

Never Make A Bad First Impression Again! Just think F.A.S.T.

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Does your position require you to meet people that affect your business? For many of us, meeting others is a daily task which must be accomplished to achieve our goals. When we fail to make a positive first impression, it can create obstacles in acquiring new clients, receiving promotions and building beneficial workplace relationships.

It is said that first impressions are lasting impressions. If this is the case, and my research shows this to be true, it is important to understand how to make a positive first impression to get started on the right foot, fast! The following techniques will assist you to make positive and memorable impressions that will help you personally and professionally.

They have been designed to be memorable, creating the acronym **F.A.S.T.**

F - Friendly Introduction

Each of us is blessed with our own unique personality. It is important that we accentuate our personality, but also maintain simple rules of decorum. Whenever you are introduced to someone new, you should instigate the relationship with a firm handshake. Always look into the other parties eyes. If an introduction was not made, introduce yourself and state what your relationship is to the meeting situation.

For instance, when meeting a new patient you may say, "It is a pleasure to meet you; my name is (insert your name here). What is your name?" This introduction is professional and direct.

A - Attention Will Take You Far

Your ability to listen will make or break your ability to create a positive first impression. Everyone is capable of being a wonderful listener, but often times we allow our focus to wander. You need to focus all of your attention on the individual you are conversing with, listen to each word they say, and if you are unsure of the pronunciation of their name, verify it. A person's name is very important to them...make sure you say it correctly. Don't make those mistakes. Everyone likes attention, and providing attention to the individual you are

speaking with will be making a strong first impression that you are a person who is intelligent and considerate.

S - Secret Strategy Of Questions

Questions are your secret strategy and the strongest way to make inroads to creating a positive impression with long term rewards. At any event where you are interacting with strangers, it is important you engage the other party to discuss their interests. Keep your own interests to a minimum and don't discuss your kids, difficult projects or hobbies. Focus your questions on them. As long as you are talking about yourself you cannot learn about the other individual.

In addition, by asking questions people are comfortable with; you will be building rapport and be on your way to creating relationships on a professional level that can have numerous long term benefits. The best questions to ask are based on their responses and previous comments to your questions. Never go in with a set of questions. Several years ago I remember hiring a new CHT at one of my hand clinics. During the day I overheard her ask the same rehearsed set of questions to everyone she met. It became so cliché, it was impossible for her to develop rapport with anyone. She would have been far better asking relevant questions to each individual.

In making a positive first impression it is best to avoid all religious, political and taboo questions. The questions you use should draw out the other party, increase their confidence and make them feel comfortable with you.

T - Think Value

Your ability to provide value should always be your defining commitment in all of your professional activities. There are always skills, people, associations and resources you are familiar with which will benefit others. Don't ever enter into a professional relationship without asking yourself what value you can bring to others. Even in a brief meeting it is possible to provide a key piece of assistance to others. More importantly, in attempting to assist them, you will make a positive impression on them and show you are a person of value.

Next time you meet a new patient, think F.A.S.T. Following these four rules you will find yourself feeling confident, making beneficial contacts and creating positive first impressions that will take your business to new heights.