10 Tips to Help You Make a Positive First Impression:
You Only Get One Chance!
By Victoria Munro

You only have a few seconds to make that positive first impression! Experts tell us that in those first few seconds, you make an indelible impression that may be impossible to reverse.

It’s Not What You Say
When meeting someone, your nonverbal communication (body language, appearance, tone of voice, etc.) accounts for 93 percent of how you will be judged, and the actual words you say make up for only 7 percent.

Ensuring that the other person feels important is key to making your best possible first impression. So be sure to allow him or her to bask in the spotlight.

Ten Top Tips to Help You Make the Best Possible First Impression:

1. The Initial Contact
Use your whole body to express how eager you are to meet this person, and show excitement and anticipation at the prospect. Act as though he or she is a dear friend you haven’t seen for a long time—or perhaps someone who is going to become a wonderful new friend.

2. Eye Contact
Our eyes—the windows of our soul—reveal the truth about our sincerity. Hold a good thought about the other person. Show that you’re interested and listening to what he or she has to say.

3. Facial Expression
Smile! Smile with your eyes as well as your mouth. Smiling slowly conveys genuineness as you’re developing a true appreciation of the person. Smiling also releases endorphins that make us feel better.

4. The Handshake
The way we hold another’s hand will express presence and enthusiasm or send a negative message. Offer a firm handshake, with thumb notches contacting each other. Maintain the contact for at least two seconds.

5. Body Posture
Energy is key! No matter how you may feel—work at putting yourself in a happy frame of mind. Leaning forward ever so slightly will express your interest.

6. Dress
The dress-for-success advocates were right—your appearance does have an impact. Dress modestly and appropriately for the occasion. Colors also make a profound, immediate impression.

7. Name Recall
The sweetest word for all of us is our own name! Using people’s names emphasizes their importance to us. It can also help us to remember their names.
8. Sincere Compliments
Offer honest compliments on a person’s appearance, actions, skills, character or attitude. Be specific and sincere. When expressing admiration about an action or character trait, explain how this affected you—perhaps it inspired or encouraged you.

9. Listen
Never interrupt or give the impression that you’re simply waiting for an opportunity to talk about yourself and what you do. Pay careful attention, nodding occasionally to show that you’re listening and comment, “Really?” or “I understand.”

10. Asking That First Question
Begin the conversation with a question that indicates a genuine interest in the other person. Develop some thoughtful initial conversation starter questions you can use. Resist the temptation to simply ask, “And what do you do?”

People do business with people they know, like and trust. Use these tips to grow your business by making a positive and lasting first impression whenever you meet someone for the first time.

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