

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1252 The Reality of First Impressions

Your mom told you. Your grandmother likely told you. Maybe other family members, too, along with a few teachers. It's absolutely on target. They are all correct. The only question is, did you listen? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll figure that out, next on The Extra Point.

What was it that all of these people told you? It was that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. It was that first impressions not only count, but they are critical.

First impressions are a crucial aspect of our daily interactions with others. Whether it's a job interview, a first date, or just meeting someone new, the first impression we make can have a lasting impact.

A positive first impression can lead to new opportunities, friendships, and professional relationships, while a negative one can shut doors and leave a lasting negative impact.

Research has shown that people form opinions about someone within seconds of meeting them, and these opinions are often difficult to change.

This is why it is so important to get the first impression right. How do we do that?

One thing is body language. The way we stand, sit, and move sends a powerful message to those around us.

For example, standing up straight and having solid eye contact can convey confidence and sincerity, while fidgeting or avoiding eye contact can suggest nervousness or dishonesty.

That being said, in some cultures it will freak people out if you maintain eye contact for very long. You have to know who you're talking with and how they see things. That's not easy, but if it's important to you, that kind of detailed information is available.

Another important aspect of a good first impression is our communication style. How we speak, the tone of our voice, and our choice of words can all play a role in how others perceive us. It's important to be clear and not ramble on when speaking. Experts will also say that minimizing the use of filler words like "um" and "ahh" and "you know" is also advisable.

Being a good listener is one of the better qualities anyone can have. Listen to people for the purpose of understanding them, not for the purpose of making a response. Too many of us are figuring out what we want to say while the other person is still giving us the details. We're not really listening at that point.

Our attitude can also have a significant impact on our first impression. Being positive, friendly, and approachable can help us make a good impression, while being negative, hostile, or distant can have the opposite effect.

A natural smile is a good thing and can go a long way in creating a good first impression. You'd think some people are forced to pay every time they smile, so that's why they don't do it very often.

It's also worth noting that first impressions are not limited to face-to-face interactions. We develop first impressions of people from social media.

One more thing. Although I led off with the famous line that you never get a second chance to make a first impression, you do have the opportunity to do a little repair job if the initial impression didn't go so well. I said first impressions are difficult to change. Difficult? Yes, that can be true, but not always.

If you weren't warm, friendly, open, and helpful the first time around, make sure you are that way the second time.

(Con't.)

Same with the third time. Two good interactions like that will help smooth out whatever was missing from the first meeting.

So, the people who gave you that guidance about first impressions were absolutely right. However, they didn't have the full story.

Make all your impressions count. You can do it.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

