

WARMTH

What is warmth?

Warmth refers to the consistent demonstration of good will toward others. This includes a welcoming attitude and persona.

Why is it important to show warmth?

Operating from a platform of warmth impacts our lives in many ways. Having a welcoming attitude with others could be the difference between success and not achieving what we set out to do. When we display warmth to others, we give an immediate invitation for them to trust us, to be open with us, and we therefore create the possibility to build a relationship; either personal or business related. Operating with a warm persona sets a positive environment for all other opportunities to flourish.

People who do not operate with a welcoming attitude may give the impression that they are not really interested, or that other people are bothering them in some way, and, as a result, they may be losing multiple opportunities because people do not persevere in trying to get to know them. How many times have you met someone and thought 'my comments were really not welcome' or 'they really didn't want to meet me or get to know me'? This may not be the impression the person was wishing to give, yet they may have already put you off from persevering in trying to get to know them. It may well be that this first impression was incorrect yet an opportunity been lost by the person who didn't give warm regard.

And have you in fact done this yourself? Have you let opportunities slip by because you did not show a warm and welcoming attitude? Has anyone said about you 'he/she is great, you just need to get to know them.'? The benefit of taking action to correct this is that you will find many more opportunities coming your way, not only because of the people you will directly get to know, but also because people will speak of you with warmth to others so positively affecting your reputation.

Why is it so easy to slip up in the area of warmth?

Some of us feel so busy, with so many commitments, that we try to 'save time' in counter-productive ways, for example by falling into a tunnel vision approach when meeting new and existing people because we are so focused on hurrying to the next appointment.

With all this hurrying from place to place, and meeting to meeting, we can lose awareness of what attitude or persona we are giving out. We can fall into thinking we don't have the time to acknowledge and connect with others; that we've got too much to do to show a consistent good will and warmth towards others.

It is when we get over focused on what is on our plate that we forget the importance of how we are perceived by others.

If we are distracted and not in the moment, it is hard to remember that our lives are blessed by those we meet and that our opportunities come from these meetings or interactions. So prioritising people before 'to do items' is very important.

Another reason we might slip up in the area of warmth is that we might have had a previously difficult interaction with a person so we let this affect how we subsequently behave when meeting them again. By doing this we make it all the more likely that we will not succeed in establishing rapport so it is all the more important to put the effort in so that we create the opportunity to turn things around.

In addition, it may be that we are a reserved or shy character type and struggle with being warm and open. A good rule of thumb in this case is to remember that most people are quite happy to do the talking – so we can ask questions and get curious about them in order to begin establishing warmth and rapport.

Characteristics of behaving with warmth

- Take the time to give others our full attention
- Open and welcoming attitude when meeting people
- Genuine interest in hearing what is going on with other people and asking them questions about how they are doing
- Good listening skills
- Value people and relationships highly

Evaluate your own warmth

- How do you think others perceive you in terms of warmth? Check in with others to see how accurate your self-image is compared with how others experience you.
- How much of the time do you operate with a naturally warm attitude and how much of the time do you need to remind yourself to slow down and give people your full attention and care?
- How often do you walk along the street with a smile and your attention outwards compared with how often you're attention in inside while you think about the next thing you need to get done?
- Do you ever greet random strangers?
- Are you often approached by strangers for directions?
- When you are meeting people for the first time, how often do you try to make them feel comfortable versus wait for their cue to engage?

- When you pick up the phone are you usually aware of your tone or do you let it be dictated by the frame of mood you happen to be in at the time or the tone and mood of the other person on the call?

Improve your warmth

- When you are walking along the street look other people in the eye with a smile and see what happens. How do you feel when the other person responds and when they don't respond? Do you tend to take it personally when someone doesn't respond or do you more often just let it go?
- Before you get out of bed, or out of the front door, pause and think an affirming thought i.e. 'I am grateful for all I have today and I have the power to make it great', or 'today is a clean slate and anything can happen and I can make the most of whatever comes my way'. See what happens when you put the effort into thinking this way. Does it affect how you greet people when you hold this type of attitude?
- Before you go into a meeting or function remind yourself that your impact will affect others. So take a moment to think positively about the people you are about to meet, and about the potential that you can achieve together, and set the intent to act with warmth - and then enter. When we frame things positively before we dive in, we set up the likelihood of having a better more positive experience of whatever comes to meet us – and we also set up the likelihood of others have a more positive experience.
- If you are interacting with someone and it starts going off track, consider your attitude towards the other person and dig deep for some positive and warm regard for them as a fellow human being.
- When you finish a task or a call stop and take a moment before you head into the next interaction; this helps leave the energy of the last task behind and allows you to create a new focus for the next interaction.
- An exercise to improve your warmth might be to consider the following non verbal gestures and notice the positive effects that you can generate:
- What is the response when you look people in the eye to show you are listening and paying attention. Notice the point at which eye contact can become too intense or intruding (which is likely to vary for different people).
- Notice the effect when you nod in agreement or acceptance of what is being discussed. If you are in disagreement, notice what gestures are useful and what are a hindrance (for example a look of horror on your face might put someone on the defensive whereas a more subtle questioning expression might cause the other person to check in with you).
- Notice how you greet someone - do you hold out your hand to them or are you more likely to stand stiffly/awkwardly? If the latter, what could you do to be more open and welcoming? And do you smile or does your face show stress and concern? If the latter, what could you do to put yourself more at ease and focus more on the needs of the other person?

- When in meetings, practise having your attention more on the person speaking than on your reference materials or notebook, thus showing your regard and respect for the speaker.
- Notice the effect of sitting with your arms crossed versus being in a more relaxed posture with your hands placed on your lap or by your side. The latter is much more open and welcoming in the message it conveys to others so it is very useful to be conscious of this.
- Put you focus on the gestures that you find create positive, warm exchanges so that you increase the frequency of these gestures in your natural repertoire.

Further resources

If you would like to develop further in the area of warmth, the following books, courses and consultants may be worth considering. Please note that High Ideals does not endorse or receive any direct benefit from recommending the following resources. The list is simply a suggestive collection of materials that members of the High Ideals management team have found useful in their own development.

- Book - The Art of Connecting: How to Overcome Differences, Build Rapport, and Communicate Effectively with Anyone by [Claire Raines](#) and [Lara Ewing](#) (Author)
- <http://www.mindtools.com/> is a site High Ideals often refers people to as it is an incredible resource to assist people in developing their own professional skills regardless of whether they run their own business or work for someone else.
- <http://www.selfgrowth.com/> is a site High Ideals often refers people to as it offers both personal and professional self-development information and resources. You can type in any search word you want, such as “sustainable decision making” and you’ll get a list of articles, blogs, resources and links to other sites which could assist you in your own development.
- <http://www.high-ideals.com> – Check out the Member Directory section for High Ideals members who offer services which could support you, such as coaching, mentoring or consulting on High Ideals criteria/values.

Author and editor acknowledgement

High Ideals would like to acknowledge and thank Abbey Cappiello for her work on this document. Abbey is the State Membership Manager of High Ideals. To find out more about Abbey, please visit her profile on the High Ideals directory by clicking [here](#) and search by name.

This document is part of the **High Ideals** Criteria Information Series, edited by Claire Stretch. For more information on Claire please visit her profile on the High Ideals directory by clicking [here](#) and search by name.

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