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Talk to Impress!

by Ivan Maclean

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About the Author

Ivan Maclean has considerable experience as a successful public speaker and has written speeches and other material for many people.

However, this book is not just for those who want or need to speak in public. Ivan says that he has gathered the best tips and techniques which were used by him and many other speakers. He explains them for the benefit of speakers among his readers, and also makes suggestions about those tips which can help everyone who wants to be more effective with their everyday communication in both business and personal situations.

"Public speaking" is one of the major causes of stress for many people, second only to an extended session in their dentist's chair.

But, most of those people don't worry about "speaking in public" with one or one hundred people every day.

Those readers that want to become better at formal speaking will get some great information from the book, presented in a way that they can quickly make use of.

But, Ivan's focus with this ebook is to help people use the ideas of many professional speakers to help them be more interesting and effective in their daily communication.

Ivan said, "I believe that this ebook will be a great help to all readers in achieving their personal and professional goals."

"There's nothing complicated or hard to master or I would not have been able to do it!"

Try a few of these tips from professional presenters and see how they help you make all your communications more effective and popular!

Introduction

Over many years speaking at business and other events, I have found that many people have some fear of speaking at events themselves.

But, these same people are very casual about speaking to groups in their work and social spheres every day. Sometimes those groups are much larger than some of the audiences at a few functions I've attended.

The impression that we make in everyday social and business encounters can have consequences for us in years to come.

It is also true that many people are uncomfortable when mixing with groups even on a casual basis.

Some other people are casual about it to the point that they cause problems for themselves and others quite unintentionally. The results of a poorly judged action or comment can cause problems for them which may not be resolved for a long time.

That's why I decide to write this ebook. The suggestions I explain are based on my personal experience and tips which I learned from watching other speakers and also many people that were mostly not professional speakers, but very good mixers at social and business functions.

Using ideas from speakers to make better connections in our day-to-day interactions is not much different to learning tips from the professionals in our favorite sport and using them to the best of our ability in our own games.

I believe that you will find some help here in my ebook for your social and business networking. Some ideas will probably be known to you and others will be a different twist on something you've heard about or even used yourself.

I hope these suggestions will help you make a great impression at all times.

Use your judgment about what best suits you and your circumstances.

You won't know how good you are or can be until you try.

Ivan MacLean

Making a Quick Connection

It's common for people to put little effort into learning about people they have just met in the course of their day.

But, that effort in learning about them could help you in any future dealings which you have with them and also give them a great impression of you.

If you are planning to attend a business event, you will find the event much more valuable if you prepare yourself.

Linking what you say when meeting some new people to their interests is always worthwhile.

Speakers often spend significant time checking the specific interests of the groups and particularly any especially important individuals who will be in their audiences. Then, they can fine-tune their presentation so that it has the maximum possible appeal to those groups.

The first couple of minutes of their talk might be specially prepared to draw the attention of the particular group they are making the presentation to.

This technique is widely used by comedians. When they are touring, they get the local newspapers delivered to each hotel where they stay and look for local events and concerns which they may be able to tie to jokes they are currently using.

This helps to improve their connection with those in their audience who are not already their fans.

If you can include a few references to the comments or background of people you are talking with at an event, it will encourage them to listen to and appreciate you and what you say.

You Won’t Know Until You Have a Go!

Edison’s Advice: Thomas Edison was not the first person to think of the light bulb. He is the person who stayed on the task which he set for himself, despite hundreds of attempts which did not work out, until he was able to exhibit a working bulb.

His story illustrates something which I have seen repeated by many other successful people. Their breakthrough moment was often just a short distance past the point where they felt closest to failure.

It reinforces the old truism that there’s often just a short distance between the winner of the race and the next closest, but that little gap results in much less reward and recognition for the also-ran.

It also tells me that we probably don’t know how much we are capable of achieving.

The suggestion that you probably have more ability than you are aware of is a fanciful notion to some readers, but there is a growing body of documented research which supports it.

But, when you make an effort to improve your ability in any particular area, you might be surprised at the amount of benefits which come to you from that decision and your follow-through.

Even a small improvement is likely to help you deal with similar matters better in the future.

There are also likely to be some measurable side-benefits as well:

- ✓ Your self-image will improve and you will be more comfortable when you are faced with other challenges even though they may be outside your comfort zone.
- ✓ Your positive attitude will attract the notice of more people that have similar attitudes and goals to yourself.

When you start or join a conversation, you need to take the necessary time to be introduced to everyone, learn the common interests of the group and where their interests might coincide with some of yours.

Like me, you have probably had the unfortunate experience of trying to have a conversation with someone who thinks everyone is as knowledgeable and as interested in the fine details of their job or other favorite topic as they are.

It can be a difficult situation to make any progress with. The best tactic I have found is to interrupt and ask for them to explain it more simply and with particular reference as to how you or the group can use the information.

If someone does not suggest that the topic be explained so all of the group can understand, you could all be wasting some time for no good result.

Making a Lasting Impression.

When someone makes a formal presentation, they have to ensure that they carefully prepare every factor which affects their delivery.

The three main things which affect the impression that people get when you speak to them are:

- 1)** What you say.
- 2)** How you say it, and
- 3)** Your overall appearance and attitude.

Although we tend to put most of our preparation time in preparing the words which we say, some studies indicate that how we say it is likely to have a greater effect on how our audience responds to our message. The attitude and degree of our interest in the audience may sometimes have the most effect of all!

This would vary with different types of presentations and presenters. But, it strongly suggests that we need to give adequate preparation time to all factors that we have some control over, especially when we have just a limited amount of time to make a lasting connection.

In everyday life, when we are starting a conversation that does not know us, that period could be under a minute. If that seems too short, watch the reactions of a group you know well when someone next joins the group and introduces themselves. I suggest that you watch people you know because the length of time they give the new person to make an impression will be more obvious to you.

What You Say

There are a number of things which you need to work on if you want to get the best response to what you say.

The people who are listening to you will be less interested if you start talking about something which is different to the subject they were discussing.

If you want them to listen to you but then get them interested in a different topic, you will have to lead them to your topic with some sort of logical bridging comment from their present topic.

Make sure that they don't get an impression that you have hijacked the conversation just to suit your own objectives.

Although you can talk about other's experiences and information, they will usually be more interested if there is something which is based on your personal experience or research or which involves someone they all know as well as yourself..

If you repeat what you found out from other people, try to include some feedback based on your own tests of their claims.

Don't monopolize everyone's attention or time. Comment on something someone else said, or give some information you discovered and maybe ask them for their views about it.

If the conversation drifts or is forcibly moved away from the area which you are most interested in or affected by, just go with the flow.

Try to make some worthwhile contribution from time to time and accept that you may have to wait for another occasion before you can discuss your favorite topic with them.

How You Say It

You should always present yourself as the same person – be natural in the way you deliver your words.

You might want to be a little more polished at a formal occasion or when you are representing your business than you are in less formal meetings, but people will soon see through any artificial manner you adopt.

This will cause most people to discount the worth of your statements even though they may not seem to do it during your discussion.

When you speak, always focus your attention on the people who are listening to you. If you appear distracted by other people or happenings elsewhere in the area, those you are speaking with are likely to lose interest in you and what you are saying.

The best way to get a good reception for what you say is to show a sincere interest in your new friends or business associates’ comments.

You can repeat what someone said in your own words to check that you understood them or try to link some comments to what other people have said during the conversation.

This acknowledges that you value their input and that you have been listening, not just thinking about what you would say when you got the chance!

Nobody wins an Argument.

Don’t let anything pass which you strongly disagree with or which you don’t understand. Ask politely for more information or clarification.

Put your own view if that seems appropriate, or perhaps arrange to discuss the matter with that particular person at a more appropriate occasion.

Don’t let any disagreements which directly involve you become personal. If other people in the group have a disagreement, let them sort it out unless they make it clear that they would welcome other people’s input.

The one sure thing about an argument is there will always be a loser. Unless you are very careful, it is probable that any argument will result in both

parties losing.

No-one that becomes involved in a heated disagreement is likely to get as much benefit as they would have if they had resolved the argument or kept their discussion civil and reasoned.

The best course when people cannot reach agreement, is to agree to disagree and move the discussion on to a subject which all members of the group may be interested in and able to contribute to.

Anyone that is regularly involved in public disagreements is likely to create a poor impression with other people in the vicinity and not just those in the group he is with.

That can result in fewer opportunities to connect positively with a lot of people over a fairly short time.

See Us as Others Do

As you would expect, every speaker does a careful, last-minute check of their appearance just before they go to the platform. That check is just some extra insurance.

TheyI've already run through everything before they started their trip to the venue.

In daily life, it can be very important to have a realistic as possible an idea of how you sound and look when you are with other people.

Speakers will record everything they do with a video camera and can usually get some reliable feedback from members of their family and friends who attend some of the events.

I suggest that it is worthwhile for all of my readers to see themselves on video or at least get a recording of their normal speaking voice.

It's important that you don't use a special voice or make notes about what you will say.

Be your own Advisor

I know how strange my voice sounded to me the first time I heard a recording of it. I felt that same shock to a lesser extent when I first saw myself on a video.

That was despite the fact that I had already been speaking a while before I heard and saw the recordings!

I can recommend that you put yourself through that experience as soon as possible.

When we are speaking, we do not hear our voice as other people do. What we hear is affected by the bones of our skull and our own mental impression.

Most people I have suggested do this have been very surprised and none has really been disappointed.

Many people do worry about the way they speak or how they look. This can be a major factor which stops them from taking up opportunities to make

presentations or to meet new people.

That is a great pity.

I think you should take a chance which is offered to you for the experience and also for the extra confidence which you get when you are warmly received.

Most people have had similar experiences themselves and will be ready to give you a fair hearing.

If you want to do presentations, I suggest that you join Toastmasters or other community organizations which have sessions or, like Toastmasters, thorough programs which can develop your natural ability and help you gain experience in formal and also spontaneous speaking.

This sort of experience is valuable for almost everyone who is in business or who may want to express themselves better.

If there are aspects of your appearance or voice which concern you, try smiling a bit more. That and a genuine interest in the people around you are the biggest assets you can have.

It's not vanity to want to improve your own appearance and personal style. It's really good for your own confidence to know you are presenting yourself well and it is also a kindness to your friends!

But, don't plan to make any significant changes if you are already getting a good response.

If you can get a video of you in a social or business setting, you may also discover small annoying mannerisms or things you say which you might want to modify or discard. These may be quite insignificant – that's your decision.

These actions start without our noticing and become ingrained habits over time.

With the low cost and wide availability of good equipment today, you might find that you can do it all yourself. Otherwise, get your partner or close friend to help.

I know some people that have made videos and given feedback of each

other. That has been very useful for them.

It’s worthwhile to make another video after a few months to see the improvement, if you have been seriously trying to improve. Don’t worry if you see less changes than you hoped.

Changing deep-rooted habits needs time and consistent effort.

So don’t worry if you cannot stop the habit. Worrying about it may cause you more problems than the effects of the habit does!

I am not qualified to advise about changing habits or modes of speech. I believe that being successful in either area without at least some professional, paid guidance is likely to be stressful and take a lot of effort and time.

Feedback

We often may wonder about what effect we have on the people that we mix with.

Speakers and other performers can usually tell from the response of the organizations which they have worked for - if they get more bookings, they must have done well.



But, they don't leave it at that. They sometimes try to get people who hired them to give them feedback. Some will, but most just say, "We'll let you know if there are any problems."

And, they like to leave it at that, possibly because it doesn't put them under any sort of obligation or risk that a casual comment after a booking might be mis-used as some

sort of official endorsement.

I heard of one speaker who hid in cubicle in the men's toilet after he had done his presentation to try to get some unguarded feedback from people that had seen his talk.

I don't know whether he heard anything to his advantage. But, that does show the importance which we place on reliable feedback.

We take any genuine feedback from clients or members of the audiences gratefully, but know that many audience members will be either more negative or more charitable than the majority, who don't directly offer any feedback, might be.

It's very hard to get unbiased information.

So, I understand that many people would also like feedback about the impression which people got of them in their day to day encounters and social events.

Your best indicator is the reaction you see when you are in the group and

their questions and comments directed at you.

That reinforces the importance of focusing on the people you are with so that you can make a genuine contribution as a listener as well as when you speak.

But, the best advice I have come from a friend that said, "People should not worry much about what people think of them. Most people don't think about people outside their immediate circle at all. They are all listening to **W.I.I.F.M.** (everybody's favorite radio station "**What's In It for Me?**") and thinking about next week's football game."

Anyway, you can't do much about what they think of you (IF they do!) except by treating them as you would want to be treated.

And, worrying can probably cause you more problems than they are likely to.

Useful or Fluff?

This is a vital consideration for anyone who wants to really connect with the people that they talk to.

Do you talk to be understood or just to be heard?

If what you say is not focused as closely as possible to the interests of the people you are talking to, they will soon turn off from listening to you.

That is likely to mean that they will also avoid listening to what you might want to say to them on future occasions as well.

You should comment only when you have something relevant to add to the discussion.

Using Humor is Easy

Almost every speaker will use some humor even when their topic is serious.

I am sure that you do when you are talking informally.

So, I'm including these tips which I believe will help you to get better results than you may have in the past, even just a little bit.

Making jokes which might reflect against any particular person, whether or not they are present, will almost inevitably rebound on the joker at some time.

Some people do make negative, supposedly funny, comments about other people but they are not likely to enhance their social or business appeal with anyone that matters.

So, who else is there?

Just you, yourself!

You may have noticed that experienced comedians will often use themselves as the butt of their jokes. It is much safer and it follows a tradition, first used by jesters and clowns, that has been continued by all sorts of funny people through the centuries.

Don't just tell jokes unless you're at a joke-telling competition.

If you don't have anything at all to say which is interesting and funny, put your joke into a story which connects with the interests of the people you are with.

If you're a really good comedian, have a go professionally. If your jokes don't get a great, honest reaction, put lots of space and mildly serious material between them or be ready to put lots of space between you and the people you told them to.

Don't use any jokes which you heard in the last few weeks on TV or through other media. The people in your area may also have heard and remember them. That means you will be competing with their recollection of the joke being told by a popular professional comedian and it's very likely you'll come off second best.

Even if you think you have the greatest joke of all time, don't jump in to tell it to the group you are with if they're discussing something else which is engaging their interest.

When someone else tells a joke, give them at least a generous smile. Never try to top their joke or tell a slightly different version.

A comedian I know said, “We should always be prepared to be a good audience for each other.”

That also means not saying the punch line with them or following up with another joke too quickly. Give them time to enjoy their applause.

That's one area where the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do for you”, can pay lasting dividends. Although you probably don't need this to motivate you to support someone else when they are speaking, it's very likely that they and their friends in the group will give you a good hearing whenever they are in group that you are speaking with.

Dealing with Criticism

Our Mistakes

It is inevitable that we will have to handle some problems that are the result of our own mistakes.

No one is immune from making them, whatever our level of experience and however hard we try to avoid them.

Proper preparation will help us to keep our mistakes to a minimum. Learning as much as we can about the people we are meeting and remembering what they tell us is a good start.

If they are made aware of mistakes that they have made, some people become defensive or even feel offended.

But, you should ask them for all relevant details. Give the other person the time they need to explain the problem and their views about who or what caused it.

Until you have those details, you cannot decide the most appropriate response, whether or not you were actually at fault.

Often, the problem only escalates if the person making a complaint is not given time to explain their view of the situation or is blocked from connecting with someone that can do something about the matter.

Thank the person who tells you about the error because making their concerns known often takes some personal courage.

They are really doing you a favor; if no-one tells you about something you did wrongly, you will very likely keep doing it and cause more problems for yourself in future.

If it was your mistake, apologize to them or the affected people who are present.

If it is certain that you were not at fault, make that clear but keep your conversation polite. Offer any help or other suggestions which you think is appropriate.

Breaking the Ice

Everyone knows that it can be hard for anyone that wants to join a conversation with a small group or start talking to someone that they want to know better.

It's something that also gives inexperienced speakers some worry. The speaker has to face a room full of people who will all be looking directly at him or her and making a judgement about how interesting or otherwise they are.

However large or small the group is that you try to connect with, you usually have less than 30 seconds to make an impression and start to hold their attention.

Before you join the group, take a close look and decide if they are likely to welcome someone new at that time. Even if you get it wrong, most people will be sympathetic. They will also probably be understanding if you unintentionally break in when they are discussing something they want to keep within the present group.

When you realize that they want to keep their discussion private, make a polite exit and find another group.

Unless the subject is sensitive, most people are usually eager to meet anyone that has a good attitude.

It's worth waiting until whoever is speaking pauses before making your approach, but don't leave it too long.

After all, if it doesn't work out you still have plenty of time to find other groups or individuals that probably will.

How to Relax

Most of the speakers that I know have some sort of relaxation routine which they do before they walk on to the platform. They also know what they are going to say and have practiced saying it.

The stock suggestion of, "a few deep breaths", is a good one but many of us don't actually know how to breathe well. A lot of people tend to breathe shallowly, taking in much less air in with each breath than they are capable of doing. That of course reduces the amount of oxygen which the body can get.

The situation is even worse when they feel under stress, such as when they are meeting new people.

I hope that some readers will get some help from a very simple and effective breathing exercise at the end of this section.

Don't worry if you get a mild, nervous buzz just before the start of a meeting or social event. That's natural and can help you to make the best impression you ever have!

It's actually true that most professional speakers get "butterflies" in their stomach before each presentation. They welcome it as a sign that their body is prepared for the work ahead.

But, don't focus on the butterflies, or they might become buffaloes.

When you know that you did the necessary preparation, just look forward to meeting the people that you will be talking to. Every meeting is full of opportunities to work or socialize with some new people and perhaps build relationships which will bring you enjoyment into the future.

If we focus inwardly on our own performance and other people's opinion of it, that can make us feel stressed.

Just focus on making the encounter enjoyable and useful for your new friends or associates and you are more likely to have a successful outcome for everyone involved.

How to Present Yourself Better

There are many things which you can do with minimal cost, effort and time to make a positive improvement on your appearance and appeal in social and business settings.

Speakers and other performers have to maintain good general health because they themselves are the means of delivering their product; their speech, etc.

If they are not fit, they may not just forfeit a fee because of a bad performance or not being able to fulfill a commitment - they may lose other future work from the same organization.

So, we look into any suggestions which can help us to give our best effort every time, whatever the conditions which we encounter.

Whatever time and effort we put into maintaining our health is always repaid with positive benefits and also the avoidance of problems which develop when we don't.

I must emphasize that different people will have different results from the same strategy. Always check with your doctor before making changes to your lifestyle such as starting a new exercise program or changing your diet.

Before doing any form of exercise or extended effort, ask your doctor to give you a check-up and follow their advice about what exercises or lifestyle adjustments may or may not suit you and your particular circumstances.

Each reader must accept full and sole responsibility for any use which they make of any material in this book.

Better Breathing.

Everybody probably thinks that they are an expert on the subject of how to breathe. After all, they've been doing it all their lives and they think they are getting along all right.

The truth is that most people live their lives on less than 60% of the oxygen which they could take in if they use their lungs to anything like their full capacity.

If we stand as we normally do and look at ourselves in a full-length mirror, most of us will see where we might make simple improvements in our posture (and possibly other things as well).

It is easy to learn to breathe better and highly advantageous as well.

This is one way to check whether you are making full use of your breath.

Stand upright, but fairly relaxed, with your arms loose at your sides.

Touch your fingertips of both hands together and placed them gently on your stomach just below your rib cage.

Now, breathe in as you normally do. Don't make any special effort because that will just disguise how well or badly you normally breathe.

It is likely that you won't feel much pressure underneath your fingers unless you have some sort of exercise routine or have some knowledge about proper breathing and its advantages.

Then, focus for a few minutes on your breathing cycle. Slowly draw a breath and imagine that you can follow its path as it is drawn deeply into your body. You will feel more pressure underneath your fingertips after you have tried this just a few times.

Take your time: Hold each breath for two or three seconds before releasing it and mentally following its path back up from your lungs to your mouth.

After a few short sessions, I believe that my use of the air I took started to improve.

That encouraged me to make other changes to my diet and look into other forms of exercise.

There are many other things which we can improve about our health and our outlook which can have a positive effect on the impression we make on other people.

Some lifestyle choices which we have made could be improved, modified or eliminated and some may give fairly quick improvements, while other changes can be gradual.

Many can be tried without much disruption of our regular routine.

The choices you make is up to you. I strongly suggest that you do not try to make an number of changes together unless your doctor recommends it.

That could make it difficult for you to understand what is working for you and what changes might not be necessary or beneficial.

I know it can be very hard to make changes and stick to them. I have some favorite snacks which I have as an occasional treat, but always tell myself that, “I am tapering off my consumption of them and I’ll give them up one day!”

But, you may be able to get encouragement from your partner or friends. Some may even join you and you can provide mutual support for each other.

These are some of the things which I know, from my experience as a speaker, can affect anybody’s ability to present themselves at their best.

Smoking: It affects your lungs so they cannot properly process each breath. The smell and fumes can be offensive to some people at close quarters and it also tends to stain the fingers and teeth.

Your posture: Poor posture affects your breathing and the impression which you make on other people.

If you make an effort to improve how you sit and stand, you will be able to get more air into your lungs and more oxygen into your system. It will also have other benefits for your general health.

It is also possible that your voice will sound better because you will be able to direct it toward the people you are speaking to.

Alcohol: Although many people think that alcohol helps them to relax, it actually causes more problems than it solves. Some people become over-cautious and depressed. Others become too relaxed and lose their all sense of caution. Either outcome can cause embarrassment to them or other people near them.

Sleep: Despite the common belief that many people have that they can get along really well on about six hours of sleep a night, the research I’ve read emphasizes that people generally need closer to eight.

The trap is that we can build up a sleep debt over time. During that period, we may seem to be winning the battle but there will be an inevitable reckoning when our ability to operate even at our usual level is negatively affected and we may actually incur serious and long-lasting effects on our health.

If you have problems keeping to a new exercise routine, you might find the investment in a gym membership worthwhile. But, a high percentage buy them and never complete the first lot of sessions which they pay for.

A better alternative might be to sign up at a local gym or get some friends together and create your own program.

Asking Questions

Asking questions is a time-honored way of starting a conversation in just about any sort of gathering.

The best results are likely to come when you use questions that are easy to understand, not very personal and that can be answered with more than just a simple yes or no.

Try where possible to ask something which is not just an overworked cliché like, "Do you come here often?" (Yes, that's a "closed" question as well as a cliché!).

If you ask a "closed" question (one that can be answered with yes or no), your attempt to connect with that person or group could be over almost as soon as it starts.

"Open" questions that give them more options with their answer, give you more chance of connecting with them.

Closed question: Did you like the music tonight? (Answers: "Yes" or "No").

Open question: What did you think of the music? (Answers: "Brilliant", "My three-year-old does better!", or even, "Do you call that Music?")

Although the suggested answers to the second question are also brief, you could use any of them to widen the scope of the conversation and there are also many other possible answers.

All of them might also give you some indication of the other person's interest in Music and whether they have any interest in continuing the conversation.

One thing I suggest that you carefully avoid is to try to start a conversation by making a negative remark about any of the people at the event or any organization that is involved. I have heard of many potentially enjoyable or profitable relationships which have foundered at the first encounter because one person has made a negative comment about someone that is a colleague or close friend of the person they just met. Even if that is not the situation, few people are attracted to anyone that is negative when they meet someone for the first time.

It's just as important to think about how you will answer questions as to work on some good questions to ask.

If you expect to meet new people, think about both those points.

If you hear some good ice-breaking questions or responses, try to remember them and use them yourself when the opportunity arises in the future. Be careful to make any adaptations to make them more appropriate for you to use and relevant to the person or group that you use them with.

When you are trying to think of some good questions to ask, you might want to start with the journalists' workhorses - who, where, when, how and why.

I avoid questions that have a personal element except when they are really appropriate and I am sure they will not offend.

If you are hoping to avoid being asked questions about certain matters that could cause you some discomfort, try to prepare some responses because those questions are very likely to appear in some form when you least expect it.

If you have prepared in advance some reasonable sort of response, you will almost completely eliminate the possibility of giving a negative impression.

Don't try to avoid answering any question. It is very hard to do and the attempt is likely to draw more negative attention than a simple and brief reply which politely shows that you do not want to continue discussing that matter would do..

The outcome is likely to be worse if you show that you are upset by it as well as unable to give any sort of reasonable answer.

You Can't Improve if you Don't Take Action

All the preparation and study in the world will not move you even an inch closer to what you need or desire until you take some action.

Of course, it is unlikely that every move you make will have the exact effect that you desire and expect.

But, not taking action is usually the worst possible choice.

Where I did not seriously consider and investigate some opportunities when I started work, I avoided some possible embarrassment but I also denied myself some wonderful experiences.

If you miss some opportunities, there is no value in continuing to regret them. Keep improving our skills and knowledge so you will be ready the next time.

I always look at new opportunities and encounters in a positive light.

Of course, I am aware that there are possible downsides to stepping out of our current comfort zone.

At the very least you should ask yourself, "What is the possible benefit to me from following up on this opportunity?"

If you are still unsure, then the question should be, "What is the worst that can happen if I take this step?"

Then, ask yourself, "What potential benefits will I deny myself if I don't do it?"

If you don't know, do some research.

If you don't have confidence in your own ability, you probably won't inspire other people either.

That's why I suggest that you keep a diary where you record your successes, however small. Rereading the entries can help to re-enforce your self-esteem when you have some disappointment.

It can also be a reminder of great ideas which you found but have not yet implemented.

What's Worry going to do for You?

It is actually strange that we worry so much about so many things even when we are well aware that worry cannot help us and may actually lead to more serious problems than we started with.

Worry doesn't produce useful answers, inspire or soothe us.

It just reduces our ability to think clearly, fixes doubts about our ability to handle the particular type of problem (usually unfounded) more firmly in our subconscious and can increase the possibility of certain medical conditions.

The answer to worry and its effects has two parts:

1] Preparation: Take the time to study all aspects of the problem and what resources you have or can reasonably obtain to help deal with it.

2] Experience: The more things you have knowledge or experience in dealing with, the more resources you will have available to apply on any future challenges. And, your confidence level is likely to be higher because you will know that you dealt with similar or greater challenges before.

If you don't have the necessary knowledge, take steps to find it or, where necessary, get the help of those who have.

With most situations, the sooner you look for a suitable solution, the easier it will be to find and use.

What are You Telling Yourself?

Before anyone can start to convince another person about their ability to do something or be selected for something, they need to have genuinely convinced themselves.

One of the biggest barriers is that many people find preventing them from presenting themselves in a positive light is that they have not been able to convince themselves about their own qualities and abilities.

The surprising reason is that many people are constantly telling themselves that they are not really as capable and worthy an individual as they want others to believe they are!



You've probably heard someone say, "I can never get organized!" or "I've got a memory like a firefly!"

These are simple examples of what the person that says them probably thinks is modest self-depreciation.

But, the truth is that they are negative statements which won't impress anyone that hears them.

They are also likely to embed in the subconscious of the person who utters them where they have an increasing negative effect each time they are said.

Over time, their subconscious accepts unquestioningly that those statements are true and this can reduce their ability in the particular areas of activity which they relate to.

Yes, mere words can reduce our ability to use any natural talents we have because our subconscious does not question what we tell it.

This effect can also result from input that we get from our parents or other people we respect.

This is one of the major reasons that many children whose parents did not

support their dreams and aspirations may achieve less and expect less as they go through life.

How can we change this if we believe that it may be part of our current thinking?

We do not have to accept that we cannot improve our capacity to handle particular tasks until we have given some effort and time to it.

We can question and try to overcome any limits that we have accepted without good reason of our abilities or potential.

We can carefully monitor and filter the information and opinions which we may have previously accepted without question or due consideration.

Our subconscious will accept positive statements which we feed it as readily as it accepts any negative statements which we let it get hold of.

There is much misinformation and even more negativity on offer to us from all kinds of media as well as people we meet.

But, there is no reason that we must accept this and live our lives within the strictures of other people's limited beliefs or statements about us.

Don't accept a limitation without carefully examining the supporting information.

Set aside some time on a regular basis to listen to or watch inspiring material that will help you to improve abilities that you already have or learn better ways of doing things.

Remember that ultimate success may be just a few more steps beyond what we think we are capable of.

Keep a diary and record in it your successes, however small or large, and your aspirations for greater personal or business success.

Set targets and timelines for them and you will have begun to get closer to them. Someone once told me, "A dream that you write down becomes a goal and it becomes achievable when you put the date that you will reach it on that piece of paper."

When you meet setbacks or become discouraged, pick up your diary and

review your successes. This is always great encouragement from me. I am quickly back on track with my confidence revived and my filters against more negativity even better than before.

I do not believe that everything will always turn out the way I want it to.

But, I know that I can improve my average rate and level of success by pushing myself a little more than may sometimes be comfortable.

That attitude can also help to reduce the impact of any disappointments which we have.

Over the years, I've met many people who face greater challenges than I ever have just to keep going for another day.

Some have delivered inspiring talks at events which I attended.

Others have never got on any stage but they inspire people by the way they tackle and overcome the enormous challenges every day.

The one thing I notice is that they are grateful for each day and they wring as much enjoyment out of it as we'd get from winning a lottery.

A little of the gratitude they show can improve anyone's attitude. I know people that have a gratitude diary where they record something which they are grateful for every day.

If that appeals to you, start yours tomorrow.

Acting the Part

Speakers make their presentations after careful and thorough preparation which can involve emphasizing certain parts of their personality and attitudes above others.

That's like actors assuming the personality and habits of a character in a play or story.



It is not easy to get to the point where you can, within a fairly short period, act or present as if you were a different person.

It is easier to present yourself as the best "you" that you can become.

To do that, you need to know your real self thoroughly, and without any self-deception.

The major benefit that you get from doing this sort of exercise is that the

positive effect that you will have on other people will also be greatly enhanced.

After all, there's nobody that could do the part any better than you.

And, there is no part you could ever hope to do better.

Remember Everything

One of the most important abilities that we can have in our social and business dealings is a good memory.

And, the truth is that it is much easier to improve how we use our memory than you will probably realize.

If people actually realized what the advantage that proper use of their memory power would give them, they would be ready to put a lot more effort and time into it.

As far as I am aware, there is no magic pill or potion which can give you a better memory in 30 days or less.

But I can almost guarantee that you can do it yourself without any cost and probably with less time and effort than you think it would need.

From what I have read, that unmapped part of our brain called the subconscious retains an impression of almost every incident and experience we have ever had.

It is a valuable store which is almost useless to us because we do not put enough effort into recording the important items clearly when we encounter them.

That means that the links between those memories and our conscious minds are soon covered over as new memories, usually equally faint, are added in the next few hours.

If you want to get better at remembering names and other details of people that you meet, all you have to do is take more care when you first meet them.

Make sure that you clearly understand their name and other details.

Asked them to repeat their name if you are not sure of it.

Ask them to tell you a little bit about themselves, their interests and their background.

Try to use their name in a natural fashion at least a couple of times during

that first conversation.

If you get to meet many people at a particular event, it can be very difficult to remember each as an individual and their particular qualities and characteristics when you get home.

But it just takes very little time or effort to use the tips I just gave you. That can be enough to make all of those memories last and make sure that they are more easily retrieved.

If you are at a business event and collect a number of business cards, you can either quickly note a few relevant details on the back of each card about the person who gave it to you, or set aside some time when you get home to sort through the cards and use the details on them to reinforce the mental images you retained.

This is not hard to do, but you can expect to have a few misses at first.

You will quickly start to broaden the quality and number of your personal or business contacts and also be remembered better by those people as well..

You will also impress those you meet because of your genuine interest in them and your ability to remember who they are and what is important to them.

There is also another benefit for you. That small amount of concentrated mental effort, will help to keep your mind active and alert.

Apart from the benefits to your own well being, this will also help to attract more people into your circle of influence.

Silence is Golden

Another important factor in establishing firm and lasting relationships is **trust**.

In the course of your social and business and interactions, you meet many people and it is almost inevitable that you will receive information about their personal activities or their businesses.

Presenters routinely overhear or may be directly told information about the people and companies which employ them.

Sometimes, this information is quite detailed because they may be hired to present material about the companies' services or products and be briefed by company experts so that they can give appropriate answers.

They may even work at different times for companies which are fierce competitors with each other.

So, they quickly realize that they have to be very discreet about what they hear or see.

Some people like to let everybody know that they have information about people or companies which is not generally available.

While they believe that they are enhancing their personal reputations and creating interest in themselves and their knowledge when they talk about their privileged information.

But, even if they don't ever disclose any of it, they are really alerting everyone that they may be unreliable.

After all, if they will tell you about Fred, who you don't know or even care about, there is no way that you can be sure they will not share any information, good or bad, true or untrue, about you with Fred and hundreds of others as well!

Over time, they will gather people that have similar attitudes to themselves into their circle but they will also lose many opportunities because of the risk they pose. And their supplies of information will inevitably dry up.

On the other hand, you will find yourself gaining greater respect than they

could ever hope to command simply because you respect your friends’ and colleagues’ trust in you.

I found that trust is one of those qualities which is very highly prized socially and in business.

After all, if a friend asked you to recommend someone, that would be a quality that you would give high marks to, wouldn’t you?

Connecting with People

The effect that you have on people always depends on the strength of the connection you make with them.

Tip #1: I guarantee that they won't start to be interested in you until they know that you are genuinely interested in them.

Make it Interesting

Sometimes, I'm asked to present a talk which was written by someone within a business who knows a lot about the product but what they write is less interesting than last week's newspaper.

If there is no choice, I will do my best with that material.

But, if I can, I will ask for someone to give me the information in a form which I can illustrate with examples, which may have more attraction for the people who listen to my presentation.

The producers of the product are likely to know intimately the features of the product; those things which make it different and possibly better than any of the competing products.

The customers basically want to know about the benefits which they will get from buying and using that product so they can compare them with the claims made for the competitors' products.

Put It in a Story

The effect of what you say can be greatly improved by developing a story about how it affects people like those listening to you rather than just telling everybody the plain facts.

If you are selling a drill, don't tell them how powerful the motor is. Ask them to imagine the impression they will make on their family and friends when they show the new wardrobe or cubby house which they built for their kids or a local charity.

Appeal to All Their Senses

We have several senses and it has been proven that we make a greater

impact if we make the effort to appeal to more than just one of them.

If you can involve the sense of touch, smell, or provide some visual stimulus as well as the words and gestures which you have so carefully worked on, you are almost guaranteed to improve the response that you get.

You may have heard that some people are mostly responsive to only one of the three main senses, Vision, Touch or Hearing.

But, further research is favoring the view that, unless we are unable to make full use of all three, each of us has times when we respond to each particular sense more than the others, but it is not always the same one.

Put it in Their Hands

This is a well-proven maxim in sales. If you get the other person to hold the product or use it to do something, they will start to feel a sense of ownership and are probably more likely to be willing to pay for it than give it back to you.

It's used for many types of offers, from exercise equipment to puppies. Many people buy items on impulse after seeing a flashy commercial on TV and never get around to sending it back within the guarantee period.

And, very few can take back anything that has a wagging tail.

Value Each Person's Time

Although it's probably the most valuable and limited resource any of us have, TIME is the most abused as well.

In a program at a function, one requirement for any speaker is to start on time and finish almost exactly at the specified time.

If I start late, someone has to keep the audience amused until then. If I finish early or go over time, I will cause problems with the running sheet for the rest of the presentations. I won't get invited back and the word will spread. The simple fact is that my bad timing upsets the timing of every other person that is involved in the event – the organizers, other presenters and, especially, the audience.

Other people's time should always be in your mind, too.

If you don't show that you value the priorities of other people, they will avoid committing to meet you or make excuses to leave when you start telling a story that may not end for along time you get the idea.

Everyone, at some time, will have their schedule disrupted by something unforeseeable. But, frequent failures will inevitably create a lasting bad impression.

This is one of the most important qualities that any speaker can demonstrate.

I believe that it is one of the best ways that anyone at all can demonstrate that they rate the priorities of their friends, colleagues and associates as highly as they do their own.

Making an Impression

How others feel about us and our actions is of special interest to each of us.

Some people try hard to make a good impression.

Some wonder why they can never make any progress with some people they want to be around socially or in business, despite their strongest efforts.

Sometimes, it is just because they try so hard and are very obvious that their interest is mostly because of some benefit they hope to get for themselves.

Others fail because they try to appear to be someone they are not and somehow, the other person or group finds out.



I heard about someone that went to a conference because they wanted to get to know a high-flyer in their industry.

They met and they seemed to get along to some degree.

The high-flyer agreed to talk with the other fellow the next day. Then, he said that he

would have to miss the next presentation because he had to make some calls.

So, the younger man eagerly returned to the venue, looking forward to the next day’s meeting, but he got a message the next morning that the high-flyer had to cancel the meeting.

The other fellow didn’t find out for a long time that the high-flyer had watched a recording of the presentations he could not attend late that night.

He saw the other man arguing with a drink waiter over something very minor. He decided that someone that had so little control in public was not someone that was likely to be useful to his organization nor benefit from his assistance and called off the meeting.

It might have worked out, but his lack of judgment ensured that it didn’t.

Thanks for Listening

I hope that these tips will help you improve your social and business interactions.

Any time you spend on that is never wasted.

The main message I have for you is that worriers will never win.

I believe that your investment in this ebook, along with your determination and preparation will help you get there sooner and have a smoother journey through life.

Just don't ever give up too soon.

I wish you almost more success than you can handle,

Ivan MacLean.

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