



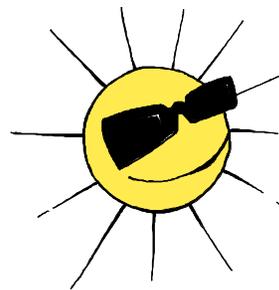
# Look like you are an especially nice person!

**L** human dynamics are fascinating! For instance, **Why do I like you?**

**For starters, it's the fact that I feel like you like ME!** When you start off with "I like you" written all over you, you're start-ing out in a positive spot.

**People decide if they like the messenger before they even hear the message!**

Therefore, how nice the client perceives you to be has a lot to do with how *effective* you are and, ultimately, how much satisfaction you get out of doing the session.



**Sure, you're a nice person . . . but is it clear just by looking at you?** You will get tangible results from clearly *projecting* how nice you really are!

In clinic, you make subconscious and conscious evaluations constantly throughout each session. The same thing happens deep inside the participant. A client who feels positively about you will be more likely to open up to you and explore their situation.

If you appear too professional (the one in charge, the one with the answers) or too emotionally distant, the climate will be much less condu-

---

**"Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.**

**Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting."**

Mother Teresa

---

ive to learning. You will be much less effective. If you are someone participants feel they can talk with and explore things with, you will have set the stage for learning and progress.

**Lighten up! Both you and your message will be SO much more attractive!** People react positively to positive people and positive expectations. Good nutrition may be serious business to us but a serious approach does not make our messages especially appealing.

**Why do people respond better to a light approach?** Because it takes a lot of pressure off them. **People are more receptive if they feel the pressure is off.** More of their attention is available for listening, thinking, and exploring options. Lighten up a little and you will probably find that people give you more feedback that you've been really helpful. And that's the kind of feedback we can all use more of!

**Do you sometimes find that you are talking with someone whose face is blank and who looks like she refuses to interact with you?**

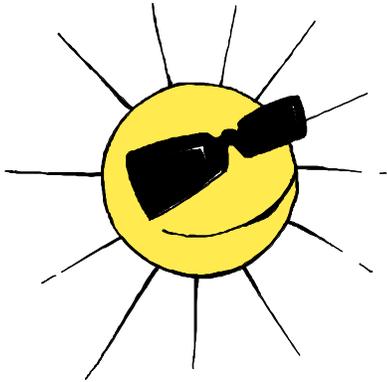
You don't think she's angry, it just looks like she is tuning you out.

A face that's blank does not mean the mind is blank! It could be a posture. It could be a pose or protection. This person is not necessarily hostile.

Maybe they had a bad experience at the front counter or with another staff member. Maybe they just don't know what to expect and they want to check it all out before they share a smile with you. Perhaps this is someone from a culture that reserves smiles for people already known and trusted.

Next time you see a blank face, think of it as a *vulnerable* face and then be your *warmest* self. Your genuine warmth can break through barriers fast.

**You may find it unnatural to maintain genuine warmth when you don't feel any in return, but think of it as a challenge.** Your smile doesn't have to be focused on the adult, either. If you smile as you look at the baby or children,



**"Who you are  
speaks so loudly  
I can't hear  
what you're  
saying."**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

the parent notices right away. (Don't you find that if you show that you like somebody's kids, they are automatically more comfortable with you?)

Desmond Morris, the anthropologist, has done some fascinating work on the messages our faces send. He has demonstrated very clearly how we have a primitive and instinctual response to the cues on the faces of the people we meet. We read each others' faces almost unconsciously. For many thousands of years, humans have used the smile to defuse hostility and signal peaceful intentions.

**Have you ever thought about how the genuine smile looks?** After reading this, you will become really conscious of when people are giving you a genuine smile and when they're just giving you a business-like smile:

The genuine smile is one that gives us "apple-cheeks" and pulls those muscles around our eyes so that we get little bags under our eyes. Look for it! When the area around a person's eyes crinkles up, you're getting their warmest welcome.

The eyes are half of a genuine smile.

**A genuine smile and a caring attitude set the stage for a good session.** If it's the end of a long day and you can't muster a warm, genuine smile, at least look each person directly in the eye and smile a business-like smile!

And the next time a fellow staff member complains that nobody listens to her, watch how she greets her participants. Is there a genuine smile in sight?

"I'd like people to consider that underneath all the layers we construct to protect ourselves--our dignity, our titles, our degrees, our status, and our need to be seen in certain ways--underneath all that, remains the authentic, essential self. I'm not afraid to call it *the soul* . . . I sadly conclude that all those other layers, which we so carefully construct through our lives, distance and insulate us from truly contacting others."

Hanoch McCarty  
Chicken Soup For the Soul

## Activities to do before Discussion

### Look like you are an especially nice person!

Welcome to your first **Bright Ideas** Activities! Since these are your first Activities, let's discuss what the goal is here. Maybe the best way to put it is to borrow from Anthony Robbins, the fellow who has made achieving success an art form. Here's his "Ultimate Success Formula" (from Giant Steps, Small Changes to Make a Big Difference, 1994).

1. **Decide what you want.** (Be precise! Clarity is power.)
2. **Take action** (because desire is not enough).
3. **Notice what's working or not.** (You don't want to continue to expend energy on an approach that's worthless.)
4. **Change your approach until you achieve what you want.** (Flexibility gives you the power to create a new approach and a new result.)

To apply that to you now, in these Activities, **decide** that you want to explore some new ways of doing things so that you are more effective and less fatigued!

Then **take action!** Try some new things in your own clinic situation, things that you do on your own without anybody looking over your shoulder. These are things that can increase your awareness of the actual dynamics of what's happening in your particular encounters with participants.

**Notice what's working and what's not working!** Then **change your approach** in little ways until you notice that it's having an effect on how you feel when you go home in the evening.

Since we're all different, there's no one formula for a successful style or approach--but there are predictable ways human beings reach, relate, and learn. Why not explore them? The benefits are personal and enriching. Burnout really can be avoided or alleviated.

Here are your first Activities. It would be helpful to you if you think about some of these things and try some new approaches. Discuss with your supervisor or in a staff discussion group what you tried and what worked for you and your clients.

#### 1. *How nice are you?*

*And how nice do you appear to be to the participants you work with?*

Rate yourself on how nice you really are. Where do you score yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being "not nice at all" and 10 being "extremely nice?"

**Here's how I rate myself:**                      1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## Activities to do before Discussion

Now think about how your participants in WIC clinic see you. How nice would they say you are, on the same scale of 1 to 10? This is just for you, so be totally honest.

**Here's how the participants might rate me :**      1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

So look at those two scores you gave yourself. Do you appear to be as nice as you really are? If not, why not? Would it result in more job satisfaction for you if you improved either how nice you are or how nice you seem to be? Think about it.

### 2. *What impression do you really make on other people, especially when you don't know them very well? How can you figure it out?*

- You could ask, but that's awkward and they'll tell you something nice anyway! And the question really is "Are you nice **enough**? Nice enough to be maximizing the possible positive effect you could have on people?"
- One way to find out is to **experiment** with how nice you are! You can change how you usually do things and see if you get different reactions, more feedback that you're really helpful. People will let you know in little ways.

Before you discuss this topic of "looking like an especially nice person," try some new things. Jot down successes or pleasant surprises you might want to share. (Successes or surprises don't mean you haven't always been nice! They just mean you have experimented successfully with your established style and found something that may be even more effective!)

### Activities to Try:

- Will Rogers said, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Try different ways of greeting people. How about consciously being warm and smiley? See if there's a difference in getting a rapport established. See if anyone comments on your mood or your attitude. See how people react. Is there any difference? Experiment!
- One of the "Ten Commandments for Helping People" from the Sparks Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham is, "Call people by name. The most delightful sound to anyone is the sound of their own name." For one week, greet everybody by their name and make a conscious attempt to refer to their child by name at least twice in each session. Do people respond a little more warmly or pay more attention? Is there better interaction? Observe! Jot down notes on any particularly notable successes you have in using people's names.
- If you always dive right into the chart, do something different. Chat for a minute. Relax, enjoy yourself and see if it makes a little difference in how things go. Let go a little bit! Focus on the person, not your mission or your message, and see how that affects things.

## Activities to do before Discussion

- If people always have to wait a long time in your clinics, try apologizing more about it. If you get interrupted during a session, say you're sorry and see if that makes a subtle difference. For one week, pretend that each participant in your space is like an honored guest in your home. Does anything change in a small, positive direction?
- Wait expectantly for the person who comes to you with the blank or defensive face. Here is a challenge! Treat her with all the warmth and goodness you can find in yourself. Think of Mother Teresa and how she would treat this person! Notice how your session goes. If the results are not noticeable, change what you do a little with the next person with a blank face--and the next, until you get positive results. When you do get results, jot down what you did and what the participant who responded did, so that you can share your own bright ideas.

Would you like to copy this page, cut out the notes below and tape them around your work area or on your schedule as little reminders?

**Greetings!**

**Names!**

**Chat!**

**Honored Guest!**

**Support  
Positive Parenting!**

**Blank? Warmth!**

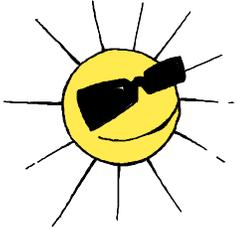
Well, that is a lot of Activities, isn't it? But you have time to practice . . . give them a shot. The smile you preserve may be your own!

Complete the Activity Worksheet as you practice these activities.

**Activity Worksheet**  
**Bright Ideas - Unit 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Look like you are an especially nice person!**

**Activities I tried this week to experiment with my style:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Explain how participants reacted when you practiced these activities. If applicable, please share what changed in a small positive way:

**I will continue using the following approaches when I interact with WIC clients:**

Discuss these ideas with your supervisor or in a staff discussion group. These Activity Worksheets and a discussion are to be done for completion of the module.