

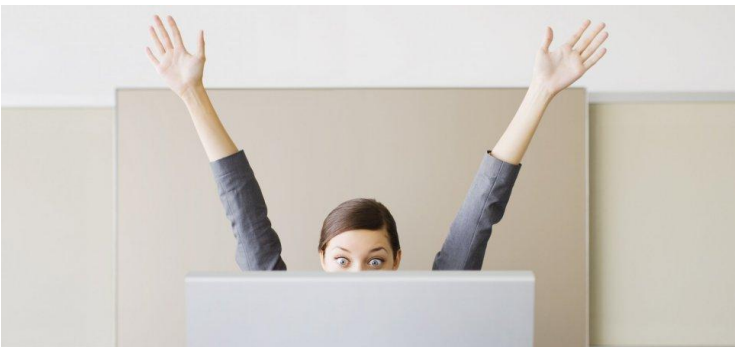
10 Tricks Confident People Use to Make a Great First Impression

Here is how you can calm your nerves and make a lasting impression.



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IMAGE: Getty Images



Meeting someone for the first time can make anyone a [little anxious](#). After all, most of us want to be liked and respected -- and no one wants to blow their chance to make a good [first impression](#).

As the founder and CEO of [Aha!](#) I meet new people almost every day. I know

that first meetings can be unnerving -- it does not seem to matter whether you are meeting in person or via Web video.

If meeting new people is a challenge for you, here is some good news. You can improve how you come across in a first meeting. And with practice, you can even become adept at it.

It helps to examine how [confident people](#) approach social situations. They do not shy away from meeting new people; they put themselves out there. That added practice helps to ease new introductions. They also do not kick themselves if they have an awkward moment -- they learn from it and move on.

Here are 10 more ways confident people make a great first impression when meeting someone new:

Prepare

It is smart to research who you are meeting ahead of time so you will feel more at ease and able to [strike up conversations](#) more easily. This is not always possible, but in work situations, you know who you will be speaking with more often than not. Read up on the background of the company so that you have a few talking points to share.

Be punctual

Being late not only makes a poor first impression, but it starts you off at a disadvantage. If you are meeting in person, plan to arrive a little early so you can find a parking space and collect your thoughts. If you are participating in a web meeting, eliminate distractions ahead of time and be ready to log in as soon as the meeting starts.

Offer a friendly hello

You may not have given much thought to how you say hello. But studies of [vocal attractiveness](#) show that people form an immediate opinion of the other person's personality with this simple greeting. So make sure your warmth comes through when you say hello the first time.

Use appropriate eye contact

Eye contact is one more way that people gauge the trustworthiness of others. If you are not sure how long to hold the other [person's gaze](#), look at their eyes long enough to register what color their eyes are. Eye contact is also critical if you are meeting online, so be sure to look at the other person on the screen, just as if you were meeting in person.

Engage in chitchat

You may think that small talk is a waste of time (and just want the conversation done and over with.) But small talk is important to the art of conversation; a few minutes chatting about the weather helps eliminate your own awkwardness before you ease into more serious topics. Chitchat also makes the other person feel comfortable (which will make you more likable.)

Ask questions

You may think that you should show strength and launch right into your discussion. But posing a question first allows the other person to have the floor -- which helps them to [feel understood](#). In the process, you learn something new about the other person, which helps to build the relationship.

Give and take

Some people have a tendency to ramble on when nervous, and rush to fill in any awkward silences. If you are a rambler, remember that a conversation should have a nice back-and-forth rhythm. Take turns and listen to what the other person is saying, instead of planning what you are going to say next.

Use confident body language

Give the other person space so they do not feel claustrophobic. Lean in to show interest, and do not cross your arms or look disinterested during the conversation. If you are in a [video meeting](#), remember - body language still matters. You can nod and use gestures to demonstrate your understanding and engagement with the conversation.

Be positive

Even if you were in a grouchy mood earlier in the day, shake off that gloomy perspective and force yourself to be pleasant. Saying nice things about others will make the person associate you with being nice as well (a phenomenon called spontaneous trait transference.) And a little bit of flattery can also help leave a favorable impression.

Smile

In your nervousness, you may forget to smile altogether. But a smile can tell plenty about you, so use your great smile to your advantage. The other person will subconsciously read whether or not you are a person they can trust. So be yourself, and do not be afraid to offer a [genuine grin](#) (which is even better accompanied by a laugh.)

It is true that first-time meetings can be awkward. But you will gain more confidence every time you take that opportunity to meet someone new.

With practice, you will become less self-conscious -- and then meeting new people can become second nature to you as well.

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