

First impressions etch deeply because they're written on a clean slate, when nothing else is going on except curiosity and the alert collection of data on both sides. They not only establish you to each other; they create the environment in which your meeting will continue.

Before You Begin

What's your goal? To be cool? Secure? Efficient? Open? To create an environment of support, reasonable discussion, or whatever? Decide on your persona and what quality would suit this occasion before you begin. Base it on all that pre-planning we talked about in Chapter 3 and the strategies you developed because of it. Then use it, especially at the beginning.

Change Gears

Until your meeting begins, your "other" was all involved in something else. It requires an active stepping on the brakes, stopping, then putting the work engine into another gear to make him/her go from *that* focus to the new tack *you* wish to take.

Therefore, making a personal dent and helping the other person change gears to focus on *you* is the first order of business in the "Openers" segment of your one-on-one encounter. In order to do that, you need to take a little time to help the other person slow down, stop, and restart with *you*.

The next group of suggestions will do that, and more. **I'll** focus on both visitor and meeting-caller, to show you how to create the most productive and appropriate environment, at the beginning of your encounter.

Warm-up

How You Greet

- *To shake or not to shake*

Women, particularly, ask me about this. They're concerned since many men don't offer a hand and it looks like such a male gesture if *they* do it. Since it's such an expected gesture when business people meet each other, my advice is to shake hands and to offer yours if it's not offered first. That initial physical gesture can help establish a business-