good impression is common sense. But with a little extra thought and preparation, you can hone your intuitive style and make every first impression not just good but great.

---

**Why Eye Contact is Important and Tips About Eye Contact**

*By Chris Collins*

One of the biggest tools we have that build rapport with people is our eyes. In two small parts of the body we can convey almost every emotion and feeling we have. Because of this fact it is almost key that we learn how to make proper eye contact with people. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and you could not meet there eyes. Instantly you could imagine yourself falling down the ladder of control and you have lost.

Just as eye contact can convey many things eye contact also masks many things. When you were a child and you were trying to lie to your parents, one of the main ways they could tell, was because you could not maintain confident eye contact with them. It is also a proven fact that when you are meeting a woman, maintaining eye contact is a way to promote interest. However when you meet a woman and cannot maintain eye contact chances are once again you have lost the rapport you could gain. In the business world eye contact is used to maintain conviction, confidence, and trust.

Realistically many people are unable to obtain eye contact for long periods of time. It makes them uncomfortable. This can make relations with people different and may mean you do not have confidence in yourself. Here are some tips:

If you cannot look directly into someones eyes try locking both of your eyes with one of theirs. Chances are they will not be able to tell the difference. At the same time you can gain a level of confidence knowing you are tricking them. If you are still unable to look this person in the eyes, look directly at the tip of their nose. In this case, they have no idea you are not looking in there eyes.

There is a large difference between staring and eye contact. Staring can be interpreted as intimidating. However eye contact can convey so many things just in one look. Once you have mastered the basics of eye contact you will find many doors opening up for you.

After eye contact, you can start learning about other areas of body language. There are many things you can learn from people and nearly half of them all come from the eyes.

Being able to maintain eye contact will let every one know you are a confident, cool character. By allowing pleasant interactions with people you will be able to excel your social situations. With honesty and a sense of confidence people, the people in your life my see a side to you they did not know existed.

---

2010 © Associated Content, All rights reserved.
Privacy Policy | Terms of Use