



## Wimpy Handshake, Missed Opportunity

Ann Golden Eglé, MCC  
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Think you make a great first impression? Think again.

Studies show that your first impression is set in stone within the first *four seconds* of that person meeting you. You don't have a second chance to make a first impression.

Your hand shake is an immediate physical connection that communicates volumes about who you are and what you represent.

Diana Mather, Managing Director of Public Image Inc. looks at the down side of a wimpy handshake: "The weak, horrible, wet fish handshake is a problem. That gives a lot away."

This past month I've had the opportunity to shake over 60 hands in four states (I'm not a politician, just love to travel and meet intriguing new people). All individuals were quite accomplished and all had the opportunity to earn my respect, business and referrals.

Of the sixty plus handshakes, only three were strong enough to convey messages that would move our relationship to the next level.

Their handshakes said the following to me without words: "I am truly happy to meet you!" "I am worth a moment of your time." "I am a quality business representative who you'll enjoy getting to know." "I am confident in myself; tell me about you!"

We are entering the holidays, the best time of the year for meeting and greeting. Before you spend hundreds of dollars on your appearance to make a remarkable impression, I invite you to invest time in yourself to strengthen your handshaking skills.

Here are my **Top Seven Tips** for enticing people with a winning and memorable handshake.

1. **Relax.** If you are in a stressful situation or intimidated by the individual to whom you are being introduced your hands may be either damp or tense. Breathe, become very present and reach your 'freshly dried' hand out with confidence.
2. **Smile.** When you meet someone new, you want them to feel good about themselves and you. The warmth of a genuine smile will do just that, creating a feeling of safety, enjoyment and anticipation for what's next.
3. **Eye Contact.** Eye contact begets eye contact. What a great way to begin a conversation or relationship. Your wandering eye quickly conveys lack of interest or confidence. Look them straight in the eye with curiosity and eagerness.
4. **Posture.** Face the individual straight on. If you are at an angle, you appear ready to move on to your next opportunity as quickly as possible. Stand straight with a slight lean in. Be sure not

to stand too closely. Respect your new friend's personal space which is often invaded during social or networking situations.

5. **Dreaded Finger Tip Shake.** If you are going to shake a person's hand, then shake the entire hand, not just a portion of it. Clasp just the fingertips leaves just as negative an impression as cupping your hand around theirs to avoid the center of the other's hand or vigorously shaking it up and down.
6. **Strong Impression.** Your hand should be firm enough to convey confidence. A wet mop (barely touching) handshake is an immediate turn off, as well as shaking someone's hand too hard. It once took a full week for my crushed hand to recover from someone trying a little too hard to make an impression.
7. **Acknowledgement.** In addition to the physical aspects of a powerful handshake, make your acknowledgement of this person memorable! For example, are you eager to meet him? Have you been a fan of her work? If so, say it while shaking their hand to acknowledge how meaningful this is for you.

When a person looks back upon the experience of meeting you, you want them to remember their experience in a favorable light. How they feel about themselves after that initial interaction will directly affect how they feel about you.

It all starts with the first impression - the handshake. And, if that is followed by a stimulating conversation, they will feel great, and think you are great.

If they were bored or you had a strained conversation, they may feel anxious, and memories of anxiety may arise when thinking of you.

Before you say anything clever that they'll reflect back upon, you must first get their attention. It simply will not happen with an ineffective or 'wimpy' handshake.

I challenge you to get feedback today from several individuals on your handshake. I feel so strongly about the impact of that first handshake, that if you see me around town reach out your hand and ask for feedback. I would happily do so with your future success in mind.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

*Master Executive & Leadership Coach Ann Golden Eglé, MCC, has steered highly-successful individuals to greater results since 1998. President of Golden Visions & Associates, LLC, Ann can be reached at 541-385-8887 or [www.GVAsuccess.com](http://www.GVAsuccess.com). Subscribe to her internationally recognized e-zine on her website.*



Golden Visions & Associates, LLC  
Coaching for Success  
PO Box 1696, Bend, Oregon 97709  
541.385.8887 1.888.831.8883  
[info@GVAsuccess.com](mailto:info@GVAsuccess.com)

[www.GVAsuccess.com](http://www.GVAsuccess.com)