



For you, your career, and your life

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Your Professional Image: How to Look and Act the Part

There's no better way to smooth your path to professional success than to put others at ease. When you practice good manners and present yourself in a way that is appropriate to the situation, you enhance your image to everyone around you.

"Only 15% of your success is based on your education and skill," says Mary Lee Kennedy, founder and president of Houston-based MannersPro. "The other 85% is based on your people skills."

As she helps individuals of all ages learn those people skills, Kennedy emphasizes manners.

"Having good manners is not about which fork to use," she explains. "It is all about making other people feel more comfortable around you. You can do that



"When you're doing the work you're meant to do, it feels right and every day is a bonus, regardless of what you're getting paid."

-Oprah Winfrey, Stanford Commencement Address, 2008

by behaving in a predictable way, and by treating everyone equally and with respect."

How to communicate respect

Respect applies to every interaction—whether that's with higher-ranking doctors, administrators, peers, staff or patients.

"You can demonstrate respect by acknowledging others," says Bambi McCullough, leadership coach and consultant with Chrysalis Partners in Houston.

"Say hello. Listen when they talk—don't just wait for them to finish so you can move on," McCullough advises. "You don't have to agree with them, but listen to understand their perspective and views. Listen to understand what is important to them. As human beings our natural tendency is to be concerned about ourselves. We wonder, 'Do they like me? Do I agree with what they are saying?' Yet respect requires shifting the focus away from ourselves."

Respect also means putting away electronic devices. "You may be adept at multi-tasking, and able to follow a conversation

Making a great impression can be a challenge when you're stressed and sleep-deprived. Whether you're dealing with issues that challenge your ability to cope and communicate effectively, or you want to be proactive about gaining personal skills to complement your medical knowledge, RAP is here to help. We are your confidential resource, free for the asking. Our caring professionals are just a phone call away.

Contact RAP: 813-870-3344.

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while texting," says Michele Norris, president of Navigen Leadership, LLC and a member of Tampa Bay Area Professional Coaches Association. "However, this is interpreted as inconsiderate and rude when you're face-to-face with someone. So resist the temptation to be connected 100 % of the time. Stay present in the current interaction."

When criticized, how do you behave?

Another cue to others about your level of professionalism is your ability to handle criticism without becoming defensive.

In his book *Criticism Management: How to More Effectively Give, Receive, and Seek Criticism in Our Lives* (Prescient Press, 2006), Randy Garner, Ph.D. suggests that criticism can be viewed as valuable information, and that there are advantages when we solicit criticism from others.

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Money Matters

Small Steps to Savings

About two out of three American workers are saving for retirement, but less than half are confident that they will have enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement years, reports the Employee Benefit Research Institute. However, even those who are confident may not have realistic expectations.

Consider that a \$250,000 account earning a 5% annual return could provide an income of about \$1,000 per month (without dipping into principal). Yet only 10% of workers have savings of \$250,000 or more.

You may be able to increase the amount you are saving without making huge sacrifices. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Save an extra 1% of your salary each year. Raising your retirement contribution in small increments can generate significant long-term results.

Give your retirement a raise. The next time you receive a pay increase, try to divert part or all of it toward your long-term financial goals. You might find it easier to save a raise if you don't allow yourself to spend the extra money.

Make payments to yourself. When you pay off a debt, such as a car loan or a credit-card balance, consider pretending that you still owe the monthly payment—to yourself. Since the payment is already built into your budget, this could be a simple way to make additional progress toward your long-term goals.

Cut out a small expense. Consider the cumulative costs of small purchases—like coffee drinks, bottled water and dining out. Save \$5 a day on such items and you'll have an extra \$150 per month.

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Professional Image *continued*

Avoid self-sabotage

You can make a better first impression by thinking about what others will notice about your appearance and behavior, says McCullough.

“Depending on where you work, the traditional and baby boomer generations have an expectation that you dress professionally and appropriately,” she notes. “A style that stands out may be acceptable in certain professions—like having pink hair if you are a rock star. But in the business and medical community, that will likely impact your ability to be taken seriously.”

As she works with leaders and their teams to help them achieve their personal and professional goals, McCullough advises them to consider a series of questions:

“Do you take yourself seriously? What do you want people to be saying about you? Do you want to be seen as someone who is highly respected in your profession? How will you act to gain that respect?”

If you're not sure of the answers, observe successful professionals and ask one to mentor or coach you.

Resources:

- Chrysalis Partners www.partnerschrysalis.com
- *Brag!: The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn without Blowing It* by Peggy Klaus, Warner Business Books (2004)
- *The Power of Positive Criticism* by Hendrie Weisinger, Amacom (2006)
- www.mannerspro.com
- www.navigenleadership.com
- Tampa Bay Professional Coaches Association www.tbpc.com

Excuse me, is that a pathogen you're wearing?

Well, it might be. More than 60% of hospital doctors' and nurses' uniforms tested positive for potentially dangerous bacteria, according to a study published in the September issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*.

A team of researchers led by Yonit Wiener-Well, MD, from the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, Israel, collected swab samples from three parts of the uniforms of 75 registered nurses (RNs) and 60 medical doctors (MDs) by pressing standard blood agar plates at the abdominal zone, sleeves' ends and pockets.

The researchers at the 550-bed, university-affiliated hospital found that exactly half of all the cultures taken from uniforms harbored pathogens. Of those, 21 cultures from RN uniforms and six cultures from MD uniforms contained multi-drug resistant pathogens, including eight cultures that grew methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Although the uniforms themselves may not pose a direct risk of disease transmission, the researchers reported, the results indicate a prevalence of antibiotic-resistant strains in close proximity to hospitalized patients.

“It is important to put these study results into perspective,” said APIC 2011 President Russell Olmsted, MPH, CIC. “Any clothing that is worn by humans will become contaminated with microorganisms. The cornerstone of infection prevention remains the use of hand hygiene to prevent the movement of microbes from these surfaces to patients.”
