

LEIL LOWNDES

**HOW TO
TALK TO
ANYONE**

92 Little
Tricks

for Big Success in
Relationships

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*There are two kinds of people in this life:
Those who walk into a room and say,
“Well, here I am!”
And those who walk in and say,
“Ahh, there you are.”*

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Introduction

How to Get Anything You Want from Anybody (Well, at Least Have the Best Crack at It!)

Have you ever admired those successful people who seem to “have it all”? You see them chatting confidently at business meetings or comfortably at social parties. They’re the ones with the best jobs, the nicest spouses, the finest friends, the biggest bank accounts, or the most fashionable zip codes.

But wait a minute! A lot of them aren’t smarter than you. They’re not more educated than you. They’re not even better looking! So what is it? (Some people suspect they inherited it. Others say they married it or were just plain lucky. Tell them to think again.) What it boils down to is their more skillful way of dealing with fellow human beings.

You see, nobody gets to the top alone. Over the years, people who seem to “have it all” have captured the hearts and conquered the minds of hundreds of others who helped boost them, rung by rung, to the top of whatever corporate or social ladder they chose.

Wanna-bes wandering around at the foot of the ladder often gaze up and grouse that the big boys and big girls at the top are snobs. When big players don’t give them their friendship, love, or business, they call them “cliquish” or accuse them of belonging to an “old-boy network.” Some grumble they hit their heads against a “glass ceiling.”

The complaining Little Leaguers never realize the rejection was their own fault. They’ll never know they blew the affair, the

friendship, or the deal because of their own communications fumbles. It's as though well-liked people have a bag of tricks, a magic, or a Midas touch that turns everything they do into success.

What's in their bag of tricks? You'll find a lot of things: a substance that solidifies friendships, a wizardry that wins minds, and a magic that makes people fall in love with them. They also possess a quality that makes bosses hire and then promote, a characteristic that keeps clients coming back, and an asset that makes customers buy from them and not the competition. We all have a few of those tricks in our bags, some more than others. Those with a whole lot of them are big winners in life. *How to Talk to Anyone* gives you ninety-two of these little tricks they use every day so you, too, can play the game to perfection and get whatever you want in life.

How the “Little Tricks” Were Unveiled

Many years ago, a drama teacher, exasperated at my bad acting in a college play, shouted, “No! No! Your body is belying your words. Every tiny movement, every body position,” he howled, “divulges your private thoughts. Your face can make seven thousand different expressions, and each exposes precisely who you are and what you are thinking at any particular moment.” Then he said something I'll never forget: “And your body! The way you move is your autobiography in motion.”

How right he was! On the stage of real life, every physical move you make subliminally tells everyone in eyeshot the story of your life. Dogs hear sounds our ears can't detect. Bats see shapes in the darkness that elude our eyes. And people make moves that are beneath human consciousness but have tremendous power to attract or repel. Every smile, every frown, every syllable you utter, or every arbitrary choice of word that passes between your lips can draw others toward you or make them want to run away.

Men—did your gut feeling ever tell you to jump ship on a deal? Women—did your women’s intuition make you accept or reject an offer? On a conscious level, we may not be aware of what the hunch is. But like the ear of the dog or the eye of the bat, the elements that make up subliminal sentiments are very real.

Imagine, please, two humans in a complex box wired with circuits to record all the signals flowing between the two. As many as ten thousand units of information flow per second. “Probably the lifetime efforts of roughly half the adult population of the United States would be required to sort the units in one hour’s interaction between two subjects,” a University of Pennsylvania communications authority estimates.¹

With the zillions of subtle actions and reactions zapping back and forth between two human beings, can we come up with concrete techniques to make our every communication clear, confident, credible, and charismatic?

Determined to find the answer, I read practically every book written on communications skills, charisma, and chemistry between people. I explored hundreds of studies conducted around the world on what qualities made up leadership and credibility. Intrepid social scientists left no stone unturned in their quest to find the formula. For example, optimistic Chinese researchers, hoping charisma might be in the diet, went so far as to compare the relationship of personality type to the catecholamine level in subjects’ urine.² Needless to say, their thesis was soon shelved.

Dale Carnegie Was GREAT for the Twentieth Century, but This Is the Twenty-First

Most of the studies simply confirmed Dale Carnegie’s 1936 classic, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.³ His wisdom for the ages said success lay in smiling, showing interest in other people, and

making them feel good about themselves. “That’s no surprise,” I thought. It’s as true today as it was more than sixty years ago.

So if Dale Carnegie and hundreds of others since offer the same astute advice, why do we need another book telling us how to win friends and influence people? Two mammoth reasons.

Reason One: Suppose a sage told you, “When in China, speak Chinese,” but gave you no language lessons? Dale Carnegie and many communications experts are like that sage. They tell us what to do but not how to do it. In today’s sophisticated world, it’s not enough to say “smile” or “give sincere compliments.” Cynical businesspeople today see more subtleties in your smile, more complexities in your compliment. Accomplished or attractive people are surrounded by smiling sycophants feigning interest and fawning all over them. Prospects are tired of salespeople who say, “The suit looks great on you,” when their fingers are caressing cash register keys. Women are wary of suitors who say, “You are beautiful,” when the bedroom door is in view.

Reason Two: The world is a very different place than it was in 1936, and we need a new formula for success. To find it, I observed the superstars of today. I explored techniques used by top salespeople to close the sale, speakers to convince, clergy to convert, performers to engross, sex symbols to seduce, and athletes to win.

I found concrete building blocks to the elusive qualities that lead to their success. Then I broke them down into easily digestible, news-you-can-use techniques. I gave each a name that will quickly come to mind when you find yourself in a communications conundrum. As I developed the techniques, I began sharing them with audiences around the country. Participants in my communications seminars gave me their ideas. My clients, many of them CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, enthusiastically offered their observations.

When I was in the presence of the most successful and beloved leaders, I analyzed their body language and their facial

expressions. I listened carefully to their casual conversations, their timing, and their choice of words. I watched as they dealt with their families, friends, associates, and adversaries. Every time I detected a little nip of magic in their communicating, I asked them to pluck it out with tweezers and expose it to the bright light of consciousness. We analyzed it together, and I then turned it into an easy-to-do “little trick” others could duplicate and profit from.

My findings and the strokes of some of those very effective folks are in this book. Some are subtle. Some are surprising. But all are achievable. When you master them, everyone from new acquaintances to family, friends, and business associates will happily open their hearts, homes, companies, and even wallets to give you whatever they can.

There’s a bonus. As you sail through life with your new communications skills, you’ll look back and see some very happy givers smiling in your wake.

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PART ONE

HOW TO INTRIGUE EVERYONE WITHOUT SAYING A WORD

*You Only Have Ten Seconds to
Show You're a Somebody*

The exact moment that two humans lay eyes on each other has awesome potency. The first sight of you is a brilliant holograph. It burns its way into your new acquaintance's eyes and can stay emblazoned in his or her memory forever.

Artists are sometimes able to capture this quicksilver, fleeting emotional response. My friend Robert Grossman is an accomplished caricature artist who draws regularly for *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Rolling Stone*, and other popular publications. Bob has a unique gift for capturing not only the physical appearance of his subjects, but for zeroing in on the essence of their personalities. The bodies and souls of hundreds of luminaries radiate from his sketch pad. One glance at his caricatures of famous people and you can actually “see” their personalities.

Sometimes at a party, Bob will do a quick sketch on a cocktail napkin of a guest. Hovering over Bob's shoulder, the onlookers gasp as they watch their friend's image and essence materialize before their eyes. When he's finished drawing, he puts his pen down and hands the napkin to the subject. Often a puzzled look comes over the subject's face. He or she usually mumbles some politeness like, "Well, er, that's great. But it really isn't me."

The crowd's convincing crescendo of "Oh yes it is!" drowns the subject out and squelches any lingering doubt. The confused subject is left to stare back at the world's view of himself or herself in the napkin.

Once when I was visiting Bob's studio, I asked him how he could capture people's personalities so well. He said, "It's simple. I just look at them."

"No," I asked, "How do you capture their personalities? Don't you have to do a lot of research about their lifestyle, their history?"

"No, I told you, Leil, I just look at them."

"Huh?"

He went on to explain, "Almost every facet of people's personalities is evident from their appearance, their posture, the way they move. For instance . . ." he said, calling me over to a file where he kept his caricatures of political figures.

"See," Bob said, pointing to angles on various presidential body parts, "here's the boyishness of Clinton," showing me his half smile; "the awkwardness of the elder George Bush," pointing to his shoulder angle; "the charm of Reagan," noting the ex-president's smiling eyes; "the shiftiness of Nixon," pointing to the furtive tilt of his head. Digging a little deeper into his file, he pulled out Franklin Delano Roosevelt and, pointing to the nose high in the air, "Here's the pride of FDR." It's all in the face and the body.

First impressions are indelible. Why? Because in our fast-paced, information-overload world of multiple stimuli bombarding us every second, people's heads are spinning. They must form

quick judgments to make sense of the world and get on with what they have to do. So, whenever people meet you, they take an instant mental snapshot. That image of you becomes the data they deal with for a very long time.

Your Body Shrieks Before Your Lips Can Speak

Are their data accurate? Amazingly enough, yes. Even before your lips part and the first syllable escapes, the essence of YOU has already axed its way into their brains. The way you look and the way you move is more than 80 percent of someone's first impression of you. Not one word need be spoken.

I've lived and worked in countries where I didn't speak the native language. Yet, without one understandable syllable spoken between us, the years proved my first impressions were on target. Whenever I met new colleagues, I could tell instantly how friendly they felt toward me, how confident they were, and approximately how much stature they had in the company. I could sense, just from seeing them move, who the heavyweights were and who were the welterweights.

I have no extrasensory skill. You'd know, too. How? Because before you have had time to process a rational thought, you get a sixth sense about someone. Studies have shown emotional reactions occur even before the brain has had time to register what's causing that reaction.⁴ Thus the moment someone looks at you, he or she experiences a massive hit, the impact of which lays the groundwork for the entire relationship. Bob told me he captures that first hit in creating his caricatures.

Deciding to pursue my own agenda for *How to Talk to Anyone*, I asked, "Bob, if you wanted to portray somebody really cool—you know, intelligent, strong, charismatic, principled, fascinating, caring, interested in other people. . . ."

“Easy,” Bob interrupted. He knew precisely what I was getting at. “Just give ’em great posture, a heads-up look, a confident smile, and a direct gaze.” It’s the ideal image for somebody who’s a Somebody.

How to Look Like a Somebody

My friend Karen is a highly respected professional in the home-furnishings business. Her husband is an equally big name in the communications field. They have two small sons.

Whenever Karen is at a home-furnishings industry event, everyone pays deference to her. She’s a very important person in that world. Her colleagues at conventions jostle for position just to be seen casually chatting with her and, they hope, be photographed rubbing elbows with her for industry bibles like *Home Furnishings Executive* and *Furniture World*.

Yet, Karen complains, when she accompanies her husband to communications functions, she might as well be a nobody. When she takes her kids to school functions, she’s just another mom. She once asked me, “Leil, how can I stand out from the crowd so people who don’t know me will approach me and at least assume I’m an interesting person?” The techniques in this section accomplish precisely that. When you use the next nine techniques, you will come across as a special person to everyone you meet. You will stand out as a Somebody in whatever crowd you find yourself in, even if it’s not your crowd.

Let’s start with your smile.



How to Make Your Smile Magically Different

In 1936, one of Dale Carnegie's six musts in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* was SMILE! His edict has been echoed each decade by practically every communications guru who ever put pen to paper or mouth to microphone. However, at the turn of the millennium, it's high time we reexamine the role of the smile in high-level human relations. When you dig deeper into Dale's dictum, you'll find a 1936 quick smile doesn't always work. Especially nowadays.

The old-fashioned instant grin carries no weight with today's sophisticated crowd. Look at world leaders, negotiators, and corporate giants. Not a smiling sycophant among them. Key players in all walks of life enrich their smile so, when it does erupt, it has more potency and the world smiles with them.

Researchers have catalogued dozens of different types of smiles. They range from the tight rubber band of a trapped liar to the soft squishy smile of a tickled infant. Some smiles are warm while others are cold. There are real smiles and fake smiles. (You've seen plenty of those plastered on the faces of friends who say they're "delighted you decided to drop by," and presidential candidates visiting your city who say they're "thrilled to be in, uh . . . uh. . .")

Big winners know their smile is one of their most powerful weapons, so they've fine-tuned it for maximum impact.

How to Fine-Tune Your Smile

Just last year, my old college friend Missy took over her family business, a Midwestern company supplying corrugated boxes to manufacturers. One day she called saying she was coming to New York to court new clients and she invited me to dinner with several of her prospects. I was looking forward to once again seeing my friend's quicksilver smile and hearing her contagious laugh. Missy was an incurable giggler, and that was part of her charm.

When her Dad passed away last year, she told me she was taking over the business. I thought Missy's personality was a little bubbly to be a CEO in a tough business. But, hey, what do I know about the corrugated box biz?

She, three of her potential clients, and I met in the cocktail lounge of a midtown restaurant and, as we led them into the dining room, Missy whispered in my ear, "Please call me Melissa tonight."

"Of course," I winked back, "not many company presidents are called Missy!" Soon after the maître d' seated us, I began noticing Melissa was a very different woman from the giggling girl I'd known in college. She was just as charming; she smiled as much as ever. Yet something was different. I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

Although she was still effervescent, I had the distinct impression everything Melissa said was more insightful and sincere. She was responding with genuine warmth to her prospective clients, and I could tell they liked her, too. I was thrilled because my friend was scoring a knockout that night. By the end of the evening, Melissa had three big new clients.

Afterward, alone with her in the cab, I said, “Missy, you’ve really come a long way since you took over the company. Your whole personality has developed, well, a really cool, sharp corporate edge.”

“Uh uh, only one thing has changed,” she said.

“What’s that?”

“My smile,” she said.

“Your what?” I asked incredulously.

“My smile,” she repeated as though I hadn’t heard her. “You see,” she said, with a distant look coming into her eyes, “when Dad got sick and knew in a few years I’d have to take over the business, he sat me down and had a life-changing conversation with me. I’ll never forget his words. Dad said, ‘Missy, Honey, remember that old song, “I Loves Ya, Honey, But Yer Feet’s Too Big”? Well, if you’re going to make it big in the box business, let me say, “I loves ya, Honey, but your smile’s too quick.”’”

“He then brought out a yellowed newspaper article quoting a study he’d been saving to show me when the time was right. It concerned women in business. The study showed women who were slower to smile in corporate life were perceived as more credible.”

As Missy talked, I began to think about history-making women like Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Madeleine Albright, and other powerful women of their ilk. Not one was known for her quick smile.

Missy continued, “The study went on to say a big, warm smile is an asset. But only when it comes a little slower, because then it has more credibility.” From that moment on, Missy explained, she gave clients and business associates her big smile. However, she trained her lips to erupt more slowly. Thus her smile appeared more sincere and personalized for the recipient.

That was it! Missy’s slower smile gave her personality a richer, deeper, more sincere cachet. Though the delay was less than a sec-

ond, the recipients of her beautiful big smile felt it was special and just for them.

I decided to do more research on the smile. When you're in the market for shoes, you begin to look at everyone's feet. When you decide to change your hairstyle, you look at everyone's haircut. Well, for several months, I became a steady smile watcher. I watched smiles on the street. I watched smiles on TV. I watched the smiles of politicians, the clergy, corporate giants, and world leaders. My findings? Amid the sea of flashing teeth and parting lips, I discovered the people perceived to have the most credibility and integrity were just ever so slower to smile. Then, when they did, their smiles seemed to seep into every crevice of their faces and envelop them like a slow flood. Thus I call the following technique "The Flooding Smile."



TECHNIQUE #1

THE FLOODING SMILE

Don't flash an immediate smile when you greet someone, as though anyone who walked into your line of sight would be the beneficiary. Instead, look at the other person's face for a second. Pause. Soak in their persona. Then let a big, warm, responsive smile flood over your face and overflow into your eyes. It will engulf the recipient like a warm wave. The split-second delay convinces people your flooding smile is genuine and only for them.

Let us now travel but a few inches north to two of the most powerful communications tools you possess, your eyes.