

# 9 Things Successful People Do When They Meet Someone

These steps that can put you in control of the results in any first encounter.

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Preparing for meetings is critical, whether you're [having them internally](#) or [doing a deal](#) with a critical partner. It's no less important to prepare for a first meeting with anyone.

You never know in advance the roles you and people you meet will play in each other's lives. Research suggests that you make a [first impression in the "blink of an eye."](#) Not only are people judging you, but you are judging them, often without being aware of the process. Such an approach leaves enormous room for accident on the part of both you and the other person. What if the person you're meeting could, in the right circumstances, become a staunch friend, love interest, business partner, mentor, or ally in some cause?

Stopping human perception is impossible. However, you can be aware of what is happening and strive for ways to undertake a meeting with more control. Here are nine actions that can help you be more successful.

## **Do research ahead of time**

Some meetings are accidental, but many aren't. Do the research you can to see what you can learn about the other person. Maybe it's professional experience, background, or personal interests. Make an effort before the meeting that might influence how you see it and the other person.

## **Prepare for the context**

There's a big difference between a blind date, a first discussion with a new supplier, and a job interview (no matter which side you represent). To understand the dynamics of meeting someone, consider the context and realize that you're seeing only a limited view.

## **Remember that no one is comfortable**

Few people are really comfortable meeting other people. There are fragile egos and self-images at play. If you're uncomfortable, recognize that the other person is as well and focus on putting him or her at ease. You'll forget your own problems in the process.

## **Smile in a relaxed manner**

Smiling when meeting someone is old advice. But not all smiles are alike. You've probably met people who put on big yet insincere grins when meeting someone. It can be off-putting when you give someone the sense you're getting ready to sell them a used car. Let a smile come genuinely out of the chance to be pleasantly surprised, learn something new, and perhaps strike a relationship that might become important in the future. (And even a smile might be inappropriate under some cultural expectations, depending on the context of the meeting.)

## **Look someone in the eyes, but not in a psycho way**

Like smiling, looking directly into someone's eyes is rote advice. However, avoid making this an inadvertent contest or test of domination. Remember, too, [cultures handle eye contact differently](#). A comfortable meeting of the eyes in the U.S. might be seen as impolite or even aggressive in other countries. Do some research to learn the rules, depending on the person you're about to meet. If you can't learn ahead of time, take cues off their body language and posture.

## **Offer a culturally-acceptable greeting**

In a global world, rather than a narrow and parochial one, greetings vary, and what is expected in one culture could be impolite in another. A handshake might be acceptable between two people of the same gender but not for a man and a woman. In some countries, a slight bow might be considered appropriate.

## **Take note of their surroundings for clues about them**

If you meet in someone's office, at their home, or in another place they frequently inhabit, look around for clues to them. Are there family pictures? What types of books and art do they prefer? Do furnishings suggest someone with traditional or avant-garde tastes? Get to know them by paying attention.

## **Concentrate on the other person**

Focus on the needs, interests, and comfort of the other person. That doesn't mean to ignore your own interests, if the meeting is for a specific purpose. But do turn outward so you don't miss the existence of the other person. If a relationship of any type comes of this, it will be with him or her.

## **Don't overstay your welcome**

A first meeting will more likely than not have a natural progression and span. Be aware of signs the other person is ready to move onto other interests and obligations. As the old entertainment saying goes, leave 'em asking for more. Then there's a greater chance that the other person will look forward to a second meeting rather than find ways to duck it.