

Managing Impressions

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Expert & Success Coach



Every morning you get out of bed and go about your day. You say good bye to your spouse, get the kids off to school, and make your way to your job. At work, you attend meetings, greet customers, and chat with colleagues. Maybe you go to the gym a few times during the week. Weekends, you spend time with family and friends, stop at local shops to make purchases, and perhaps attend special events. And all along the way people are watching you. It's kind of scary when you think about it but no doubt, you are making an impression on everyone you meet as you navigate through your life and work.

I See You

Think about it: Your boss watches you. Your spouse watches you. Your parents, friends, colleagues, and family watch you. The neighbors most definitely watch you. Employees are exceptional boss watchers as are children who notice everything! But the most important person who watches you is YOU. You go with you everywhere you go so you see it all.

I call this concept "Permanent Video", meaning that you are on video all the time, every day. I know what you're thinking. It doesn't feel good to think about this! When I explain this concept to clients or in presentations, people cringe. Please don't shoot the messenger. Like it or not, you cannot deny the truth of it. It is what it is.

It's not the concept that matters; as a leader, what matters is what you do about the concept. If you know that your actions are being monitored, that everything you do and say is being witnessed, then how do you choose to act? Going about your business each day knowing people are watching you and caring about what it is they witness when they do watch, that is the way of a leader.

Integrity Matters

The true test is when you believe that no one is watching. There is a story of a priest new in town who boarded a local bus. The driver gave him the incorrect change handing the Priest an extra quarter. The Priest sat down before he realized what had happened. "It's only a quarter, what does it matter?" he thought to himself. As he went to exit the bus, the Priest returned the quarter to the driver. The driver thanked him and admitted, "You know, Father, my wife and I have been unsatisfied with the churches in town. We heard there was a new priest. I knew it was you when you stepped on the bus and I gave you the extra quarter on purpose to see what you would do. My wife and I will see you on Sunday."

No matter how big or how small, integrity matters. What you do makes a huge statement about who you are. Ralph Waldo Emerson declared, "Who you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying!"

Integrity is doing the right thing – for YOU. It's that fine line between doing what feels good to you versus what feels bad and everyone's level of integrity is different. That's why we have laws. At the end of the day, when you feel good about the decisions you have made, the impressions you have left on others, the things you have done and said, then you know you are living up to your own level of integrity and you can feel good about what people experience of YOU as you navigate life's journey.

When you cannot sleep at night, you toss and turn and your mind just won't shut down, ask yourself where you are out of integrity. As you get yourself into integrity by doing the right things for YOU: honoring yourself, making the tough decisions, speaking up for yourself, walking through your fear, and getting the support you need, then your mind quiets down and you can sleep better.

Become the Leader of Your Life

See, it's not that people are watching you that matters; **it's caring about who people meet when you show up in the world.** It's caring about you and how you come across. It's taking responsibility for YOU, your words, your emotions—it's taking yourself seriously. You are the most important person in your life. Too often, people try desperately to change others but try as you might, you have no control over what other people do; you only can control you. This is where your power lies and it is where your greatest happiness can be found.



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As you travel your life journey, you leave a mark. Each and every day you make an impression and over time that adds up to your lifetime. So each day you have a new opportunity to make your mark. And you decide what kind of mark you want to leave.

In order to regulate the impression you make and what people see when they watch the video called YOU, two things need to happen: One, decide the kind of person you want to be. Create a vision for who you want to be as you navigate this thing called life. What qualities do you want to espouse? How do you want to be known by others? How do you want people to describe you? Secondly, be more aware of yourself in your every day activities. Is what you are saying or doing representing this vision you have for yourself? Are you living the qualities you've identified as important to you?

Permanent video is not about caring what other people think of you—that is a huge waste of time and energy. It is caring about what people *experience* when they are in your presence. There is a difference. On one hand your focus is about other people and trying to please them (i.e. making assumptions about what others want from you and then acting accordingly hoping you are right); the other is about who you want to be and how you want to be received. You are responsible for what people see and how people experience you. One day they'll be writing their eulogy about you. What would you like them to say?

Each day is a new opportunity to become the person—the leader—you want to become. You have many opportunities to practice. But know that while impressions form quickly, they are not easily changed. There is no rewind or pause button to permanent video. The sooner you start on your journey to becoming the person you want to become, the more people experience YOU living the leadership qualities you want to express, the sooner people's impressions will change. Eventually, you'll get feedback that it's working.

Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN, CSAC is named one of the TOP 100 THOUGHT LEADERS in personal leadership development. Your happiness and success is her business! Her coaching clients experience dramatic and profound results in their productivity, level of confidence, and their relationships. As a certified coach, accomplished writer, and motivational speaker, Julie empowers your personal best and teaches you simple, practical tools for meeting your goals, communicating effectively with others, and enjoying yourself at work and at home. Visit www.NurturingYourSuccess.com to learn more about coaching with Julie or contact Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com to have her speak at your next meeting or conference. Subscribe to her blog at www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com.



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