# How Can a Computer Geek Develop Good People Skills?

In today’s technological society, good people skills are still a must. These skills encompass the ability to effectively interact with others and involve speaking, listening and interpreting non-verbal cues. Often named “soft” skills, they become critically important in the business world when trying to make a sale, maintain connections, supervise colleagues, lead a team or break down information so that co-workers can complete their jobs. So, how can technically-minded, analytical people develop better social skills for success in life?

# Identifying Good People Skills

A good starting place is to identify what constitutes appropriate people skills in social interactions. For the workplace setting, a [useful list of soft skills is represented in an article by Forbes staff writer Jacqueline Smith](http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/11/15/the-20-people-skills-you-need-to-succeed-at-work/). Her list includes 20 skills which are also relevant to the workplace and other situations. Examples mentioned are:

* Using verbal and written communication skills in positive ways.
* Being observant of non-verbal body language to pick up on how others are feeling.
* Demonstrating good listening skills to let others know they are valued.
* The ability to seem genuinely interested in others and empathize with them.
* Exhibiting trust in other people’s judgments and actions.
* Being trustworthy and following through on your commitments.
* Being flexible, open-minded and having a good sense of humor to connect with others.
* Leading through motivation, encouragement, supportive behaviors and negotiation.
* Being honest and expressing gratitude for what others do.

# Assessing Personal Social Skills

Examining personal social patterns is another avenue to learn how individuals communicate. One way to do this is by taking a[personal skills inventory](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_36.htm). Information gleaned from this type of assessment can establish areas of interpersonal communication, team building, conflict management and personal integrity that may be affecting relationships at work and in the world.

# Practicing and Implementing People Skills

Finally, it is important to apply appropriate social skills in real life experiences and settings. This often means stepping outside of one’s comfort zone. Some suggestions for how to employ good social skills in work, school or other settings include:

* Establishing personal connections by acknowledging birthdays or learning what people like to do beyond work.
* Being conscious of talking too much. Communication implies that more than one person’s ideas are being considered and that everyone should have a chance to express themselves.
* Echoing back what someone says so they know they have been heard.
* Observing facial expressions (happy, sad, bored, angry, etc.) in different circumstances and using them as a barometer for predicting future responses in similar situations.
* Demonstrating trust by allowing others to take the spotlight.
* Following up written communication (emails, texts, memos, etc.) with verbal acknowledgments.

Once recognized, [good people skills](http://www.computersciencedegreehub.com/faq/important-computer-scientist-people-skills/) can be easily developed. Whether using them to lead teams in the workplace, make business contacts or increase social circles, knowing personal communication strengths and areas for improvement will only enhance one’s ability to move ahead in life.