

Plan for Improving Your “Book Cover”

As prepared by Mary Lowman

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, you know, okay, or like.
- _____ Tend to use slang expressions or incorrect grammar often.
- _____ Slouch when I’m sitting.
- _____ Walk with poor posture or shuffle 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 quickly.
- _____ Talk too loudly.
- _____ Talk too quietly.
- _____ Have bad breath too often due to improper hygiene or care.
- _____ Eat with my mouth open.
- _____ Gulp down food too quickly.
- _____ 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:

You are creating:

1 to 5 “yes” answers:	Excellent perception
6 to 10 “yes” answers:	Good perception
11 to 15 “yes” answers:	Fair perception
16 to 20 “yes” answers:	Poor perception
More than 20 “yes” answers:	Very poor perception

2. Have a good and trusted friend give you his or her answers to the statements in question one 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 one. (You do this through reminders, gimmicks, accountability and, most importantly, prayer.)
- Video my presentations to see how I look and sound 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.