

4 emotionally intelligent ways to make a great first impression

Whether it's in an interview, meeting new people or your first day on the job, making a great first impression can go a long way.

Developing your emotional intelligence skills is an excellent approach to boosting your first impression game.

Here we look at four emotionally intelligent ways to make a great impression.

What's emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence – sometimes called EQ – refers to your ability to recognise your emotions and the emotions of others, and to use that information to guide the way you think and act. This can help to enhance the relationships you have with people, says Leadership Coach and psychologist Vanessa Fudge.

How to use emotional intelligence to make a great first impression

Here are four tactics to help you harness the power of emotional intelligence and make a positive impression in any situation.

1. **Self-reflect**

Before you even enter the room, think about how you're feeling – are you confident and relaxed, or nervous and worried? Pausing to centre yourself can help you find a more positive and calmer state of mind.

As cliché as it may sound, finding a quiet place and doing some breathing exercises before a first meeting can be extremely useful. Taking a few big, deep breaths can be a simple and effective way to lower stress in the moment. And taking a second to recognise what you're feeling, and name it, may help you to work through those feelings.

For example, you might recognise that you are feeling a bit anxious, and tell yourself that it's because you're excited about the opportunity, so you're going to bring that excitement to your interview or meeting.

2. **Match your energy to the room or person**

Good emotional intelligence skills include being able to read a situation and adjust your behaviour to suit. This doesn't mean changing who you are, rather adjusting your energy levels and body language to match the mood of the room.

For example, if you walk into a formal setting, an overly casual greeting may seem out of place, so you might instead opt for a friendly smile and good eye contact. Likewise, walking into an interview room filled with folk in casual attire and relaxed postures could mean that a formal approach might send the wrong vibe.

3. **Focus your attention on the person you're speaking to**

Apart from the obvious of removing any other distractions, Vanessa says to properly connect with a new person, it's **important to listen** in a way where you are totally present. That means removing any other distractions – such as a phone – and focus your attention entirely on the person who's talking to you.

What not to do? Vanessa recommends avoiding the temptation to paraphrase or interrupt to finish their sentence. Also avoid thinking too much about what you're going to say next while someone is talking – you might miss something important they've said, or it may make you seem disinterested.

4. **Find the common ground**

Talking about common interests gives the new person you're meeting the opportunity to talk about something they enjoy. This means when you walk away, they know something about you, and you something about them which helps to build a greater connection.

A way to find common ground is to ask questions that show interest beyond the purpose of the meeting. Just be mindful of asking too many questions – particularly if the person is not overly receptive – as this could put some people off.

The pressure to make a great first impression can feel strong, especially if it's for an interview or your first day on the job. But putting your emotional intelligence to use can help.

Next time you need to make a great first impression, think about reflecting on how you feel, matching the energy of the room, listening carefully and trying to find common ground. These four simple strategies can help you to make that first impression a great one – and feel a little more comfortable and confident while you're at it.