

The Check-In Method

To change or improve your first impression

By: Patti Wood MA, CSP

You may ask, “Can you change a first impression?” You can change your first impression, but it can take a while. Research indicated that it can take up to six months of continuous face-to-face interaction to change an incorrect first impression. You can use the following Check in Method to begin the process.

You create a check-in first impression at the beginning of every workday, at the beginning of every meeting, and at the beginning of every phone call or other interaction. People check in to see how you are going to be on that particular day and in that particular situation. And on the basis of the check-in, they decide how they will treat you. Think of the times you looked at someone and thought, “Wow, he is in a bad mood. I’d better be careful.”

If you want to change your overall snap, then focus on each of your check-ins to establish new behaviors. The good news is that the more interactions you have, and the more check-ins you do in different environments (in and out of the office, for example), the greater your chance of improving your overall snap.

A simple way to find out if you’re making the changes you want to make is to do a check-in on your own behavior at the beginnings and endings of interactions. For example assess what you did as you saw the person, how you greeted them and their response. When you end a phone call an email or a face to face interaction slow the process down a bit and see how that changes and improves the energy and perhaps that person’s impression of you.