How to Make a Good First Impression
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As a young man of 23, Abraham Lincoln said, "Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition... I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem."

Esteem is achieved by painting the canvas of your life in the rich colors of honesty, humility and caring, and with the bold brush strokes of integrity.

A person's esteem for you begins with the very first encounter: "First impressions are lasting impressions."

Here is a technique for making a positive first impression in a way that reflects integrity of heart. I hope the acronym F. I. R. S. T. will make it easier to remember.

F=FOCUS ON THE OTHER PERSON. Manipulators ask, "What can this person do for me?" Leaders ask, "What can I do for this person?" If you maintain a genuine interest in the other person, you will appear "confidently humble" rather than overbearing or arrogant.

I=INQUIRE ABOUT THEIR INTERESTS. Find out what the other person cares about. Ask questions about the "four Hs": hopes, heroes, hobbies and heart.

R=REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE. Regardless of your impression of them, other people are created in God's image and are dearly loved by the Creator.

S=SMILE. A smile brightens your whole countenance and warms the hearts of others.

T=TELL ABOUT YOURSELF. Talk about what interests you, but seek to relate it to their interests. Seek to end the conversation with words of encouragement.

Also, don't let your fear of others get you down. As I study great communicators, I become more and more impressed with men like Winston Churchill. Weak and sickly as a child, unloved by his parents, and plagued with a severe lisp, Churchill nonetheless grew into a powerful, influential leader.

Here is a quick Churchill quote you can post on your desk or refrigerator for motivation: "I have no fear of the future. Let us go forward into its mysteries, let us tear aside the veils which hide it from our eyes and let us move onward with confidence and courage."