

Exercise Snap Me

Print out the online SNAP ME Worksheet

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1. In the “**self-perceptions**” column, write a list of all the things you believe to be true of you. What is your personality? What are your characteristics? If you work for an employer, list all the things you believe to be true about yourself as an employee, supervisor, or coworker. My list in the story would have said, “*professional, workaholic, great speaker, team player,*” and so on.

Then, in the same column, make a list of how you see yourself in personal situations — say, as a spouse, parent, and friend. The list should include personality characteristics, adjectives and adverbs that describe what you believe about yourself. Examples might include *happy, strong, overbearing calm, friendly,* and *shy*.

2. In the “**viewable behaviors**” write down all the things that others see you say and do. Typically, the items in this column are the things you do with friends, coworkers, dates, customers, or clients while face-to-face, while on the phone, or through email and texts — things they are likely to have noticed. You must be honest with yourself here. To give you an idea, my list included *my way-too-casual clothes, my bad hair, not saying hello to my coworkers, my messy desk, and my childlike habit of sitting on my feet at meetings* (the few I did go to). List only the behaviors others see and hear, not what you think they mean.

For example, when listing your work behaviors, write

everything that your team sees you do. Don't write down anything you do behind closed doors or that you tell others you do — only the things they actually see you doing. I couldn't write down that I got standing ovations from audiences and great critiques from clients. Those things were invisible and, frankly, irrelevant to my office co-workers. List all these items as nonverbal behaviors, and be specific. These should be things a scientist looking at your life would write down in her lab notes. For example, instead of writing down "friendly," as you did on your self-perception list, write viewable behaviors, such as "They see me come into work every day and say hello to everyone with a smile on my face and cheery voice." Instead of "business-like," write, "They see me grumpy and sour faced, hunched over my computer, until I have my coffee" or "They see me go directly to my computer and start working without stopping to smile or wave at anyone." Instead of "workaholic" you might write, "They see the long rambling emails I send at two in the morning or they typically see me with a cup of coffee in my hand rushing somewhere or with my head down texting."

For a work situation, think about the following:

- How and when do you come into work each day? (Remember, time is a powerful nonverbal communicator.) What do you do nonverbally? And what, if anything do you say to people? Include what you say in the parking lot, the elevator, the hallway. What is your first behavior that your coworkers see? If you are working on the first impression you give to clients, customers, prospective dates, friends, or family members, think of that first visual interaction in a specific context and list your behaviors.

- How do you usually dress, from your shoes up to your head? Be sure you use descriptive
- words for your clothes, shoes, jewelry, glasses,
- watches, wallets, phones, bags, and accessories, such as *pressed, wrinkled, old, tight, big, in style, dated, scuffed, crisply pressed, worn*, and so on.
- What does your office or cubicle, and especially your desk, look like?
- What are your standard everyday nonverbal facial expressions and voice like?
- How often do you work in your cubicle or any other place where others can see you?
- Do you keep your back to the entrance of your office or cubicle?
- How do you sit — what is your typical posture like when you are working and not working?
- How do you respond when others come into your office, cubicle, or other work area?
- Do you visit others, and if you do, what is your nonverbal behavior then?
- How do you respond to phone calls, emails, and texts: quickly, slowly, never, abruptly?
- How do you answer your phone, and how do you talk on it?
- What are your lunch behavior and break room behavior like? Where do you sit, and how do you eat? Who do you talk to, and who don't you talk to?
- What is your behavior at meetings — when do you arrive, and where do you sit?

- What is your one-on-one and big-meeting behavior? Do you listen, speak, or doodle?
- How quickly or slowly do you respond to requests? (Response time is a nonverbal communicator.)
- How do you treat different people like your co-workers, your boss, clients, and customers?
- How and when do you leave work each day?
- Do you say good-bye?
- Do you socialize after work? If so, what do you do?

3. In the **“Others’ Perceptions”** column, list other people’s perceptions of you. First, look closely at all those viewable behaviors from their point of view. What would you say about another person you saw doing those things, especially if those were the only behaviors you ever saw? Now take some time and write down these snap impressions. Be judgmental. For me, this step was a revelation. No wonder I wasn’t pulled in on projects! The other guys didn’t even know who I was or what I could do. I was just a laughing, casually dressed kid. What is your objective perception of your own behaviors? If you like, you can show the second column to other people and ask them what they would think of that person. Take it to your boss and see what he says. Sit down with your sweetie and best friend and see what they say.

4. Now compare the first column, “Self-Perceptions,” with the third column, “Other’s Perceptions.” How do your perceptions of yourself compare with their perceptions of you? Are you coming across the way you think you do? Are you coming across the way you want to?

5. Finally, make a list of actions you are willing to change if you need to, and behaviors you should continue if they are creating the impression you

want. Changing impressions may include letting your positive invisible behaviors such as the great speech you gave outside the office, or your sense of humor that only comes out when you're relaxed — be known to others. It may also include creating opportunities to spend time with people in a variety of situations. Set up courageous conversations. If you are working on altering others'

perceptions of you at work, set up a meeting with co-workers, your team leader, your boss, or your clients. Ask them, "What is or was your first impression of me?" "What specific behaviors led you to that impression?" Getting truthful feedback is difficult. If they give positive feedback, ask, "How can I give others an even better impression?" If they say, "It was fine," or give you other nebulous or nonspecific feedback, ask, "What would be one specific thing I can change to make a great impression?" or "What am I doing now that I could do even better?" Whatever you hear, listen quietly and say thank you. Don't try to defend yourself or explain your actions. They have given you a gift. Believe me, there are people in your life who are just dying to tell you that you have spinach between your teeth. You just need to ask.

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Self-Perceptions	Viewable Behaviors	Others' Perceptions