

Smile—you're on the Phone!

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Top notch customer service reps smile when they talk on the phone. Why? They know people can “hear” the smile. A smile automatically translates into a positive tone of voice. An upbeat tone of voice elicits a response from the caller—often a more open, problem-solving response than the caller might normally give.

Most of us walk through much of our lives on autopilot. We are too busy to think about the image we project when we talk on the phone or when we send e-mail.

This lack of awareness causes missed opportunities. A conscious effort to smile—to project a friendly and cooperative impression—reaps these benefits:

1. **A smile predisposes people to respond to us positively.** According to the authors of *Primal Leadership*, “of all emotional signals, smiles are the most contagious; they have an almost irresistible power to make others smile in return.” Smiles melt indifference and hamper hostility.
2. **A smile improves our own mood.** Behavioral therapists have long known that action impacts mood. If you behave in a friendly, helpful way, you are more likely to feel friendly and helpful, especially over time.
3. **Smiles create positive cycles.** If you feel upbeat, and others respond positively, you are likely to continue to feel and to behave in an upbeat way. Others will continue to respond positively, and you'll get more done.

Life is complicated, but smiles and positive moods do have real power. Make the effort to smile next time you are on the phone. Add one gracious sentence to your next e-mail. Spread a good virus. It's worth the effort!

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