

Craig Collinson

138 Simple Ways To Be A Successful Leader

Being a Leader can be difficult. From running Effective Meetings to Managing Stress, Craig Collinson imparts 138 quick and essential tips covering a variety of topics



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Leadership

There is a sizeable difference between those that can manage a team and those that can lead a team. Learn how to truly lead your team with Craig's effective leadership skills and tips.

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Coaching Skills



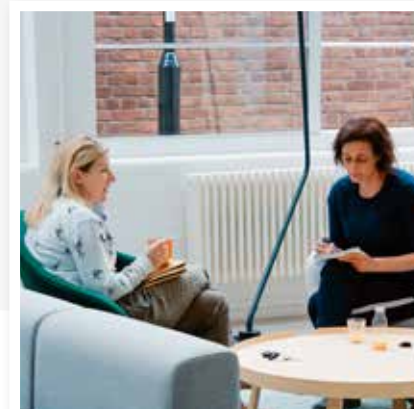
There are many ways to define what coaching is. One simple, practical way to sum up the coaching process is to think of it as helping someone perform a skill or solve a problem better than they would otherwise have been able to without your input.

- An effective coach is an individual who possesses a wide range of positive personal qualities. These include patience and willingness to make time for other people. A calm and confident manner. Empathy and sensitivity when required. As well as the ability to challenge constructively when necessary.
- The ability for coaches to communicate well, build rapport quickly, provide effective listening, ask appropriate questions and contribute suitable feedback is essential. Anyone aspiring to coach should work hard on honing these skills. You will need them to provide the greatest benefit to those you will support.
- Be creative. Seek out opportunities for coaching that are appropriate to the work environment. There is any number of ways that coaching could take place. You could think about job shadowing. Swapping of job roles. Organising an event or chairing a meeting. If not any of those, what might be a good potential coaching situation?
- It may be necessary when coaching in a specific task to produce a basic Task Analysis. This a step by step guide that you can use as an aid to ensure a task is carried out to consistent standards. A Task Analysis can take many forms. It could be a series of written steps. Photographs. Diagrams. Screen dumps. Short 'YouTube' style clips or even audio instruction. Whatever works best.

“An effective coach is an individual who possesses a wide range of positive personal qualities.”

- When observing the person being supported in action, remember a couple of the basics when giving them feedback. Tell them 'well done' before moving on to what they could have done differently. You could give them your thoughts about what they could 'more of' or 'less of' next time.
- As well as helping others to grow and become better, the coach should also be on a journey of continual learning and development. The knowledge, skills and abilities of any coach need to be relevant and up to date. Always look for ways to develop yourself so that you can help develop others.

Effective Appraisals



These tips on effective appraisals are provided as a snapshot of generic good practice. Apply these tips to enhance your own skills and provide better appraisal experiences for your employees.

- Appreciating the importance of the appraisal process is the only way to get real value out of it. Both the appraiser and appraisee should invest time, thought and preparation into it. Spend time before the appraisal meeting to ensure that the appraisee knows how to prepare for the meeting.
- Make sure that everyone involved understands the potential benefits of an appraisal. A good appraisal process can increase morale and introduce targeted training programmes. Ensure that people, on an individual level, appreciate what's in it for them. Benefits should include the opportunity to have their feelings listened to. To improved relationships. Or contributing new ideas.
- Before any meeting, the appraiser should look over the appraisee's job description. It is also vital to look over the content of previous appraisal documents. Pay attention to any objectives or agreed targets.
- It is very important that the appraisal meeting takes place in the right sort of environment. Think about how best to eliminate interruptions for the period of the meeting. Switch off any site radio's or mobile phones. Request that other colleagues not to disturb the meeting unless there's an emergency.
- The appraisee ought to do the vast majority of the talking. It is for this reason why their preparation is key. A 70/30 split in favour of the appraisee is a fair guide to the input required. Remember, this is the appraisee's opportunity to discuss how things are going for them!
- An appraisal should be a motivational experience. As such, it should focus on the positive aspects of the individual. Discussions should focus on their strengths and any areas of good practice. Dealing with negative work-

“Remember, this is the appraisee's opportunity to discuss how things are going for them!”

related issues should happen as they arise. Particularly issues related to poor performance of key tasks or negative behaviours. An appraisal is not necessarily the correct meeting for these issues to discussed.

- Both the appraiser and the appraisee should keep copies of the completed documentation. Highlight any sections that relate to personal development, targets or objectives. This gives each the opportunity to track progress. It also introduces joint responsibility for ensuring agreed targets and specified deadlines.

Effective Delegation



Good delegation provides benefits to everyone involved, individuals and organisation. Invest the time in getting it right and you will be repaid for the effort. Although there is much more to consider, apply these quick thoughts to enhance your own comfort with Effective Delegation.

- Entrusting another person with a task for which the delegator holds ultimate responsibility. This is the normal way to view delegation. Now, let us add in one more thought. A task needs doing as well as it needs doing - not as well as you would do it! If you have a tendency towards being a perfectionist, think about that.
- There are countless reasons that people use to justify why they choose not to delegate. The problem is that there are often things that you could delegate if only you took a little time to show those who you 'can't-trust-to-do-it-right' the way it should be done. What are the reasons you choose not to delegate? Consider whether your reasons are justified or are excuses.
- A very effective tool to assist you in your delegation of tasks is to use SMART targets. When you set out SMART objectives, you lay out in a clear and quantifiable way what your expectations are. This then enables you to track progress based on predetermined agreements.
- There will always be parts of your job that will be unsuitable for delegation. There will be tasks that only you can do or should be doing, that's fine. A useful procedure would be to go through your role and make a list of the tasks only you can do and do them. Next, make a list of every task that you can delegate. Coach and support those tasks as you distribute them to the appropriate colleagues.
- Once you have delegated a task, awareness is key. Be sure to provide the right degree of space and support to the individual who now has the task. You must allow that person the time and opportunity to learn how to complete the task. Meanwhile, you must be aware when to step in to

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offer support, guidance or encouragement.

- If you are not convinced that you should delegate more, then think of the potential benefits. Delegation allows for a more motivated workforce. As your colleagues develop their skills and have more variety in their roles, motivation grows. Delegation also allows for improved efficiencies and productivity through better time management. By releasing more working hours within management levels, Delegation is a vital skill for business growth.
- It's true that delegation isn't easy. This is because it requires thinking time and an element of planning. Effective communication of the task, understanding the appropriate level of support and monitoring are all vital skills. But, if you get all that right, it means that you can now expect that the task will be carried out as you would wish. This leaves you to focus on other things. It's a win/win situation!

Effective Meetings



A good meeting should be well run, focused and professional. Apply these thoughts whenever you arrange any meeting and see how a few simple rules of good practice can result in much more enjoyable, productive and Effective Meetings.

- Be sure to create and distribute an Agenda. This should show where and when the meeting will take place, and what time it will finish. Highlight any reading material or documents attendees should be familiar with or bring with them. This will allow them to prepare for the meeting and provide worthwhile contributions.
- Always start and end the meeting on time. By not doing so you run the risk of attendees becoming familiar with a 'late start' and so will turn up late. This then becomes a vicious circle of waiting for attendees to arrive. By finishing the meeting on time, you ensure that all attendees stay to the end. They are far more likely to attend a meeting that doesn't overrun.
- Understand the specific purpose of the meeting. To hold one with no clear aim is likely to be a waste of time for all concerned. A standard problem with many meetings is that attendees think they are pointless. As a result, they start to believe that they could be better engaged in more productive activities. Make sure that your meetings don't fall into this category.
- Ensure that someone is available to take notes or minutes of the meeting. Unfortunately, this often ends up being the person Chairing the meeting. Someone other than the Chair should be responsible for the note taking. This allows the Chair to concentrate only on that very important role.
- Stick to the Agenda items – time the items if necessary to make sure you get through the Agenda. Give proper consideration to items that are likely to be lengthy. Allow these points enough time to be discussed. It might be

“Understand the specific purpose of the meeting.”

better to agree to carry items over to another meeting than to rush through important ones. Be flexible. But be focused.

- Clarify action points and apportion responsibility to attendees at the meeting. Often, meetings end with either no follow-on activities agreed at all. Or actions can be agreed upon, but no one specific is named to carry them out. What's likely to then happen is...nothing! Always task an individual with a specific action point with a deadline.
- Schedule future meetings before closing. It is far easier to get agreement on dates when attendees are all in the same room. Make sure that meeting attendees have access to their diaries at the time of the meeting. This will save countless e-mail exchanges and potential frustration after the meeting has ended!

Mentoring Skills



It's important to appreciate what the role of a Mentor is. Ideally, your purpose, as a Mentor is to assist the Mentee to arrive at their own thoughts and opinions as a result of your guidance, encouragement and support. It is not your role to provide them with the solutions.

- An effective Mentor requires many positive qualities and skills. Just some of them include, a genuine interest in helping others develop, empathy, the ability to listen, the skills to build and maintain rapport. A calm and confident manner and, if possible – a sense of humour always helps!
- Remember to focus heavily on 'rapport' building during the first mentoring meeting. The saying 'people like people who are like them' is incredibly important as a factor in successful mentoring relationships.
- Although the mentoring meeting – which could be weekly, monthly or whenever is needed – is going to be the primary method of support, the Mentee should ideally have access to their Mentor when required. Even if that is only through e-mail or telephone contact.
- If a little structure is required in the early stages of the mentoring relationship, then why not ask the Mentee to complete a Personal Skills Audit and simple Needs Analysis questionnaire? This is a great way to get started. The information will also provide valuable material to look back on and evaluate their progress in terms of the Mentee's personal development.
- The skill of asking elegant and challenging questions is a necessity for an effective Mentor. The questioning should be natural and follow the course of the conversation easily. A good Mentor would be wise to work on their questioning techniques because through effective questioning you help the Mentee arrive at their own answers.

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- A Mentor must be able to devote adequate time to the Mentee. The mentoring meetings need to be perceived and regarded as important and of real value. With this in mind, when dates and times are agreed, these should be kept to where ever possible.

Developing an Effective Team



These thoughts on Developing an Effective Team are in no order of priority. They are simple, no-nonsense reminders to help reinforce a range of good practice. By applying these strategies, you are taking positive steps in the challenging area of team building.

- Management is about being hands on. The role involves the monitoring, co-ordinating and controlling of people and processes. Leadership is about direction. The role involves vision and the ability to communicate and inspire.
- The 'Action Centred Leadership' model created by John Adair explains the responsibilities a leader. There are 3 inter-locking circles – Task, Team and Individual. A leader's role is to ensure that everyone achieves tasks. That the team work together in an effective way. And to ensure the development of an individual's knowledge and skills.
- It is important to understand that teams change over time in respect of what they need from their leader. In the initial stage a leader needs to provide guidance and direction. The next phase should be when the leader adopts the role of a coach. When a leader achieves team efficiency, their role evolves into that of a facilitator. They should aim to delegate appropriate tasks to team.
- As the leader of a team you should strive to understand your own preferred 'style'. Once you are aware of what you do and how you do it you should then consider if you need a little more flexibility. In other words, do you have the knowledge and skill, the capability, to adapt your 'style'? To maximise the potential of the team you are leading? If not, you're not helping the team to be effective!
- Never ever underestimate importance of the basics for motivating your team. That means the real elementary stuff like saying 'good morning', 'please' and 'thank you'. It also means giving recognition where it's due for a job well done. It's so simple to do, so remember to do it!

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- Involvement helps to cultivate commitment, so involve your team whenever possible. For example, an effective way to engage everyone is by developing a set of 'Team Values'. These can be as simple as 'keep your own space tidy' or 'ask if you don't understand'. You can develop as many as appropriate. They can also be a great way to overcome any tricky issues and keep the team focused.
- Why not have a little fun? Well-designed team events can be a very effective way to build a positive team spirit. You can also 'do it yourself' by using quick ice breaking exercises or team games within team meetings. This type of activity can have the potential to make a real and positive impact on any team.

Problem Solving



It's a certainty that you will have already faced a range of 'problems' to solve. And it's a guarantee that they are just going to keep on coming! Apply these tips when confronted with challenges and difficulties to help you improve your skills at Problem Solving.

- A sure-fire way to begin to solve any problem is to assemble whatever information you have at your disposal. The order in which you start to piece it together is unimportant. All that does matter is that you focus in on what knowledge you have. That way you can begin to make sense of what's in front of you. If it sounds like an easy way to start the process, then that's because it is.
- There is a tendency when a problem presents itself to follow the example of the ostrich and 'stick your head in the sand' and hope it will go away. Guess what? It never does! Ignoring the problem only gives it more power. The longer we leave it unresolved, the more strength it develops for when it eventually has the chance to smack us in our sand covered face!
- You wouldn't go to a plumber to get a new pair of reading glasses, would you? So, when dealing with problems, don't discuss them with other people who can't help you. If the individual can add no valuable ideas or offer no practical assistance in resolving it, then you are just wasting your time and increasing your worry. Do not do it!
- As you think about your problem, be careful with your 'self-talk'. Ensure that you talk yourself up and not down. Phrases like 'I don't know what to do about this' will pre-programme the outcome. Instead, say to yourself in an upbeat voice, again and again 'if I knew how to solve this problem what would I do?' or 'How can I solve this?'. Trust me, it will start to alter your feelings, then your behaviours. Then your actions and ultimately your results.

“You wouldn't go to a plumber to get a new pair of reading glasses, would you?”

- Try this, it works... dwell on the problem & possible solutions AND then focus all your concentration on a crossword, maths puzzle, word search or similar activity for 10-minutes. In doing this you are getting your conscious, logical mind 'out of the way' and allowing your deeper unconscious mind to work on potential solutions to your problem. It's amazing how an 'answer' will often just pop into your head.
- Try out a few methods to find out what really that works for you in your problem-solving. Techniques such as the 'Fish Bone' diagram or 'Mind Mapping' are easy to use and provide a good structure. Look into the work of Edward De Bono who created the 'Six Thinking Hats' concept of problem-solving. The methods are out there. All it takes is a little research and practice to find what suits you, then stick with it.
- See the problem as already sorted! Use visualisation to see the successful end result of your efforts in resolving the issue and solving the problem. Because you are using your mind to solve the problem anyway, why not fully utilise it? Allow your unconscious mind to be very clear about what it is helping you work towards as the final outcome. Get relaxed, close your eyes and imagine the problem solved!

Time Management



It sounds obvious, but you need to develop a simple and usable time management system that works for you. It could be a paper-based daily 'to do' list, your diary, your PC or a wall of post-it notes! One size does not fit all so find a system that fits your needs and then work on it, so it works for you.

- Identify the people, processes, habits, personal traits and ways of working that cause the time to slip through your fingers. These 'time stealers' are a real drain on your effectiveness an efficiency and you will need to be disciplined in taking steps to resolve them.
- It is good practice and a great habit to build in 'thinking time' as a regular part of your time management routine. This is your opportunity to spend a little quality time reviewing where you are, focusing on new ideas, potential improvements or more effective ways of working.
- Spend as little of your time as possible on trivial, wasteful and non-productive activities. Instead, spend your time working on the things that matter. Discipline yourself to stay focused on working on the most important tasks. It's incredible how much you can accomplish by just doing this.
- Analyse how you are spending your precious time by completing a Time Log exercise. Using a very basic template, which breaks down each day of an average working week into 30-minute segments, simply note down what you are doing and when. Patterns will appear, and you can then see whether these are helping with your management of time. If not take action and change them!
- Don't work harder, work smarter! Enhance your productivity by taking simple steps such as grouping similar activities together, controlling your interruptions more pro-actively, utilising more effective filing systems and learning to delegate more.

**“Don't work harder,
work smarter!”**

- To get the most out of each day work with the natural ebb and flow of your energy levels. You know better than anyone else when you peak and trough in an average day. Factor this in and focus your efforts on the harder tasks when you're at your most resourceful and alert.



Communication

The Art of Communication is at the heart of inspirational leadership. Craig shares a selection of simple and effective, research backed guidance on how to improve your communication skills.

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Assertive Communication



My tips for Assertive Communication are in no particular order. They are simple and practical steps for enhancing the impact of your communication. You will see dramatic results for the better by making a few subtle changes.

- Remember you have rights! The right to say no, the right to respect, the right to make mistakes and the list goes on. Remember though. The consequence of having these rights is the responsibility to also afford them to others.
- To overcome some basic barriers in daily communication with others, try to avoid ambiguity, jargon, abbreviation and technical speak! Select your words with care. Don't use a complex word where a simple one will do just as well. This will all help to avoid misinterpretation.
- When you need to reinforce your point, use the 'broken record' technique. Keep repeating your core message. Do not fall into the temptation to introduce excuses in support of your message. This will only provide the other person with reasons to challenge you.
- Say "thank you" instead of "please"! In circumstances when you make a request of someone use "thank you" where you would use the word "please". This very small change assumes that what you have requested will be done.
- It's fine to become more assertive bit by bit. Pace yourself, especially with difficult people or very strong characters. Build up to the end result. For instance, start by being around them more. Hold their gaze a little longer. Practice positive body language in their presence. Summarise their statements back to them. Become more assertive and confident at a pace that suits you.

“It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you're not.”

- Be very clear about your goals in relation to your assertive behaviour. Consider when and for what reason you would like to more assertive. With whom you want to be more assertive. And for what reason. In other words... what do you want to achieve from it?
- If you are not being assertive that means your behaviour is either aggressive or passive. Neither of these is productive or helpful in the longer term. Make your aim to become more assertive as often as possible in as many situations as you're able.

Advanced Communication Skills



There are so many obstacles and barriers that prevent our communication being effective. Think of communication as a continual cycle of sending and receiving information. The area in the centre of the cycle is where the barriers or 'noise' can happen. This 'noise' can include things such as different views, accents, discomfort or personality conflicts.

- It's important to remember that 'people like people who are like them'! Understanding that there is a range of personality types helps explain why you get along with some people better than others. And why there are people that you 'just don't get'!

Remember also that it only takes a few subtle changes to become more like other types. And it's usually worth the effort when the end results are so positive.

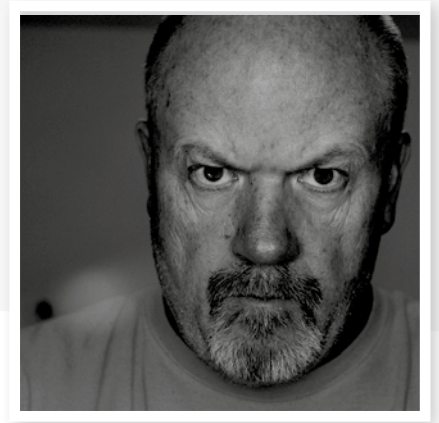
- If you're looking to enhance your communication, consider the quality of your questions. This can be a powerful technique. Cultivate the habit of using open questions. Those starting with what, why, when, where, who and how. Rather than closed questions such as will, do, is and which.
- The messages you send by what you don't say are far more important than what you do! Learn to 'match' and 'mirror' other people - particularly their non-verbal communication. This skill alone can improve the positive impact of your communication in a dramatic way.
- Learn 'active' listening skills. One of the traits of all good communicators is their ability to focus on the messages of others. For many people, listening is what they do while waiting for their turn to speak again.

“People like people who are like them!”

Compare this to 'active' listeners who give full concentration. Listening but also understanding and comprehending what the message is.

- Make sure that your intonation supports your communication. The way that you use your voice can convey very different messages. An upward inflexion implies a question. A neutral one implies a statement. A downward inflexion implies a command.
- Providing feedback to some individuals can often be difficult and challenging. Remember to always be specific. Think about the timing of your comments. Be considerate in your manner and only provide feedback which is helpful and of value on some level.

Dealing With Difficult Customers



The person you are dealing with may be angry and difficult at the time. But remember, they are human. With the feelings and emotions that come with that. No matter what the provocations are, always treat them with respect and never ever as a number.

- The 'Human Factor' of customer care becomes important when dealing with difficult individuals. It's as simple as understanding the ABC of customer service. Utilising this good practice will make you stand out for all the right reasons. The 'ABC' of customer service stands for 'Attitude, Behaviour & Competence'. In an ideal world, you need to excel in all three areas.
- There are often reasons why people become difficult customers. In general, it's because they feel that no-one is listening to their concerns. No one is understanding their issues. Or their frustrations are being ignored. A powerful, yet simple, way to help the situation is to listen. Allow your customer to explain in full what it is that has upset or displeased them. Allow them to rant. Allow them to get it off their chest!
- Keep things in perspective. Do not take the comments of the difficult customer personally. What you might regard as rudeness on their part may well simply be their complete and utter frustration. Unfortunately, you just happen to be on the receiving end of it!
- Under no circumstances will it help you to deal with a difficult customer if you argue back. If you make excuses. 'Pass the buck'. Match wits. Or in any way devalue or invalidate their comments. As tempting as it may be to go there, don't do it... EVER!

“Under no circumstances will it help you to deal with a difficult customer if you argue back.”

- Empathise with the customer rather than sympathise. You don't and can't understand how they feel because you are not them. You have no idea what is going on in their world. Yet, you can appreciate how they might feel about things. A subtle but meaningful difference.
- If a difficult customer becomes aggressive towards you, to the point where you feel threatened, you need to take a physical step back. If possible, always call on someone for assistance. Never put yourself at risk.

Providing Effective Feedback



As with any other process we label as ‘effective communication’, your ease and ability to provide worthwhile, confident feedback to another person will need practice.

Being able to provide effective feedback is vital for any leader and manager. It enables a workforce to perform more efficiently. This is a necessary skill set for high-quality communication.

- Feedback should be helpful and constructive and based on facts, rather than opinions. Give feedback based on what you or some other reliable source actually saw or heard them do. Then, go on to be clear and specific about the praise coming their way or any changes needed for next time.
- There can be a tendency with the more difficult types of feedback to ‘beat around the bush’. Attempts to ‘soften the blow’. The problem with this is your message can become confused. It becomes so ‘woolly’ that any specific points become lost. Guard against being too nice for your own good. Get the message clear in your mind. Then deliver it in a concise way with confidence.
- The concept of the ‘Feedback Burger’ is easy to remember and practical to put in place. Imagine it like this. Think of a quarter pound burger between the two halves of a bread bun. The top half of the bread symbolises the ‘positive’ comments to begin the feedback. The meaty burger is the ‘negative’ input required from you. This should be immediately followed by ‘positive’ comments to end.
- Be aware that it can be very easy to overload someone with information during feedback. Also, if the person receiving the feedback perceive you as being critical, then that will impact on the quality of their listening.

“Being able to provide effective feedback is vital for any leader and manager.”

The likelihood of them ignoring you becomes higher. To combat this, try commenting on 3-things you’ve observed them doing well. Follow this with only ONE suggestion for improvement. This helps prevent the potential for overload.

- An effective model for providing worthwhile feedback is to say “well done”. Move on to provide an example of what they’ve done well and how. Before moving onto adding “next time try...”. It’s here that you should offer appropriate suggestions for improvement. It is that simple. And it works.
- When you give feedback to others, remember that it’s very possible they may return the favour. Your comments about them and their performance may prompt them to come back with something about you and yours! If this happens, do not become immediately defensive. Instead, listen to understand what’s they say and the reasons behind it.

Increasing Your Personal Impact



These thoughts on Personal Impact are all key to increasing the impact you have when dealing with other people. Many of them may appear to be common sense, yet, that does not mean that they are common practice. To stand out for all the right reasons apply these points consistently and conscientiously. As a result, you will develop a powerful and positive Personal Impact.

- Many people are set to 'send' rather than 'receive'. You have two ears and one mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak. Not only will that result in an increase in your popularity but also your knowledge!
- The way you use your voice, your intonation, carries a powerful message. Remember, an upward inflexion implies a question. A neutral one implies a statement. A downward inflexion implies a command. So, use your voice to support the impact of your message.
- You judge people on how they look and other people judge you on how you look! With this mind, pay attention to the basics and always appear as 'well groomed' as you are able. Are your shoes clean? Did you brush your hair? Do your clothes and accessories help or hinder your message?
- Choose your words with care so not to plant any negative or unwanted suggestions when speaking with others. During conversations, pay attention to any recurring words and phrases that others use. Use these words and phrases back to them. This technique can help build a strong rapport and connection at an unconscious level.

“Learn to ‘match’ and ‘mirror’ the body language of others.”

- Whether talking one-to-one or addressing a large group you can enhance your personal impact by the use of eye contact. Where you put your gaze is where you place your attention and energy. Developing appropriate and confident eye contact will do wonders to enhance your personal impact.
- Only you are able to manage your mood by choosing the thoughts you think. What you focus on, you get more of. If you don't believe in it, why should anyone else? The cultivation of a positive mental attitude is essential for a positive personal impact.
- The messages that you send through everything you 'don't say' have a major effect on how others think of you. If you carry yourself with confidence others will believe you are confident and treat you accordingly. Learn to 'match' and 'mirror' the body language of others. This can increase your personal impact with minimal effort.

Presentation Skills



These tips are a collection of basic good practice suggestions aimed at improving your presentation effectiveness and impact. Many people can improve their techniques and results quickly and for others, it takes a little while longer.

- Many people struggle with the idea of presentations because they start off by comparing themselves with other presenters. If you do this then give yourself a break! The presenters you compare yourself with have been doing it a long time. That is where their ability, confidence and ease has come from. With a little practice and some experience, yours can come the same way.
- The prerequisite to delivering an effective presentation is to know your stuff. Even the most confident presenters need to know what they are talking about and you are no different. The more comfortable you are with your material the more confident you will be when you deliver it.
- Sir Winston Churchill used to practice approximately one hour for each minute of his speech. Do not underestimate the importance of rehearsal and practice to create a positive impact on your presentation. Break your presentation down into small sections, focus on the difficult bits, say it out loud with meaning get confident using your notes.
- Never ever trust your presentation to your memory. There is a good chance you will forget something, and they will most likely struggle to get back on track. Instead try out different memory aids. For example; PowerPoint slideshow print offs, handouts, note cards, full scripts, session plans or even a mixture of all these. Some aids will suit you better than others and you won't know which until you've tried them.
- To steal from one person is plagiarism – to steal from many is research! To improve your skills as a presenter, learn from other presenters. If you take only one positive thing from every presenter you will soon build up a lot

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of good practice. Pay attention to how they stand, how they start and finish, what they say, how they say it, what memory aids they have. Pay attention to EVERYTHING! Happy researching.

- Review your presentation immediately after you've delivered it. Ask yourself what did you do well? What could you improve? What parts did and didn't the audience react well to? What adjustments would you make for another time? How did you handle the questions? How was the timing, did you do what you had planned or was it longer or shorter – if so, why? Use the review to help you improve at the time.
- We all have our own preferred ways to take in information, some like to see it, others like to hear it and some of us like to 'do' it. Consider all these different styles when planning your presentation and mix it up a little and you will suit everyone at some stage.

Listening Skills



Instead of pretending to listen, do it! It's true that there are many 'techniques' that you can use so that people believe you are listening to them when you aren't. But, for about the same amount of effort you can REALLY listen to them and then who knows what you might hear?

- Many people are set to 'send' rather than 'receive'. You have two ears and one mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak. Not only will that result in an increase in your popularity but also your knowledge!
- The way you use your voice, your intonation, carries a powerful message. Remember, an upward inflexion implies a question. A neutral one implies a statement. A downward inflexion implies a command. So, use your voice to support the impact of your message.
- You judge people on how they look and other people judge you on how you look! With this mind, pay attention to the basics and always appear as 'well groomed' as you are able. Are your shoes clean? Did you brush your hair? Do your clothes and accessories help or hinder your message?
- Choose your words with care so not to plant any negative or unwanted suggestions when speaking with others. During conversations, pay attention to any recurring words and phrases that others use. Use these words and phrases back to them. This technique can help build a strong rapport and connection at an unconscious level.
- Whether talking one-to-one or addressing a large group you can enhance your personal impact by the use of eye contact. Where you put your gaze is where you place your attention and energy. Developing appropriate and confident eye contact will do wonders to enhance your personal impact.

“You have two ears and one mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak.”

- Only you are able to manage your mood by choosing the thoughts you think. What you focus on, you get more of. If you don't believe in it, why should anyone else? The cultivation of a positive mental attitude is essential for a positive personal impact.
- The messages that you send by everything you 'don't say' have a major effect on how others think of you. If you carry yourself with confidence others will believe you are confident and treat you accordingly. Learn to 'match' and 'mirror' the body language of others. This can increase your personal impact with minimal effort.

Asking Great Questions



There is such a lot to think about when it comes to asking effective questions. But putting in the effort to practice and develop the skills can enhance your communication skills. Apply these tips and you will see the results that come from Asking Great Questions.

- When it comes to asking great questions... silence is golden! Get comfortable with that quiet space between the end of your question and the start of their answer. You have the question and they have the answer and your task is the wait for the response... and do it in silence.
- A powerful question can be summarised as; open-ended, open-minded, clear, concise, relevant and timely. In other words, starting with what, why, when, where, who or how. Asked without any pre-judgement of the answer. Phrased in a simple way. And easy to understand. Short and to the point. It has a purpose for being asked. Finally, it is the right question posed at the right moment. Learn to ask powerful questions!
- Here's "The GOOD, the BAD and the UGLY" of asking great questions. The GOOD: 'What would you do?' The BAD: 'Would you do X?' The UGLY: 'Would you do X, Y or Z or even A, B or C?' Choose to be GOOD!
- Avoid pre-loaded questions such as 'How bad at the job is he?' or 'What do you like most about it?'. These types of questions pre-suppose that 'he' is bad at the job when 'he' may well be very good at it. Or that you 'like' something you may dislike. So, beware of assumptions!
- Stay away from the multiple questions! This is the sort of question that offers the person being asked, nowhere to start with their answer. So, guard against the 'Why did you do that? Did you not hear me say what I wanted? When will you start to listen to me?' style of question. They are chaotic and confusing... stay away!

“Clarifying questions are excellent when you need to focus in on a specific piece of information.”

- Clarifying questions are excellent when you need to focus in on a specific piece of information. Examples of these questions include: 'What do you mean by that?' 'Who told you?' or 'When exactly do you need it?'. Asking these will provide you with what you need, and no more.
- Challenging questions can be used to great effect when someone makes a comment like 'I always get everything wrong!'. The response is 'Everything?'. Or 'I'll never be able to understand this!'. The challenging question style respond would be 'What, never?'. Then use silence which gives the other person a chance to re-evaluate their previous comment.



Positivity

Make the positive difference in your life! Develop your personal skills and inspire a positive difference in yourself. These dependable pointers by Craig can direct your life.

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The Power of Positive Thinking



Think of your mind as an iceberg with the tip above the water line representing the conscious mind. This area of your mind is where logic, reason and the five senses are based. Now consider the great mass of the iceberg. The 90% submerged and unseen beneath the water. This represents your unconscious mind. This is the area of your possibilities and potential.

- The unconscious mind reacts to the thoughts that we hold in our conscious mind and responds accordingly. The unconscious mind believes whatever we tell it. In other words, it believes the thoughts that we hold in our conscious mind. You can appreciate then that we would be best to think ONLY positive thoughts, as we will create more of what we focus on, whatever that is.
- Why not think as the bumblebee thinks? According to aeronautical specifications, a bumble bee cannot fly. Its body is too heavy, its wings are too small and it has the insufficient muscle power to get off the ground. The thing is, no one has told the bumblebee and so it flies! We need to avoid dwelling on all the 'reasons' why we cannot and, like the bee, just get on with it.
- Persistence is one of the key factors in attaining what we want. There are countless inspirational stories of people who have succeeded against the odds and kept on pursuing their goals. There is the experience of Colonel Sanders who, over a two-years, collected 1,009 'no thanks' before he got his first 'YES'. KFC exists today because of a chicken recipe and the relentless persistence of one elderly man!
- It's been said that "a goal is just a dream with a deadline!". Your dreams, your goals are essential to your success. If you can accept that you get more of what you focus on, then you can see how important it is to be

“The unconscious mind reacts to the thoughts that we hold in our conscious mind and responds accordingly.”

focused on EXACTLY what you DO WANT. Invest time and energy in thinking through your goals. Write them down. Give them an achievement date. Get busy. Put in the work and go for it.

- Don't underestimate the power of visualisation or guided imagery. It was once said that "what the mind can conceive and believe the mind can achieve". Dare to dream big dreams. Once you have the end result of whatever success is for you, clear in your mind then make it real in your mind's eye. Make it a daily habit to see, hear and feel in vivid detail what it will be like to achieve your dream!
- Beware! Watch out for 'comfort zones.' The things we convince ourselves we cannot do, even while we're trying to do them. Remember, you are in charge of your thoughts and so you impose your own zone around yourself. Watch out for negative people who try to belittle your positive aspirations. Stay focused, stay positive and just keep going until you succeed!

Keeping A Journal



Think of your Journal as an empty book which you are going to fill up with valuable content. Now that may take various forms such as ideas, insights, quotes, current challenges, relationship difficulties, stressors or countless other things of relevance at the moment you write about them.

- Rule Number 1 of keeping a Journal is... there are NO rules! The way that you choose to use your own Journal is entirely your decision. If, at times, you find it beneficial to write in it several times a day and at other points, you write in it a couple of times a month, well that's your call. You don't have to justify how you keep your journal to another living soul.
- What's great about your Journal is that only you get to read the content! That means you have absolute freedom to write whatever you like about whatever you wish. So, should you want to vent your feelings, explode onto the page or let off the steam of the day, then your Journal provides you with a completely safe and confidential place to do just that.
- Journals are a wonderful space to develop a greater level of self-awareness. You can use the pages to consider your strengths and weaknesses, your values and drivers, your beliefs, your aspirations, your achievements, your character traits and anything else about yourself that you might choose to think about and reflect more deeply on for whatever reason.
- The style of your Journal can be whatever you like. A cheap and cheerful little notebook is just as worthy as a larger, expensive leather-bound version. Your tastes will almost certainly change over your journaling years. But remember that the essential value of the Journal is not the covers themselves. It is what you put INSIDE them.

“Journals are a wonderful space to develop a greater level of self-awareness.”

- It's important to spend some time reviewing what you write in your Journal every now and again. It's useful to look over your Journals about every six months. It is also worthwhile to spend a few hours re-reading your entries in full once a year. Remember, this is valuable stuff you've written but sometimes the 'value' needs a little distance to be seen for all it's worth. That's the point of the review!
- The 3 G's of Journaling are Goals, Gratitude and Growth. You can use yours for any or all them. Writing about your goals, your deadlines, your progress, your challenges, your achievements and what you have learnt can be invaluable. Writing about what you are already grateful for can be humbling and beneficial on many levels. Writing about your own personal development and growth can be a great reminder of where you started out and what you have now achieved. Choose one of the G's - better still take all 3!

Goal Setting



Only a very few people seem to know exactly what they want from life and take the sustained action required to make those goals a reality. Why not be one of them? Apply these tips to help ‘super-charge’ the results you get from your Goal Setting.

- These are a few simple ‘musts’ to follow when it comes to goal setting. One such golden rule is the necessity to work on your own imagination. Your ability to dream big. To be able to suspend ‘reality’ and go head first into the realms of your idealised world of possibilities! We all did it when we were children BUT as adults, most of us need to re-learn the skill.
- There are some great methods I’ve found and used over the years. One is that at the beginning of the year, create a list of random goals to do in the next 12-months. It might be things to do such as decorating the kitchen or making a Will. Places to go for a visit or a break. Things to learn or even people to contact.
- 1 of 3: A more complex goal setting activity is to divide a sheet of paper into four and give each quadrant one of the following headers; Work & Money, Personal Development, Fun & Pleasure and Community. Your task is to then let your mind run free for 5-minutes in each section. Write all the things you would want to achieve under that heading.
- 2 of 3: After you have exhausted your imagination and captured on paper your desires, possessions, accomplishments, experiences etc. the next task is to give each of your goals a timeline – 1-3, 5-10 & 10+ years, depending on what you would guess that goal would take you to accomplish.
- 3 of 3: Finally, select your most important ONE YEAR goal from each section and write a paragraph about it. Make it inspiring, compelling, exciting and emotionally

“Imagination is the vital beginning.”

charged! What would it mean for you to achieve this goal? How would it make you feel to achieve it? The more real it is on paper the greater the power it has to PULL you towards making it happen.

- Another method is to aim for 101-lifetime goals! These might include things you want to achieve. Places you want to visit or people you want to meet. The finances you want in your life and the good that you want to do in the world. the WOW moments you want to experience. The things you want to own. The experiences you want to have. Again, let your imagination go and see where it takes you!
- When you have a clear idea about the specific goals you intend to achieve, think about them often. But, you then need to TAKE MASSIVE ACTION to begin the process of making your goals a reality. Imagination is the vital beginning to the process. And sustained action is what’s needed to bring the written word into real-life experience. Go for it!

Managing Stress



Stress is a very individual issue and your stressors may vary. These 7 tips for Managing Stress are simple ways you to control stress levels. Put in place these thoughts. Take positive steps to help you Managing Stress with effective and resourceful methods.

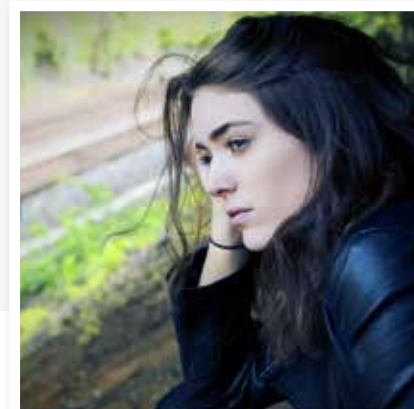
- Exercising is a great stress reliever. A good workout releases endorphin into your system. These are sometimes referred to as the 'happy hormones'! Not only is exercise beneficial for your long-term physical health. It is also an effective and immediate way to help reduce your stress levels. And, in the end, improve your mental health.
- Give yourself permission to say NO! Your personal 'stressors' are going to come in a variety of guises. You might link these to people, some to places, others to things you do. Remember that you have the right to say no to something you don't want to do. A person you don't want to spend time with or a place you don't want to be.
- Create some time for you. This 'me time' is so important in respect of helping to ease away the stresses of the day. It may be as simple as a long soak in the bath. Taking time to read. Watching your favourite TV show. Or take a walk. Even if this is not possible for you every day then sometime in the week is better than none at all.
- You may have things you would like to say to certain individuals. These people may have upset you, irritated you or caused you to feel angry or negative. A great way to help clear the stress is to write them a letter. Say everything you wish to say and then – without reading it back – burn the letter. It sounds odd, but it works. Who are you going to write to?
- 'You are what you eat' is a phrase you would have heard before. And to combat stress, it is an important element to consider. Ensure that you eat as healthy as possible.

“Remember that you have the right to say no to something you don't want to do.”

Your food has an impact on how you feel. Both in a physical and mental way. Consider your diet. Strive to eat less processed food and more fruit and vegetables.

- The right amount of sleep for you is one of the keys to managing your stress levels. Many people need between 7 and 8 hours of sleep per night. But only you actually know what you need. Start 'unwinding' about an hour before bed. Drop things that don't help ... Stop thinking about work. Stop watching the news. Don't drink alcohol. Avoid arguments. Good night!
- You are in charge of your own thoughts. You get more of what you focus on. You can help manage your stress by managing your thoughts. Make your mental self-talk as positive as you can. Tell yourself you are 'calm and relaxed'. You are 'having a good day'. Whatever positive statements work for you and takes away focus from any stress.

Selecting Your Self-Talk



Negative self-talk, what I call the Critical Inner Voice, can be compared to weeds in the garden. They spring up naturally and if you don't deal with them, they will take over. You need to be on alert and weed out the negative self-talk as soon as you hear it. Also, like with any garden, if you want to stay on top of the weeds then the weeding never stops!

- The first thing is to be aware that you are indulging in any sort of 'self-talk' at all. Next is to pay deliberate attention to the nature of your internal chatter. It may well be quite random. A commentary on what you are observing. Perhaps it could be utter nonsense. Then at either extreme your self-talk will be positive, upbeat and 'can do' or negative, beat yourself up and 'can't do'. With awareness, at least, you can begin to do something about it!
- One powerful tactic for dealing with the Critical Inner Voice is to fight back against its attacks using 'Shock and AWE!'. You heard me. You need to send a shock to the negative self-talk by deploying AWE (Alternative Words Exchange). When the Critical Inner Voice says something like 'You're rubbish at this!' retaliate with a couple of minutes of enthusiastically repeated 'I'm great at this!'. Whatever negatives it throws at you, respond by throwing the alternative positive back. Do it hard and do it with overwhelming force!
- To stay consciously alert to your self-talk is one important factor. Next, you need to get good at hailing a CAB. In this scenario, CAB means Choose Another Belief! Just as a cab (or taxi) will take you to your destination, your self-talk and beliefs, can also carry you along on a journey. And if you don't want to arrive at where your negative beliefs will eventually take you then... Choose Another Belief!
- Whatever you say after the words I AM carries a powerful message to your Unconscious Mind.

“Whatever you say after the words I AM carries a powerful message to your Unconscious Mind.”

Make certain that in selecting your self-talk you allow only positive affirmations to follow after you think or say the words I AM. Repeating to yourself the words 'I AM positive', 'I AM successful' or 'I AM a wonderful communicator' become the seeds that you are planting in the 'Garden of your Mind'. What 'I AM' seeds would you be planting?

- Another great way to select your self-talk and plant great seeds into your Unconscious Mind is by repetition of positive statements. For example, 'Everything always goes right for me' or 'My biggest challenges always teach me the most valuable lessons'. Think about what statements, repeated daily, could have the most beneficial impact for you.
- One more method of deliberate self-talk is to use the repetition of positive questions such as 'Why am I having such a great day today?' or 'How well prepared am I for my presentation?'. This keeps your mind focused on only positive outcomes and it then goes on a search for the evidence to prove the statement true! What might your questions be?

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