

Polestar Educators: Tips for Pilates Teachers

Adapted from Leile Lowndes book *How to Talk to Anyone*

Show them you're Somebody!

First impressions are indelible. Why? I remember my mother's advice to me years ago. It was, take a good look at someone when you first meet them because that's the only time you will "see" them. Beyond that you're impressions will be coloured by other "stuff" in your relationship, she said...

However, nowadays in our IT world of information overload and multiple stimuli people make quick judgments, taking instant mental snapshots of people they meet. Studies show that emotional reactions occur even before the brain has time to register what's causing the reaction and, amazingly, before the very first words pass your lips 80% of how you look and move have been indelibly printed on the brains of those you meet.

How to look like "Somebody" your client or student will want to work with confidently

1. **Smile:** Dale Carnegie six musts in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* was SMILE! Let a big warm responsive smile flood over your face and overflow into your eyes



2. **Use Your Eyes:** Your eyes are your secret weapon. The conventional wisdom of "maintaining eye contact" is sound but there is definitely a technique to doing so without making the other person more and more discomforted. Insecure or highly stressed people may read your intentions very differently to what you planned and in some cultures it's considered downright rude. Knowing cultural body language is important especially for those of us who teach in Asia. Yale researchers discovered for instance that increased eye contact between women encouraged feelings of trust and intimacy whereas the opposite was true of men who became increasingly more hostile to one another.



Added to your warm responsive smile, eye contact that you appear to withdraw "with reluctance" will go a long way to making anyone feel worthy of attention. That extra two seconds of eye contact will reap enormous rewards captivating your client or student group.

3. **Look like a Winner:** Winners stand with assurance and confidence. They move confidently. Good posture symbolizes that you are used to being in charge. Great posture, a confident smile and a warm gaze portrays that you are, without a doubt, the person they want to learn from. Stand up straight...you're a Pilates teacher for goodness sake
4. **Care:** There is a saying that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care about them. You can look like a winner and smile as much as you like. Candid, unselfconscious friendliness is rare nowadays and people are often suspicious of each other and their motives. Responding to someone as if they were an old friend can make a great deal of difference to your relationship. It

sparks a subconscious chain reaction of trust and goodwill. The interaction between the two of you becomes more sincere and congenial. The bonus here is that, according to research done at Adelphi University, if you start out acting as if you really like someone, invariably, you really will! What it boils down to is that respect begets respect and understanding begets understanding. So now, in addition to appearing confident and sure of yourself you'll also be perceived as a "Friendly, Compassionate Somebody"

5. **Because you care, treat people like Big Babies:** During the first few moments that you spend with someone you're looking for a positive verdict as soon as possible. In other words your unspoken "How do you like me so far" needs to be, "Wow, what a terrific instructor!" Think of the attention you pay to your children or your friends' children when they want your attention. We give the kind of attention that has them snuggling into our laps or beaming with joy. Give the next client you meet the same smile and undivided attention that you give a small child in such a way that the implicit understanding is that they are very, very special.



6. **Be Credible:** Whenever your conversation or lecture really counts don't twitch, wiggle or scratch. **LIMIT THE FIDGET!**

- Don't twirl your hair, bite your nails, or rock back and forth.
- Breathe deeply.
- Avoid mumbling and saying "um" and "uh" when you speak.
- When you state your opinion, speak calmly and confidently.

7. **Cultivate your Intuition:** Don't miss a trick! Watch people, see how they react and act accordingly. Keep your eyes on your client /listeners and watch how they respond to what you're saying. Are they smiling or frowning? Are they biting the ends of their pencils? Are they nodding in agreement? You don't need a complete course in body language here; just tune into the people around you and keep a keen eye on their reactions. Then plan your strategy accordingly.
8. **Practice visualization:** See yourself achieving your goals. All athletes do it. Studies show that mental rehearsals help anyone at any level and experts agree that, if you see yourself successfully achieving a goal or activity, the effect is powerful. This is no psychological mumbo-jumbo; practice being a "Special Somebody", a "Super Somebody". SEE yourself standing tall, smiling the big warm responsive smile that floods over your face and overflows into your eyes. HEAR the sincerity in your voice. FEEL the pleasure of assurance and confidence and you'll be right on track in your goal to being the **SOMEBODY** that your clients and students look to with confidence, for advice and continuing education.