

# Influencing Skills Tip Sheet



## Bear your teeth

Smiles and laughter increase secretion of positive hormones like endorphins (natural painkillers) and serotonin (mood regulators). Indirectly you make people feel good too. We mirror other and *it's hard not to smile back at someone smiling at you*. So, you indirectly make them feel good. It's amazing how we can develop rapport with others through imitating their expressions and movements. When you smile your voice also becomes more positive and lively, evoking more positive responses from others. Smile. You're good for yourself and others when you do!

## Give. Give. Give.

What goes around comes around... Treat others how you would be treated... you've heard these. Don't interpret these as giving to receive. Give to others first. Help them out where you can. *Be remembered*. When someone mentions their birthday, put it in your diary – even if it was last week. When you send a card next year they'll be stunned. Just be generous however you can. When your *thoughtfulness builds trust and a reputation* of "someone who does" then you'll receive rewards. It's a numbers game – you won't necessarily receive from those to whom you gave! Be generous with words and actions. Be appreciative.

## Waffle does not wash!

Expletives demonstrate lack of vocabulary or control, albeit heightening expression. Although increasingly socially acceptable it doesn't serve us well, clouding our message or confusing our point. Likewise, when we write and speak, ensuring *a purpose for every word* enables the receiver to process less information, to understand your real point faster, in less time. Tabloid journalists can be some of the world's best because they know how to be concise without jargon yet in a way making sense to any audience. How off-putting is it when someone says "um" every other word? Make every word count.

## Kill your speed

Just how a speeding car is a danger to the public, your speaking can kill your communication. If you're enthusiastic or well-versed, it's easy to "rattle" off what you know and feel. Imagine figures of authority, respected for command, intelligence, wisdom or power. Mafioso gang-leaders, presidents, The Pope and Dumbledore from Harry Potter all have their audiences hanging on every well-pronounced word of carefully considered sentences. At speed, we'd miss their words. Allow people to digest what you say. Be surprised by your response!

## Apologising is off the menu.

When someone says "sorry to bother you, but..." doesn't it make you suspicious? Hence, starting requests with apologies can result in long-winded or uncertain replies. If you want to ask someone to do it, you need to ask them as if they'll do it. *Credit yourself* with not being a timewaster of others and get to it. Use a brief statement "For the <occasion/event/subject/piece of work>" followed by the request "Would you do <the task> by <date/time> please?" When it sounds simple, it's assumed to be simple. Let them say if they can't or needing further information. *You have nothing to be "sorry" for!*

## Be visionary

Someone else's nostalgia or regrets and disappointments are just that, theirs. To influence others to move forward with you, you need to concentrate on now. Keep reminding them of the aims for the future. *Share your goals*. People can be part of your future. You can say "what I want is..." and no matter what someone says, they can't deny your wants. They are, after all, just wants. Saying "but it's what I want" can intrigue others to come along for the ride when you demonstrate such enthusiasm, belief and tenacity. People want to be around those who are going somewhere.

“Let me watch the movie”

When someone talks all the way through a film, is it annoying? Do you miss the best bits? You might say “sssh, I’m watching this” when they’re not preventing you watching, but preventing you hearing (unless you’re a lip-reader). It’s no fun. You have to hear a movie for it to have impact. The same goes for people. You can’t comment on a movie if you don’t hear it. You can’t create a real opinion about people without hearing them out. To get the point across, some say we have two ears and one mouth to use them proportionately. When you want to influence another, it’s best to listen and collect your own evidence. Then you can choose how you should react. So, let people speak and let their movie unravel.

Questions for the shy and bolshy

This may come as a surprise, but the same techniques work for those who know they are shy and those who know they can be interpreted as overpowering. *It’s simple* – ask questions.

- For the shy, you can avoid speaking about yourself by asking “What” (is your name), “How” (far did you have to travel here?), “When” (did you hear about this event?) “Who” (else do you know here?). You can relax into a normal conversation.
- For the far-from-shy, by asking these questions you won’t intimidate or offend by waltzing into talking about yourself or your opinion. Keep finding out more and don’t offer information about yourself for 5 minutes or until they ask, whichever is first. You’ll develop a rapport by showing interest. It’s a softly-softly win-win approach.

Coach not critic

If someone praises and encourages you, you respond with the energy and desire to improve. We’re not always happy with what others do or how they do it but if you want something doing differently, *sandwich* your feedback. Slice of Bread 1: Mention something (genuine) that you find great about the person’s talents or work. The filling (excuse me veggies but this really is the meat of the conversation): Then enthuse when you make a suggestion such as “I’d really like to see you try <a different way>” with a reason “to bring out <a compliment e.g. your true talent, what can be great about this project>”. Follow with Slice of Bread 2: Another compliment. This way you’re building on a foundation of respect and ability. No-one wants a short, sharp, shock.

The icing on the cake

What one thing will pay off across everything you do?

For assertiveness, trust, time management, earning respect, a peace of mind and many others....by applying one principle you can make life easier and work more rewarding....*integrity!* Day-to-day it’s being true to yourself, your word and others. How?

- Assertiveness – say you can and can’t do what you really can and can’t. Speak the truth.
- Trust – build trust by saying what you mean and maintaining promises
- Time Management – being realistic, delivering on time
- Respecting others - by demonstrating integrity
- Peace of Mind – knowing you’ve nothing to hide

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