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First Impressions - turn fear into courage

By Peter Murphy

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The top business people all say the same thing - first impressions count. Sounds easy, and it is easy for those few who can start a conversation with just about anyone but how many people do you know who are like that?

On the other hand when you're shy it's easy to avoid other people, shyness automatically comes with a PhD in how to creatively avoid people, especially strangers! However this tendency can prove detrimental to your business especially when you consider that your ultimate success can depend on approaching people and making a great first impression.

There is a better way; it is possible to use your mind in a simple yet powerful way that will make it easy for you to make a fantastic first impression. It involves applying peak performance principles in a special way.

Here's what I do when I'm at a conference and I spot someone I know that I ought to say Hello to although my initial tendency is to just avoid them and hope that they don't see me.

First of all, feel yourself standing tall, just pretend that you feel dynamic, powerful and enthusiastic and take on that posture. Breathe deeply, chest out, and smile so wide that you can feel the stretch in your cheeks. Even if you make believe you will still tend to come across far better with whoever you approach.

Then, as you approach him or her, hear yourself saying HI or HELLO inside your head. The key is to make the sound very, very loud

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inside your head, really exaggerate it to impress your mind with your intention.

Finally, visualize that person smiling as they recognize you and make sure to go overboard with the imagined picture in your mind as well. Make the picture twice as big as life size, make it 3D, in rich color and very bright and up close in your mind's eye.

All this takes just a few seconds when you get good at it, at first you may find it tricky, practice it with people you see about town and you'll soon find yourself greeting more people.

I also use this technique when I'm waiting in line at the bank, in a store etc. That way you get an opportunity to be friendlier with whoever is serving you and with the other people waiting in line.

In a short time you will find it easier and easier to start conversations with people you would not have dared to approach in the past. Do this day after day and the cumulative effect on your business will be staggering.

Keys to success:

1 Practice this skill daily until it becomes second nature to you.

2 Teach your staff how to approach people as well, by teaching this skill you will become even better yourself.

3 Remind yourself of the negative implications of not making a great first impression and the long-term effect on your business.

Peter Murphy is a peak performance expert and published author. Subscribe FREE to his upbeat newsletter and get a FREE e-book, Abolish Shyness - Steps to Success, which reveals secret strategies for supercharging your communication skills. To join send an email to: AbolishShynessToday-subscribe@topica.com

Three guiding principles of courage (and it's development)

By Tracy Brinkmann

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I have come under the personal belief that everyone is a leader to someone. Whether that someone be an employee (or thousands of employees), your spouse, a child or at the simplest level, oneself - you are a leader. As a leader you have the responsibility to develop a level of courage first within your self, then to instill that level of courage in those that look to you for your leadership. It is key to note here that you must first achieve a level of courage within yourself before you even attempt to instill it in those around you. Why? Well the answer is simple... how on earth can you pass on that which you do not have? You will never be able to encourage others beyond the very level of courage that you carry and demonstrate on a regular basis. Your level of courage is the only limiting bar. Raise that bar and you raise your ability to encourage others.

The three guiding principles around raising that courageous bar are:

1. Courage = Controlling you fear.

Growing up in a military environment taught me one thing that I know is fact – Everyone is afraid of something (often many things). From the 6 foot Army Veteran who has served many months on the front lines, to the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, fear is a fact in each of their lives. But throughout history our true heroes were not the men and women that were not afraid, but rather those that faced their fear, acted in spite of it, and moved forward to overcome its choke hold on their lives.

2. Face your fears.

Realize that your fear is going to exist and maintain its control on your life, until you face it. Once you face it -YOU will gain control and your fear will falter, thus lessening its grip on your life. However, let us not forget that the opposite is just as true. While moving towards that which you fear weakens that fear, avoiding it and heading away from that very same dread will empower and strengthen it, thus increasing its strangle hold on your life.

Make facing your fear a habit–knit part of your life. Consciously and continuously take steps to chip away at that fear. Look at every situation or task that induces fear in you as a challenge, or an opportunity for you to become more than you are today. To become more of what you want to be.

Last but not least - this one has almost said itself...

3. Do what you fear and that fear's demise is certain.

At the risk of repeating myself – do what you fear over and over again and your fear will lose its hold on you. A perfect example comes to mind. For many, public speaking is a number one fear. I have been a member of an outstanding Toastmasters International Club in Atlanta for 7+ years. In our weekly meetings we watch those that would never willingly get up in front of an audience and speak overcome that fear. They do so by taking a little step closer each week. First they get up and answer a simple

impromptu question - a quick thirty–second answer and they rush back to their seat. Next time they will give a two to three minute speech about themselves. Shortly after that a three to four minute speech on a topic they are passionate about. Step by step they build their skills and remove the chokehold that the fear of public speaking had upon their lives and their careers. Take what you fear and break it down, face it step by step until you are the one empowered.

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Zig Ziglar said it quite well in a presentation I attended, "Fear = F.E.A.R or False Evidence Appears Real." Time and time again you have thought about taking the action that you fear. Your mind ran through all the possible outcomes positive and negative. Then your imagination, fed by your fear, led you further down the negative path. Thus feeding your fear again. Leading you further down the negative path... I'm sure you see the pattern developing here. Break that pattern! Turn and face your fear! Take conscious and continuous steps towards it, as often as you can, until you are the one with the control.

Think successfully!
Tracy

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