



Connection Pros

Title – The Eyes Have It

For the past two months, I've been explaining what I believe are the three most important aspects to a proper introduction.

I started off by talking about smiles. A smile shows friendship. It can brighten another person's day. It puts other people at ease; leaves a favorable impression on others; makes you look confident, warm, and approachable; and best of all, it has the ability to create life-long relationships.

I then shared with you the importance of a great handshake. Shaking hands is probably the most common gesture people use on a daily basis. Your handshake conveys an impressive, non-verbal message, many times before you speak verbally. It speaks loudly of your professionalism, confidence, trust-worthiness and savvy. It is as common in America as it is around the world. In most countries, it is an accepted gesture of introduction, agreement, friendship, congratulation and good-bye.

Let's wrap up this segment on proper introductions by looking at one of the best ways to start creating more connections. It is also one of the hardest things for people to do. I'm talking about making great eye contact with others when you introduce yourself.

It's amazing how many communication skills books and courses talk about the myth that 'good' eye contact means gazing fixedly into the other person's eyes. For a few people, this will work well. However, many people are likely to find it uncomfortable to the point that they begin to wonder if you are trying to hypnotize them or ask them for a date, or both.

If you meet many people in your daily life, it's a good idea to think about how you make eye contact - it is, after all, one of the first things people use to form an impression of you! If you spend some time observing people, you will soon recognize that there are many different eye contact styles:

(1) The Fixed Stare Style: Their eyes never leave you and practically bore through you. Occasionally, this style is used as a power trick to intimidate or to give the impression that people is more confident than they really are. This has been used by politicians who have been thoroughly coached in how to appear a lot more trustworthy than they often turn out to be!

(2) The Darting Glance Style: They do look at you – but with very brief glances. They tend to look at you only when your gaze is averted. This style can give the impression of either low self confidence or



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lack of trustworthiness, so if it happens to be your natural style, you may wish to remedy the situation rather than transmit such a non-verbal message.

(3) The No-Eye-Contact style: Their eyes rarely, if ever, meet yours. They use peripheral vision to watch you. This style is much favored by country dwellers whose lifestyle has not included many opportunities for gazing into the eyes of other humans.

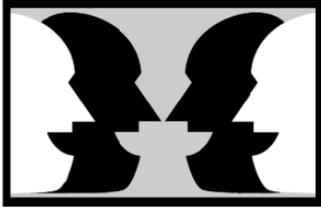
You may have noticed, while out in the open country, that there is a tendency to use somewhat less eye contact and to stand farther from one another than would be the norm on a city street. As with the Darting Glance, this style can be misinterpreted; however, the No Eye Contact style is more likely to be a learned behavior than an essential part of their thinking strategy.

(4) The Turn-And-Turn-About Style: This is the most common style. They look quite steadily at you while you are speaking. However, if you appear to find this uncomfortable, they will look away occasionally to avoid creating tension. When it is your turn to speak you look at them steadily while they still meet your gaze but look away a little more (to think, gather thoughts, check feelings, etc.).

To make more connections with others, here are a few ways to deal with the above mentioned styles:

(1) If they use the fixed-stare: While speaking to them, look at them for longer than you might otherwise do. However, avoid getting into I-will-not-look-away-until-you-do competition. When you are doing the listening, give them quite sustained eye contact. (If, at first, you find this a little uncomfortable you can ease your own tension by varying your expression and by using head nods and 'Uh-huh' sounds.)

(2) If they use Darting Glances: Giving them sustained eye contact will be perceived as aggressive or even intimidating. Adopt a somewhat similar style by looking away more than might be normal for you, especially when you are doing the speaking.



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(3) If they use minimal eye contact: Make much less eye contact that you might normally do. Also, try practicing using peripheral vision to watch them. (Thank you, Pegasus NLP, for some of this information)

As you can see, good eye contact is very important in making more connections with others. However, it takes a lot of practice to get comfortable with it. The next time you attend an event, think about how your eyes can tell so much about who you are. See you next month.