

**"Remember that failure is an event, not a person.
Yesterday ended last night."
»Zig Ziglar**

Friendly to a T



I recently read a column on Inc.com by Jeff Haden that made me smile.

It's titled, "Want to Make More Friends? Stop Wearing Fancy Clothes and Wear a Walmart T-Shirt, Research Shows."

Haden shared the results of an experiment by a Dr. Stephen Garcia and others in which they told a group of participants that their goal was to be more socially attractive to others.

Then, they gave them the choice of wearing a t-shirt with either Saks Fifth Avenue or Walmart printed on them.

Predictably (?), 76% chose the Saks t-shirt. Yet, when later reviewed by another group for their attractiveness as potential friends, 64% chose folks from the Walmart shirt-wearing crowd.

Chest Tapping, Not Thumping



During a conversation with a dad I've known and coached basketball teams with over the years, we

agreed that there is sometimes a difference between the most talented player on the court and the best player on the court.

Some of the young men we've worked with were incredibly gifted, but not necessarily the best of teammates.

Most people hear that and think of a "ball hog" - someone who takes too many shots and doesn't pass the ball. Okay, sure, there's that.

However, I'd argue that fixing a ball hog is easier than what I feel to be an equally negative trait.

A "star" player who becomes openly frustrated on the court when teammates

These findings were consistent with five other experiments supporting their Status Symbol Paradox.

Their findings tend to support the theory that people displaying high-status markers (clothes, cars, watches, etc.) have less potential to attract new friends as folks displaying neutral status markers.

Reading this research, I chuckled recalling a story a co-worker told me years ago.

He was a sales exec for a national beverage company. Having finally made it to a point where he could afford one, he bought a well-known brand of luxury watch.

Soon after, he met with a senior manager of a discount retailer to renew a contract.

The older fellow told him, "Son, I know right off the bat that your margins are too high. If you can afford that watch, your company is making too much on us."

He laughed and told me, "It killed me, but I never wore that watch on a sales call to a discount retailer again."

Now, reasonable people can debate what items are "status markers" and when and where they are appropriate.

Hey, we all like nice things.

I've long preached that the most effective way to grow your business is to proactively seek to make as many friends, in as many places, as you can.

I also whole-heartedly believe that the person wearing the clothes or watch or

make mistakes or are not able to play up to his level is a problem.

I once coached a very talented young man who was several levels above his teammates. He had the ability to see things on the court that they could not.

He also had an ability to "thread the needle" with passes and frequently saw great passes bounce off his teammates chests or off their hands because they were not ready for them.

His natural reaction was to look over at the teammate and raise his palms or throw his head back to express disgust. Now, I didn't really fault the kid.

First, he was young. Second, it was unlikely anyone had coached him on that trait before.

Few things make a teammate more nervous than having the team's best player appear mad at him. His reactions were having a negative impact on teammates. Some began playing timidly.

Away from the others, I asked if he would try something for me.

Whenever a teammate dropped one of his passes, instead of throwing his hands up, maybe he could tap his chest and say, "My bad."

This confused him.

I told him, "Look, everyone out here knows you're our best player, and they'll also know it's not really 'your bad'. But they'll look at you as the team's leader."

jewelry matters far more than what they are wearing.

I've seen bankers in "casual wear" seem totally arrogant, while some in Saks-type clothes and watches that cost more than a Honda Civic have come across ingratiatingly humble and friendly.

Your most powerful status marker is how you treat people.

How will your actions mark you today?

He liked that idea.

He went from a finger pointer to a chest tapper. He also became the kind of player who raised the levels of his teammates' games.

Usually, people get promoted into leadership on their personal performance.

Some struggle to understand the difference between being personally productive and leading productive teams.

Leaders who tap their chests more than point their fingers tend to lead teams that win more than they lose.

"The only thing that happens overnight is recognition, not talent."

»Carol Haney



Dave Martin, author of [The In-Store Advantage](#), has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

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