

## What does it mean to be approachable?

Written by Timothy Houston  
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Am I approachable?

This question has been asked of me by men and women alike. In most cases, I am thinking, "If you have to ask the question, you may already have your answer." But in some cases, it may be that the person is in the dark of why people don't approach them. Because the propensity for others to approach us can impact our relationships and employability, it is necessary that I address the subject, cause, and effect of being approachable.

What does it mean to be approachable? One definition defines approachable as easy to meet or converse or do business with. If you look further at some of the synonyms, you will find words like friendly, open, open-minded, amenable, accessible, and sociable. These are also the characteristics of those that people are able to talk to or do business with. People whose emotions are controlled by others will be difficult to approach at times. Depending on the circumstance, they could appear unapproachable. Be aware that people are watching our interaction with others and may use that information to determine we are approachable.

The effect of being approachable can be positive and rewarding. When you are open and friendly it will be communicable. People will feed off your friendliness. You can transform your home or work environment by your demeanor. When it comes to environment, you can be a thermometer, responding to your environment, or you can be a thermostat, one who controls your environment. There is another upside to being approachable. When people feel they can talk to you, they are open to doing business with you. They will also give you valuable feedback about how your business is doing. If you are looking for a mate, you are what you attract, so friendly, open-minded people will come into your circle. Potential suitors will approach you. They will see your smile and warmth as inviting and appealing. Good people will come into your sphere.

The flip side of this is that there is a downside to being unapproachable. People avoid those who appear unfriendly, unsociable, and close-minded. Businesses fail, and potential relationships are missed. I knew of someone who had a business who was not very friendly. Those who came in contact with that person did not feel welcome. They told others about how unfriendly that business was and eventually it failed. This is probably true for relationships as well. If you are not nice, word will get around and people will avoid you. People make determinations about you without ever approaching you. Many businesses and relationships have failed because of the perception of unfriendliness.

Being friendly will carry you far in business and relationships, and it will help you present yourself as more approachable. If you are in business, you do not have the option of being hot and cold. One of the simplest things you can do to present yourself as more accessible is to smile. People who smile are perceived as friendly and approachable. Beyond this, everyone

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should do his or her own personal assessment. People should take a hard look inwardly to see if they are easy to talk to or do business with. Your smile will be your welcoming card to others and a sign to others that you are friendly, sociable, and approachable.

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