

# 8 Ways to Improve Your People Skills

By Michael Zigarelli

Interpersonal skills are critical at work, in your home, at church, and around your neighborhood. Practice these time-honored and battle-tested skills to improve your effectiveness as you minister to the adults in your church family.

## 1. Don't complain

People tend to react negatively to toxic talk. Instead, offer potential solutions when you identify problems. Or, say nothing at all.

"Do everything without grumbling and arguing." Phil. 2:14 (HCSB)

## 2. Smile

Does your expression tell the world to leave you alone or that you're friendly and approachable? Practice smiling and watch how others respond.

"Render service with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men." Eph. 6:7 (HCSB)

## 3. Listen closely and actively

Make an effort to listen to everything that's being said to you. Concentrate on the person's words rather than your response. If there is the potential for disagreement or misunderstanding, paraphrase what you think was said. Be patient and briefly summarize his or her concerns, points, or ramblings before you share your opinion.

"A wise man will listen and increase his learning, and a discerning man will obtain guidance." Prov. 1:5 (HCSB)

## 4. Praise others

Acknowledge when people are working hard, doing a great job, and contributing. Express that who they are and what they do has genuine value. Practice this with your spouse, employees, friends, pastor, and the adults you lead. Be an encourager and an affirmer.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..." 1 Thess. 5:11a (HCSB)

## 5. Show gratitude

When you benefit from someone's effort or work let them know that you appreciate it. Make a habit of expressing gratitude to the people around you.

"Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thess. 5:18 (HCSB)

## 6. Talk about others' interests

Rather than hoping for opportunities to tell people how great you are, set yourself aside and become interested in those around you. People love to talk about their interests, so give them the opportunity to do so.

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth—a stranger, and not your own lips." Prov. 27:2 (HCSB)

## 7. Remember names

We find creative ways to hide the fact that we've forgotten names. Dale Carnegie said, "Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language." Do whatever it takes to make that sweet sound. You will make them feel special and memorable.

"Your name is perfume poured out..." Song 1:3 (HCSB)

## 8. Make a sacrifice

Words are powerful, but more treasured than words are a sincere sacrifice of time or money on your part. So get in the habit of identifying and meeting people's needs and putting them ahead of your own.

"No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13 (HCSB)

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