

SMARTdaily

Herald Sun

Making life better

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DAVE HUGHES

Addicted to the comedy high LIFTOUT

Lift your likeability

BEING LIKED CAN MAKE LIFE HAPPIER AND A LITTLE BIT EASIER. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT

LIFESTYLE

SARAH MARINOS

Everyone knows someone who has that special quality of being liked by everybody. Nobody has a bad word to say about them and people enjoy being around them and want to help them.

At work and socially, some people are simply likeable, says Michelle Bowden, author of *How To Persuade: The skills you need to get what you want*.

"If you're not likeable, you turn people off and miss opportunities. You might not get that job promotion, get invited to that social event, or a person won't do a favour for you," she says.

If your likeability is a little lacking, here's some tips on how to improve it:

SMILE

"Smiling is recognised internationally as a sign of positivity and people who smile are seen by others as confident and attractive," says Bowden.

She adds that, for maximum effect, take a tip from supermodel Tyra Banks and "smize", or smile with your eyes. "Look at photos of yourself when you're smiling – did your smile travel to your eyes? A sincere smile connects you more closely with the person you're talking to," Bowden says.

ASK QUESTIONS

This is a good trick to find connections so people feel you are like them.

"Ask a person about their interests and prompt them to tell you more about things they're passionate about. Let them know you've had similar experiences and understand what they're saying," says Lindsay Tighe, founder of Empowered Conversations.

A Harvard University study found people who ask questions are seen as more likeable and understanding at work and when it comes to romance, they're more likely to get a second date.

LISTEN UP

Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, writes: "Most people do not listen

with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Finishing someone's sentence, cutting them off, or talking over them makes people feel you don't value what they are saying. It's a deal-breaker for likeability.

"Pay attention, nod your head occasionally, use verbal affirmations, like 'Aha, I see, really?' and use facial expressions that show you are listening," suggests Bowden. "Listening shows respect and is another way of building likeability."

USE AUSSIE SLANG

Research from Australian National University found using a few Australian slang words might

increase your likeability with fellow Australians.

"Using slang seems to promote common ground between the speakers. People use them if they want to indicate social closeness," says lead researcher, Dr Evan Kidd.

SHOW YOUR HANDS

"Mirror the other person's body language – it sends a message that 'we're the same'," says Tighe. "Don't hunch over or fold your arms because it can make you appear less approachable and less interested in building a rapport."

Keep your hands visible, too, as it suggests you are more open and honest. Avoid putting them in your

I REALLY LISTEN

Natalie Hardwicke, 44, is a manager with a national pharmaceutical business and says her interest in learning more about people and her positive outlook help her build strong relationships.

"I naturally smile a lot – a smile costs nothing – and people feel good when you smile at them. I always smile with my eyes, too, and give people all my attention," she says.

"I try hard to show a person I that I really am listening to them by waiting until they finish before I speak. Even if I have an answer, I wait and nod and acknowledge what they're telling me. I'm genuinely interested in people and I don't judge. People have to lose my trust as opposed to gaining it."

"I've been with my employer for 17 years but previously I was a wedding co-ordinator. People ask me how many 'bridezillas' I dealt with but I had none because I made people feel comfortable and they knew I wanted to get everything right for them."



DOING LIFE



WITH JOE HILDEBRAND

Tune in every Wednesday for our SMARTdaily columnist's guide to serving time in suburbia

THE WHOLE TRUTH

FOR reasons that space does not permit, nor that I really understand, I spent much of Monday afternoon giving a speech about truth and ethics to a conference room full of financial advisers.

I lamented the death of empirical truth, the rise of "fake news" and "alternative facts" and did a helpful deep-dive into the Biden administration's attempt to redefine the word "recession".

But little did I know that a Star of Bethlehem-sized guiding light was blinking right in front of me the whole time, had I only not been too blind to see it.

This was Meghan Markle's declaration to Oprah that she was an only child, a state of being that was apparently news to her half-sister, Samantha Markle.

Fortunately, in an attempt to have Samantha's lawsuit dismissed, Meghan's lawyers cleared the whole thing up by saying her claim was "not meant to be a statement of objective fact"

but rather a "subjective statement" about how she feels.

This moment is, I feel, an insufficiently recognised milestone in our understanding of the space-time continuum.

For too long people – especially the grossly overprivileged – have been unfairly constrained in having to abide by things like "facts" and "truth".

Why should Meghan have to tell "the" truth when she can simply speak "her" truth? Indeed, why should any of us?

For example, next time the

police come around and ask me why my third child's gone missing, I'll say that I only really felt like I had two in the first place.

Next time I fill out a Centrelink form, I'll say I'm a six foot six NBA player in a de facto relationship with a Kardashian.

And the next time I see my bank manager, I'll tell him "I feel like a million bucks!".

Just imagine his surprise and delight when he realises I mean it quite literally. No doubt he'll reach for the chequebook straight away – and, if not, I can always try Oprah.

How To Persuade: The skills you need to get what you want by Michelle Bowden (Wiley, \$29.95)