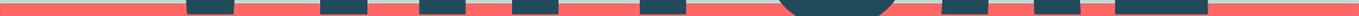




by

DANI SLAUGH

VIRTUAL



MEETING SUCCESS MANUAL



strategies for

**INCREASED ENGAGEMENT
CONFIDENCE & CHARISMA ON VIDEO**



INTRODUCTION



Does anyone feel like you're in a reality show where the host is going to jump out of the bushes at any moment and yell, "Psyche! You're on hidden camera!" Does your show include waving to your neighbors, those you have been social distancing for years, and notice something's a little off? Wait, are they wearing sweats? He looks like he hasn't shaved since....the quarantine started. She didn't put on make-up? Now that's a change! It's almost like that Batman movie where the joker infected all of the makeup so no one could wear any. The news people had rashes from it and sunken eyes.

Is this where we're headed? Is the Joker behind the camera? Apparently not, and the WHO says WFH is the way to go. But a hidden camera reality show is almost more believable. So here we are, keeping the show going until the hidden camera stops rolling. And yes, it's time to keep up appearances, both for your own mental health AND job security. If you are one of those fortunate souls able to WFH (work from home), it's important now, more than ever, to maintain your polished appearance and send a message that's consistent with your in-office persona. After all, people are used to seeing how you look in the office. Having a crumpled, frumpled appearance at home is sending mixed signals about your consistent behavior, dedication to your goals, and attention to detail. Consider your next video call as a made for TV moment you can use to your advantage, to shine as much during video calls as you do in person.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 FOCUS ON THE FACE

Keep their focus on your most valuable asset, and your "money maker", the face.

CHAPTER 2 FITTING FAUX PAUS

The right fit shows your attention to detail in your clothing, which will suggest your attention to detail in your work.

CHAPTER 3 GROOMING MATTERS

The focus of the video call should be on your face and what you have to say, not the wrinkles on your shirt, the grease spot, or bed head.

CHAPTER 4 YOUR TRUE COLORS

When you become part of the composition with your clothing, you not only appear more harmonious, but you can control where others look at you.

CHAPTER 5 IS YOUR BACKGROUND WORKING AGAINST YOU?

The objects others are seeing in your room are also communicating volumes about you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 6 STRATEGIC LIGHTING

Good lighting is your friend. Think of it as your photo filter for video.

CHAPTER 7 THE POWER OF BODY LANGUAGE

If you are looking for more engagement, body language is key.

CHAPTER 8 A PERFECTLY POSITIONED CAMERA

Just as improper lighting can cast unwanted shadows, poor camera positioning can make you appear equally as spooky.

CHAPTER 9 SOUND LIKE A PRO

New options in audio will help you sound more genuine, professional and engaging.

CHAPTER 10 PREPARE TO AMAZE

To really engage your audience and achieve your version of virtual success takes a bit of practice, small adjustments, and applying these principles.

CHAPTER 1

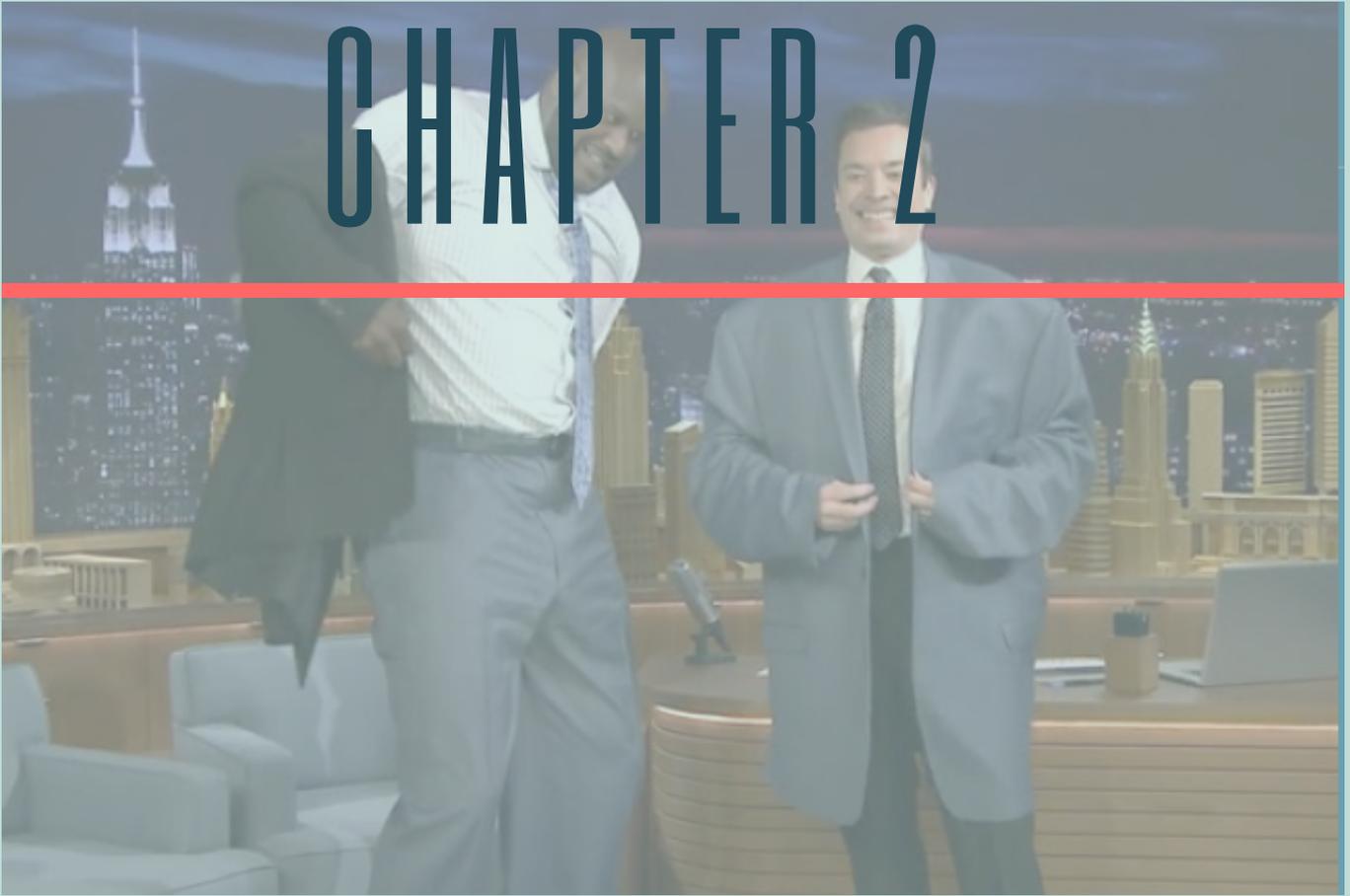


FOCUS ON THE FACE

As Ashton Kutcher says in *Cheaper By the Dozen*, “my face is the money maker”. This is where you want the focus. How can you keep the focus on your face?

- Wearing a shirt with a collar is a great way to bring the focus near your face.
- Angular collars will appear more polished and purposeful than rounded collars.
- You can also try a third layer piece. A jacket or vest will also add some visual authority and help your appearance to be more consistent with your message.
- The more structured or tailored the jacket, the more serious your message.
- There are many options in jackets, find the one that works best for you and your goals for the meeting.
- Other benefits to a the third layer piece include a visual slimming effect. This occurs when there is contrast between the shirt and the jacket, in the center of your body, leading attention up to the face.
- A row of buttons on your shirt, a necklace or scarf will also draw their eyes up to the “money maker”.

CHAPTER 2



FITTING FAUX PAUS

Your shirt or jacket should fit well. Too big and you look like a child wearing his father's clothes. Too small, and you risk looking like a child. And nothing says, “I’ve just rolled out of bed” like an oversized, sloppy, T-shirt. Attention to detail in your clothing will suggest your attention to detail in your work. How do you know when you’ve nailed the fit?

- The shoulder seam line should line up with shoulder joint.
- Collars and lapels should be in scale with the frame of the person wearing them, narrower collars/lapels on a narrower person, wider collars/lapels for a wider person.
- This same principle of scale applies to accessories such as necklaces, scarves, ties, etc.

How to know if it’s too small? There are some that live a life of weight gain denial. And their love for the garment outweighs the fact that it’s just too small. Horizontal crease lines tend to be the objective judge when it comes to fit.

- If there are stress wrinkles in the arm pit, bust, or if buttons are pulling at the bust or belly, it’s too small and not worth you stressing over. Change it for another.

CHAPTER 3



GROOMING MATTERS

The focus of the video call should be on your face and what you have to say, not the wrinkles on your shirt, the grease spot, or bed head. You are fortunate to have the opportunity to connect with others virtually. When you put some effort into your grooming, others will feel that you care enough about them to give them something pleasant to look at. Sales guru Jeffrey Gitomer said it best, “Project your self-image in a way that breeds confidence in others.” When your clothes look neat, ironed, hair is done well and make-up looks naturally enhanced, others will tend to be much more confident in your abilities.

- Clothes should be clean and ironed. Avoid the urge to wear a folded dress shirt straight from the package. The horizontal fold line at your chest may become an unwanted distraction.
- Put some effort into your hair. When in doubt, position yourself where you will be on camera and notice the image of you that your audience will see. Adjust your hair from there.
- Ladies, wear natural looking make-up.
- How are your teeth? Looking sparkling white? If not, you want to test out some whitening strips.
- Wear something on your bottom half. You never know when you’ll have the need to get up and grab something from a file drawer, only to realized everyone is watching you move around in your boxer shorts.

CHAPTER 4



YOUR TRUE COLORS

Not much has been written about this one and yet it's a simple way to create a strong message. You truly are a work of art. When you become part of the composition with your clothing, you not only appear more harmonious, but you can control where others look at you. Do you want others to focus on your eyes for better visual communication? Or your mouth and the words that are coming from it? Wearing the right colors is a simple strategy for virtual confidence.

- Repeat your eye color in your clothing and others have trouble focusing on anything but your eyes.
- Repeat your lip and blush color in your clothes and others will focus on your mouth and healthy cheek coloration.
- Add your hair color to a scarf, tie, or clothing color and your hair will appear to shine.
- Take one of the colors in your background and repeat it in your clothing. For example, if there's a green plant in view, wear emerald green to coordinate with it or add touch of brown in a scarf to coordinate with a brown wicker background.



CHAPTER 5

IS YOUR BACKGROUND WORKING AGAINST YOU?

The objects others are seeing in your room are also communicating volumes about you. People are looking for consistencies between the you they know and love at work and how you are at home. The last thing you want is for them to see the dirty clothes on the floor or a cluttered, dusty, dated room. These things will all be visually distracting.

- Eliminate as many distractions as possible. Keep the background simple, neat, and organized. (And color coordinated if possible as noted in chapter 4.)
- Order a photography background and support system kit or clothing rack. These are not as pricey as you may think. Backgrounds can be a little as \$15 and fun to experiment with. If you have lighter hair coloring or bald, choose a darker color scheme. Darker hair coloring will be emphasized nicely with a lighter color scheme. Muted pinks will emphasize blush and lip color, blues, greens, browns will play up the same color eyes.
- Some virtual meeting programs, such as Zoom allow you to change your background. You in front of the Bay Bridge is much more fun than you in front of a sink full of dirty dishes. You could also use a family photo as a zoom background or favorite vacation spot. There are even websites that allow you to upload interesting zoom backgrounds. Be creative and use it to emphasize your discussion point.

CHAPTER 6



STRATEGIC LIGHTING

Good lighting is your friend. It's your best photo filter for video. Poor lighting or back lighting can skew your facial expressions by giving a harsh silhouette effect making you appear tired and unprepared for your meeting. Sit facing a light source to ensure your face is well illuminated and clearly visible.

- Natural lighting is usually great. If possible, sit facing a window. However, harsh afternoon sun can be overpowering and even hot. It's nice to have another light source as an option.
- You may want to set up two lights. If you imagine a clock in front of you, position one light at 11 o'clock and one at 2 o'clock. White bulbs are optimal, the closer the better.
- A ring light is another great option (pictured above). Many versions have a holder for your phone in the middle of the light with a remote control to stop and start for photography and video recordings.
- Using white or bright surfaces and walls in your room will also brighten up the space by bouncing light around.

CHAPTER 7



THE POWER OF BODY LANGUAGE

Studies have shown that 55% of what people remember about you is not the actual words you say, but your facial expression or body language. (Check out Albert Mehrabian's UCLA study.) If you are looking for more engagement, you'll want your body language to be more energetic.

- Focus on a dynamic posture. Sit up straight and/or lean in to show that you really are interested in the conversation. You may want to do some shoulder stretches before the call to make sure your posture is relaxed. You do not want to be perceived as stoic and/or rigid, nor do you want to be slumped back in your chair as if you're about to fall asleep.
- Don't be afraid to use your hands when talking.
- Look at the camera, the actual lens. This is how you will make eye contact, not by looking at the screen.
- Avoid primping or fixating on your appearance. If that's too hard, hide the screen view of yourself entirely.
- Smile, laugh, and try to imagine those in the meeting are actually in the room with you and act as warmly as you would in person.

CHAPTER 8

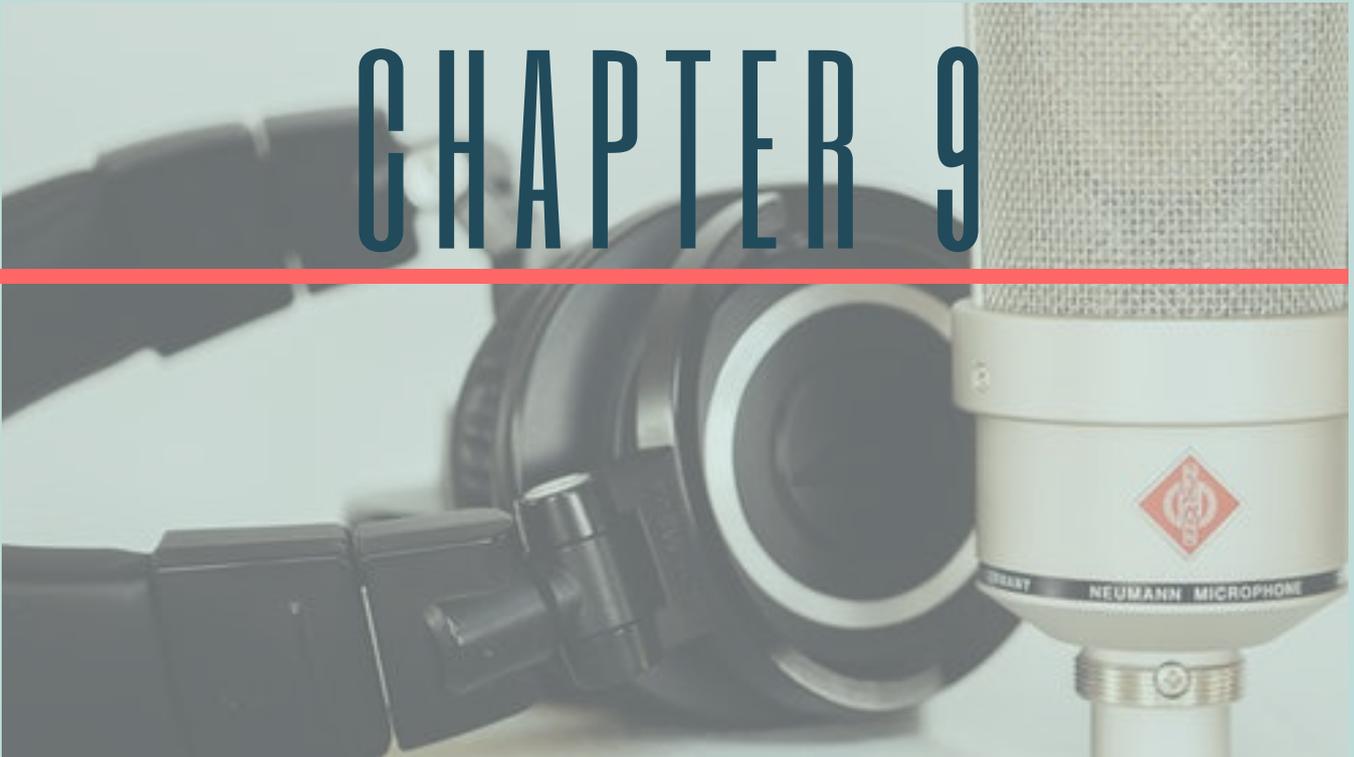


A PERFECTLY POSITIONED CAMERA

Just as improper lighting can cast unwanted shadows, poor camera positioning can make you appear equally spooky. Making a few simple adjustments will take you from looking tired and haggard to vibrant and alive.

- Position the camera slightly higher than eye level, at your hairline, angled down at you and pointed at your eyes. This may require stacking your screen on books or boxes. If you use a ring light with your phone positioned in the center of the light, you can easily adjust the poles to the correct height.
- Don't sit too close. This will exaggerate features such as your chin or nose and believe me, they don't want to see what's up there. Sit back far enough for them to see you from your chest up.
- Sit in a comfortable chair or standing desk. If your meeting is going to take some time, be sure you're in a comfortable place so that you don't have to move around.

CHAPTER 9



SOUND LIKE A PRO

Your audio may seem to be difficult to control, but there are options that will help you to appear more genuine, professional and engaging.

- Start with a quiet room. You may want to close your windows, before you notice the neighbor mowing their lawn.
- If you are using your built-in computer microphone, test it before. Go to your “sound settings” on the application you’re using for the virtual meeting to test the quality.
- Also keep in mind that your headphones might have a better mic than your computer. I recommend collecting all the mics in your house (headphones often have one built in) and test them out to find the one that sounds clearest. Again, go to the “sound settings” on the app to test quality.
- You can also purchase a podcast style microphone that plugs into your usb port.
- Keep your mic muted unless you are talking. Shuffling papers, coughing, unexpected interruptions can all distract from the purpose of the meeting.

CHAPTER 10



PREPARE TO AMAZE

One of my favorite quotes comes from famous high school rugby coach Larry Gelwiz, “Practice doesn’t make perfect, practice makes permanent.” Unfortunately, you may have been meeting virtually for years, but that doesn’t mean you’ve been doing it well. To really engage your audience and achieve your version of virtual success takes a bit of practice, small adjustments, and applying the principles listed in this book. Don't forget to...

- Familiarize yourself with the application you will be using. Be sure you understand the basics of screen sharing, muting your audio, changing your background, chat features, etc. Also check for updates or compatibility with any software or equipment you plan to use for your meeting.
- Prepare what you plan to say and practice, practice, practice! Just because you are virtual doesn't mean you can succeed without prepping for it. Practice your talk as much, if not more, than you would for an in-person meeting.
- Call a friend or request a run through before the meeting to troubleshoot before you are in front of a live audience.
- Ensure you have a strong WiFi connection.
- Be early to the meeting. There’s nothing like being late, and feeling rushed, to put you on edge. Give yourself plenty of time to get ready the day of and before you know it, you’ll be smoothly sailing through your meeting.

ABOUT ME



HELLO THERE

I'm Dani, your very own certified image consultant. You may have noticed me in a few of the previous images. I hope you have found this book useful with actionable ways for you to become more engaging and charismatic in your next virtual meeting. My goal is to help you look and feel amazing whether you are at home communicating virtually or connecting in person. Where virtual communication is here to stay, I'm here to help you be your best no matter your environment. So let me know how your meeting goes! And feel free to contact me with questions or a customized approach to your next meeting. Find my services at <https://www.stylebydani.com>.

Dani Slauch

www.StyleByDani.com
Dani@StyleByDani.com
385.229.6297