

## Plan for Improving Your “Book Cover”

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Candidly answer the following questions about yourself.

1. Do I have any of the following bad habits? (Yes or No)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Interrupt people often when they are talking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chew gum frequently in public.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yawn often while others are talking to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish the other person’s sentences when they are talking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jingle money in my pocket a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tap a pencil on the desk or table during a conversation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Twist my hair while talking to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fail to give strong eye contact when talking to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a weak, “wimpy” handshake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a noticeable verbal “crutch,” such as “uh” or “you know” or “okay” or “like.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tend to use slang expressions or incorrect grammar often.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Slouch when I’m sitting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Walk with poor posture or shuffling my feet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have sloppy dress habits, like hanging shirttails or wrinkled clothes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Let my hair go ungroomed, uncombed or dirty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have dirty or unkempt fingernails.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tend to speak in an abrupt tone of voice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Answer questions in a condescending manner or tone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk too fast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk too loud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk too quietly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have bad breath too often due to improper hygiene or care.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat with my mouth open.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gulp down food too fast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk with my mouth full of food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Slurp when I drink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smile very seldom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don’t initiate greetings with others, like “good morning.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stare at people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use “finger-pointing” phrases often, putting others on the defensive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get defensive and take up for myself easily.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lose my temper often.

If you have honestly answered those questions, your perception score is as follows:

1 to 5 “yes” answers:

6 to 10 “yes” answers:

11 - 15 “yes” answers:

16 - 20 “yes” answers:

More than 20 “yes” answers:

You are creating:

Excellent perception

Good perception

Fair perception

Poor perception

Very poor perception

2. Have a good and trusted friend give you his or her answers to the statements in question 1 about you and see if your perception of yourself is markedly different from his or her perception of you. (In fact, you could do the same for your friend and help him or her with perception feedback.)
  
3. Make a plan for some “perception feedback.” Which of the following suggestions would you be willing to do in order to help you get feedback on how you are perceived by others?
  - Solicit critiques and feedback from my manager or some other trusted person. (Question 2 is a good way to do that.)
  - Accept any criticism I receive as an opportunity to consider how I am perceived by others. Give it consideration; if there is something constructive in the criticism, work on it and change.
  - Put a plan in place to eliminate the bad habits I noted in question 1. (You do this through reminders, gimmicks, accountability, and most importantly, prayer.)
  - Record telephone conversations with customers, co-workers, friends, etc. and listen to how I sound on the phone. (Most answering machines have this feature.)
  - Practice my presentations with a video camera, or use video in some other way to see how I look to others.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. In order to turn your good intentions into action, set some specific goals with time frames, and make yourself accountable to someone. Ask them to contact you occasionally to check on your progress.