

A photograph of two women in conversation outdoors. The woman on the left is Black, smiling, and gesturing with her hands. The woman on the right is white, seen in profile, listening. They are in a bright, natural setting with greenery and a blue sky.

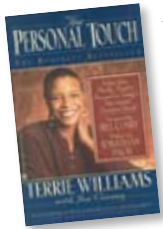
LITTLE THINGS— BIG IMPACT

PR MASTER **TERRIE WILLIAMS** KNOWS
TAKING NOTICE OF THE DETAILS CAN HELP
YOU STAND OUT IN BUSINESS—AND IN LIFE.

by Erin Casey

If you were judging by size, the nail salon Terrie Williams frequents may not look like much. The larger salon across the street would undoubtedly give her more room to relax. But Williams knows what's inside counts far more than a fancy outer shell. "I go to the smaller one because of the rapport that's been established, the little things she does and looks out for," Williams says.

As a public relations and communications expert, Williams has represented film and music stars such as Eddie Murphy, Wesley Snipes and Anita Baker, and corporations such as Time Warner, Revlon, Nestle, the National Football League and the National Basketball Association—to name only a few. In her book, *The Personal Touch: What You Really Need to Succeed in Today's Fast-Paced Business World*, Williams shares her "trade secrets" on how she created a well-known public relations and marketing firm. Her success has been incredible, but she'll tell you that, just like with the little nail salon, it's been based on connecting with people.



"I think you have to operate from an assumption that there are hundreds, *thousands*, of people who want to do what you do; who can do what you do and pretty much have the same credentials," Williams says. "And so how is it that you're going to distinguish yourself from everyone else? The *only* way you can distinguish yourself is in the details. It's in honoring people for who they are and remembering the tiniest of details that will make them look at you twice."

THINK RELATIONSHIP FIRST

When you're building a business, it's easy to look at everyone as a potential customer, and really, that's OK. The problem for business owners comes when they think of people *only* as customers. Williams shares that success comes when you care about others and their needs first. "I think if you're just about the business and don't genuinely care about people, you won't be effective," she says. That's because people easily recognize and are turned off by counterfeit emotions. "It's OK to be very strategic about getting from point A to point B. But I do think there has to be a genuine level of caring about humanity in



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order to be really effective," Williams says.

Developing meaningful relationships in business—and in life—requires reading between the lines and giving without expectations. Listening is a critical skill when it comes to connecting with people. "Listening requires really being present with that person and taking in what they are saying," Williams says. "I pay even more attention to the things you don't say, because that is as revealing, if not more. It tells me who you are, how you're thinking and feeling. I try to zero in on those things."

10 “Little Things” That Will Get You Noticed

Terrie Williams knows that the “little things” can make a big difference. “It’s all about developing a winning style and cultivating relationships that can be instrumental in opening doors you never dreamed could open for you,” she says. “Work hard to achieve your goal. Understand that there will be disappointments and defeats along with the highs and the joyous victories. If you apply the ‘little things,’ you’ll be amazed at how many ‘big things’ you will accomplish.”

Here are a few things Williams does to keep that top-of-mind awareness:

1. **Know that your reputation is valuable.** It often reaches people before you do. With that in mind, understand the importance of how you interact with people. Be sincere, honest, prepared, professional, thorough and efficient—and deliver on time, every time.
2. **Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.** A person’s position in life should have absolutely nothing to do with how you interact with them. What goes around comes around.
3. **Be visible.** Go to professional seminars, luncheons, receptions, dinners—any kind of gathering.
4. **When you meet people, be mindful.** Look them in the eye, smile, be personable, have a firm handshake and actually be with the individual at that moment.
5. **Try to develop a knack for remembering names.** People you meet will be flattered if you can call them by name after only a brief introduction.
6. **Be an active listener while you’re engaged in conversation.** If you feel yourself becoming bored or distracted, just politely excuse yourself.
7. **Be sensitive to the body language of those you come in contact with.** Be aware of how you come across to other people.
8. **Send a follow-up note to people you meet and would like to stay in touch with.** Say hello, enjoyed meeting you, mention a mutual area of interest or something noteworthy about the encounter and the possibility of getting together in the future.
9. **Selectively donate your services to nonprofit organizations that may be in need of your expertise.** Set the stage for people to get to know who you are and what you do.
10. **Remember what Mom used to tell you—say “thank you.”** It’s amazing how few people invest the time to express gratitude for a favor or a job well done. Remember that people don’t have to do anything for you.

LISTEN & RESPOND

Paying attention to the words and the behaviors of others can help you better understand their needs. “I’ve maintained relationships with very high-powered people because I connect with the human element of who they are,” she says. “That then paves the way for a business relationship.”

Another key to connecting with people is to remember that everyone is human. “I know that underneath the game face, the mask, the armor people wear every day, people are challenged and they’re going through the fire,” Williams says. “Their lives are often not balanced; they’re stressed. People don’t have enough time to do anything. I try to connect with people on that level.” Sending notes, or small gifts, something that simply says “I’m thinking about you,” can make an impact on someone’s day and on their relationship with you.

“If I haven’t talked to someone for a while or they’ve had a death in the family,” Williams says, “I’ll send a card or a note and include a short collection of prayers called *Encouraging Words*. I can’t tell you the number of people who will reach out and say, ‘How did you know? This came at exactly the time I needed it to come.’ I tell them, ‘I have no idea what you’re talking about.’ But I know me and so I know what people are going through.”

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Today’s marketplace is competitive—whether you’re a corporate employee or a business owner, or both. Adding a personal touch is something that can make you unforgettable. Terrie Williams has built an extremely successful career by understanding that *connecting* with people, first and foremost, is what’s really important.

“I think people want to be honored and respected,” Williams says. “If you do that for everyone, not just the people you think are important, you will win every time. That’s just a fact.” EW

Terrie Williams, president of The Terrie Williams Agency began handling big-ticket entertainment, sports, business, and Fortune 500 names in 1998. She is the acclaimed author of: The Personal Touch: What You Really Need to Succeed in Today’s Fast-Paced Business World; A Plentiful Harvest: Creating Balance and Harmony through the Seven Living Virtues; and Stay Strong: Simple Life Lessons for Teens. Her current work, Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We’re Not Hurting, will be published by Scribner in 2007 and will tell the untold story of depression among African-Americans. Williams is one of the country’s most sought-after speakers as well as a youth advocate through The Stay Strong Foundation. For more information visit www.terriewilliams.com.

