

Improve Your Social Skills

Matthew Reardon Autism Conference 2017

Daniel Wendler M.A, author of ImproveYourSocialSkills.com

Get Ready

Things to do before we start:

1. Fill out the pre-workshop survey
2. Say hi to someone sitting next to you
3. Get excited!



15:00

Improve Your Social Skills

Matthew Reardon Autism Conference 2017

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Welcome To Version 2.0

























My Story

○ 2012: Launched [ImproveYourSocialSkills.com](https://www.improveyoursocialskills.com)



My Story

- 2012: Launched ImproveYourSocialSkills.com
- 2013: TEDx Speaker “My Life With Asperger’s”



My Story

- 2012: Launched ImproveYourSocialSkills.com
- 2013: TEDx Speaker “My Life With Asperger’s”
- 2014: Began Doctoral Studies in Clinical Psychology at George Fox University



Part 1: Growth Mindset



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“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.

Brains and talent **are just the starting point.**”

-Dr. Carol Dweck, Stanford Psychologist



Photo courtesy <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tedxnorrkoping/>

The Growth Mindset



From this...



To this!



The Growth Mindset

Believe You
Can Improve



Improve A
Little Each
Day



Improve A
Lot Over
Time

The Social Skills Growth Mindset

Believe You
Can Learn
Social Skills



Improve Your
Social Skills A
Little Each Day



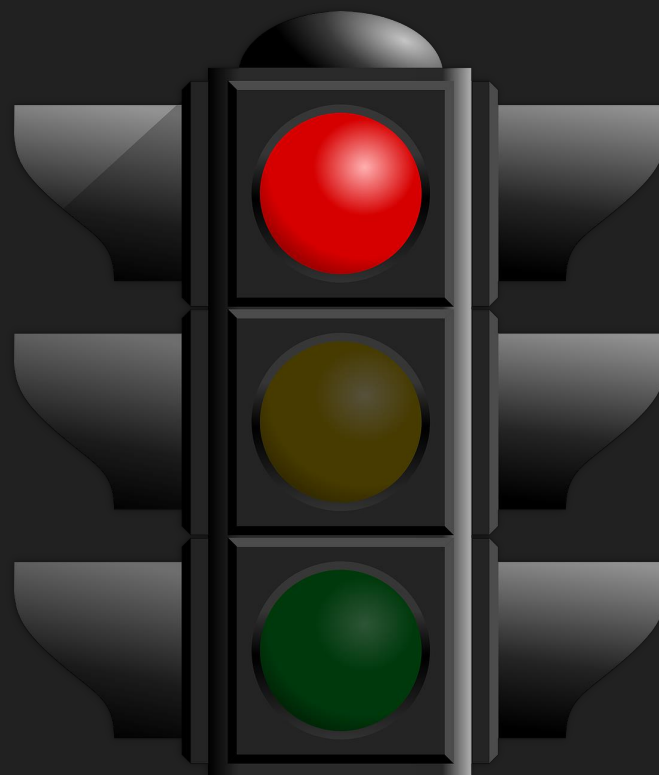
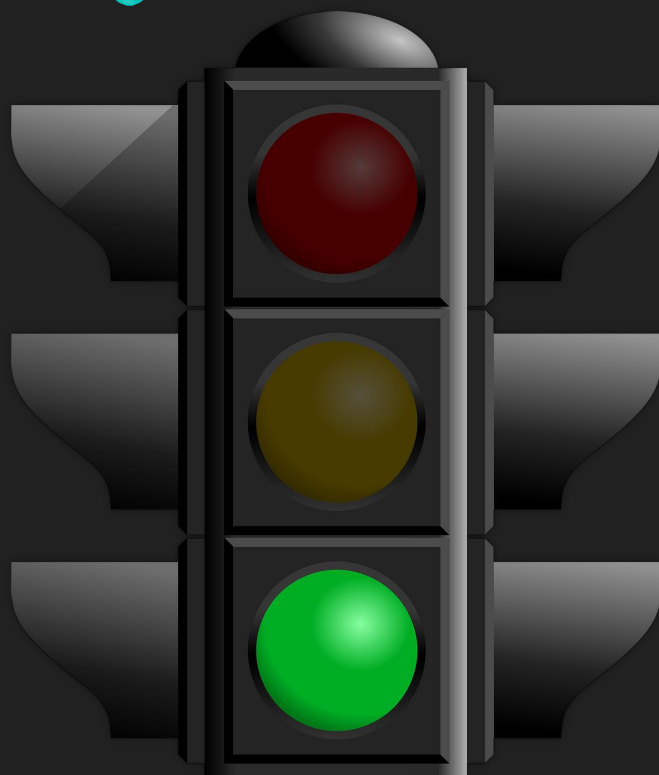
Succeed
Socially Over
Time!

Part 2: Body Language



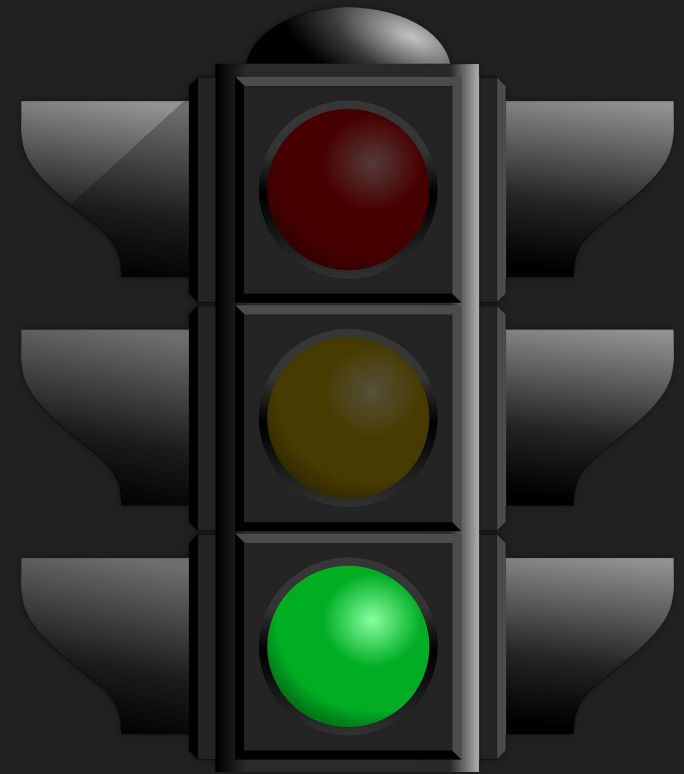
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The Secret Of Body Language



Green Light Body Language

- Facing You
- Closeness
- Relaxation



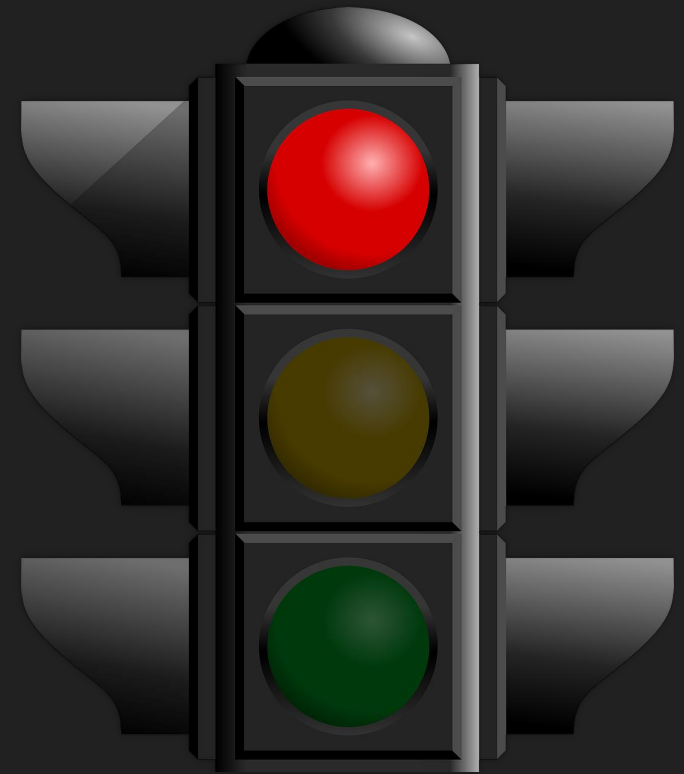
Green Light Body Language

- Facing You
- Closeness
- Relaxation



Red Light Body Language

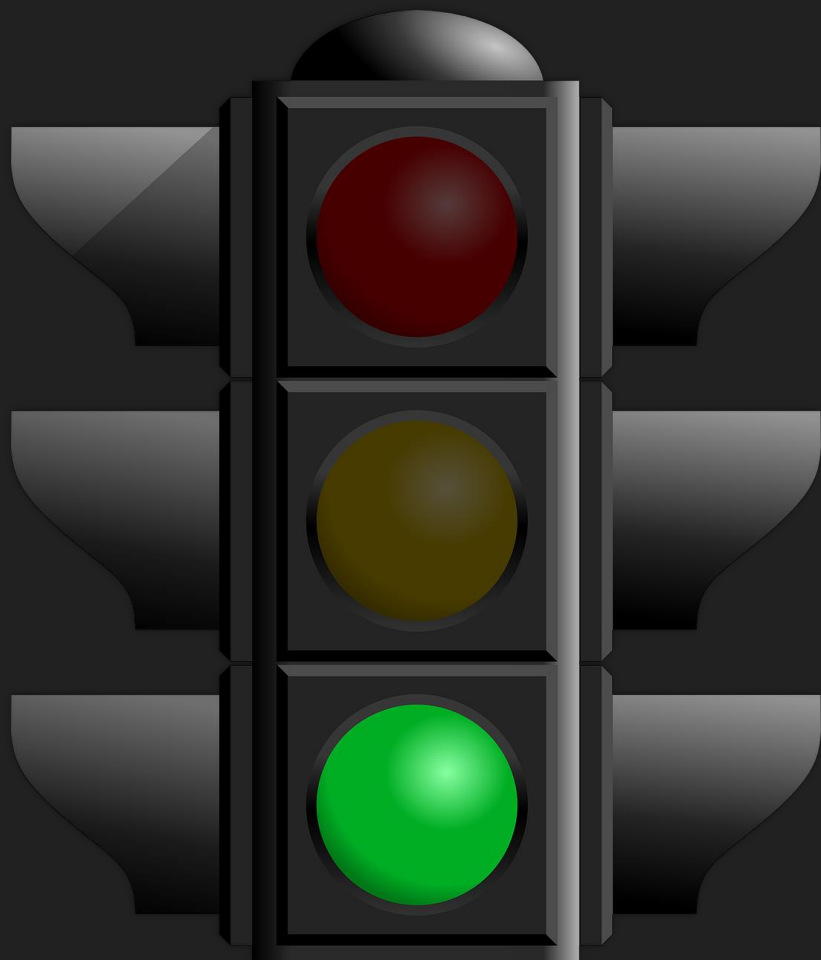
- Facing Away
- Distance
- Tension

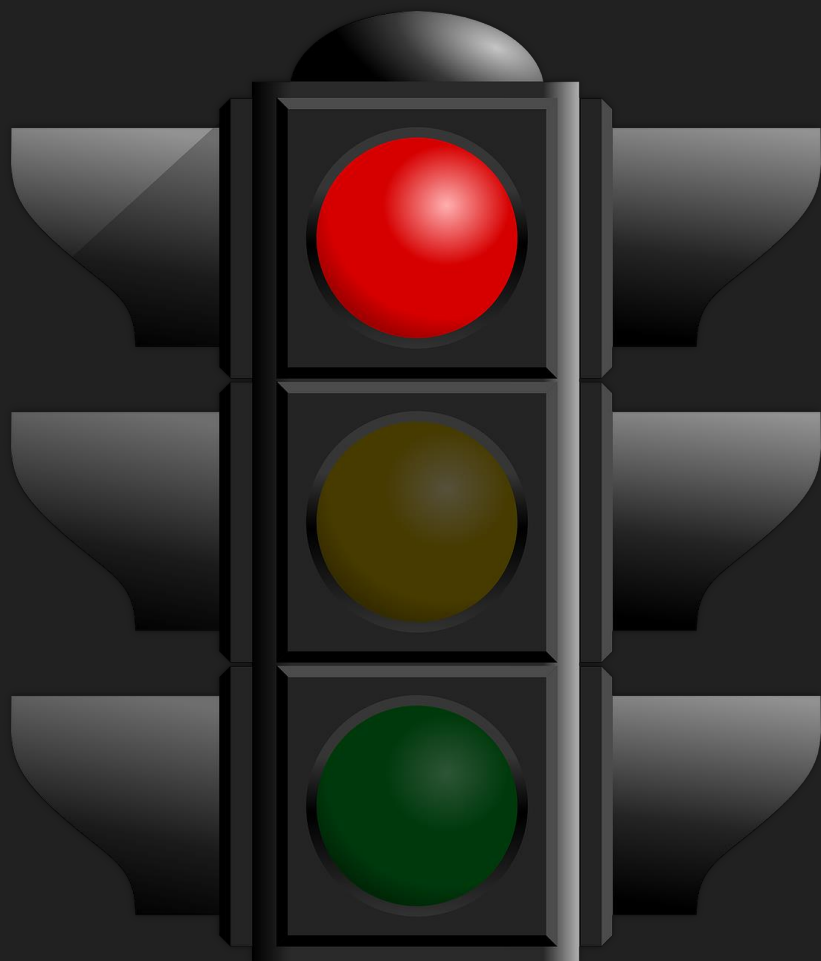


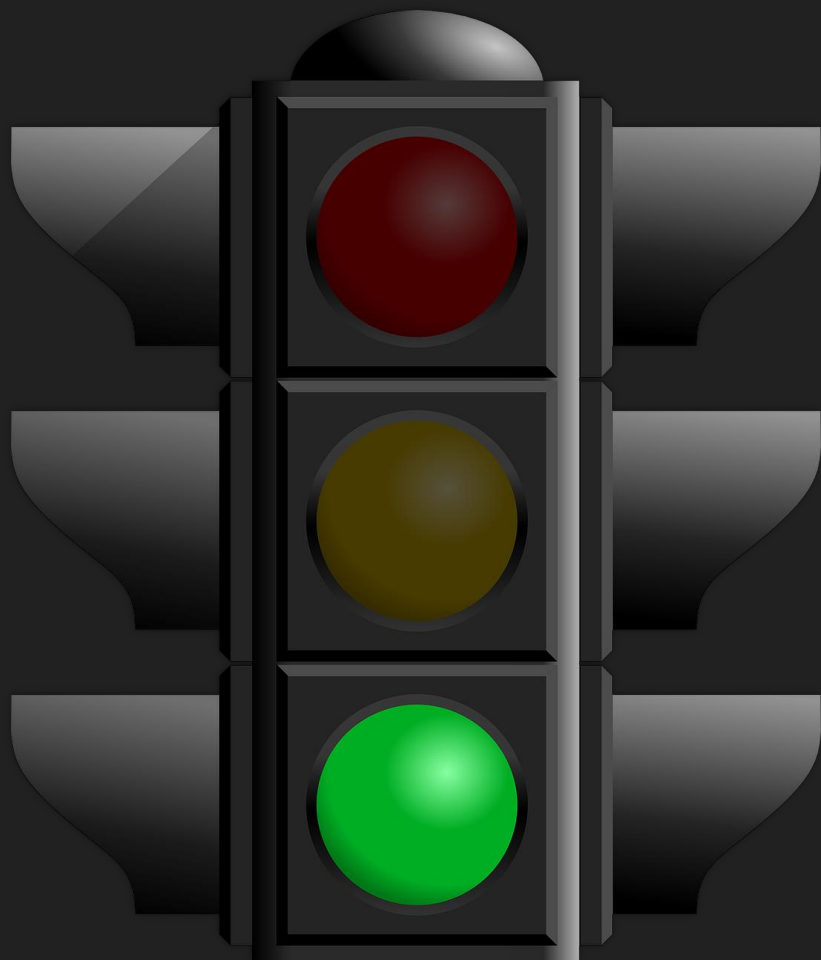
Red Light Body Language

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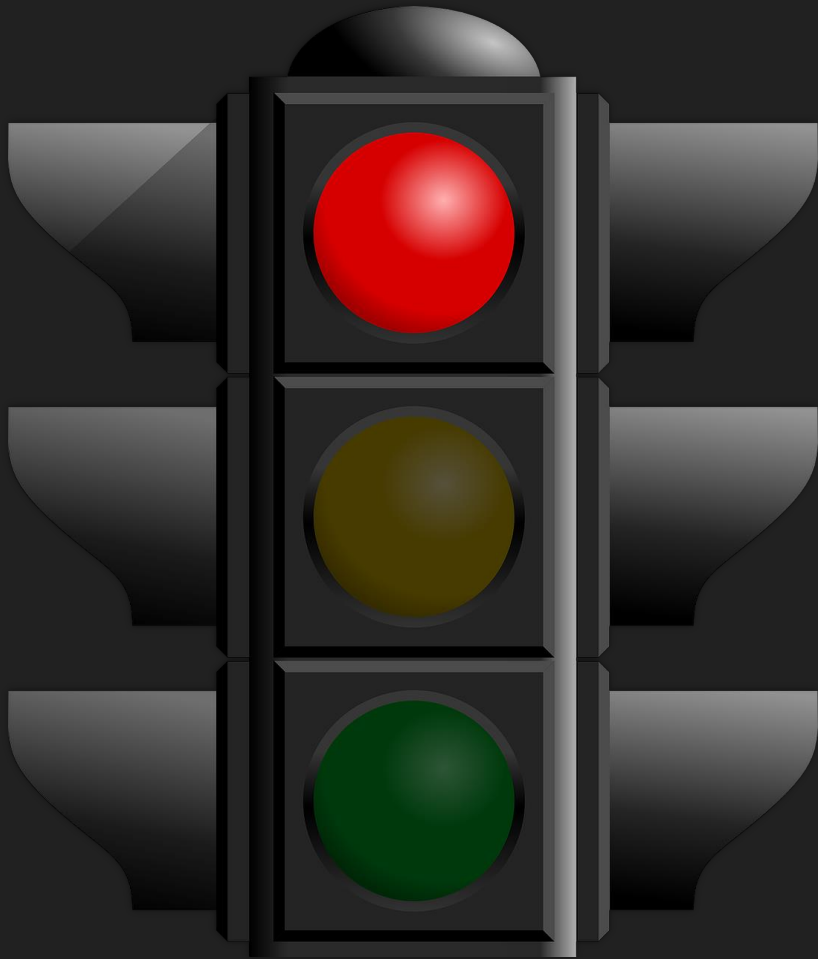








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Body Language Direction

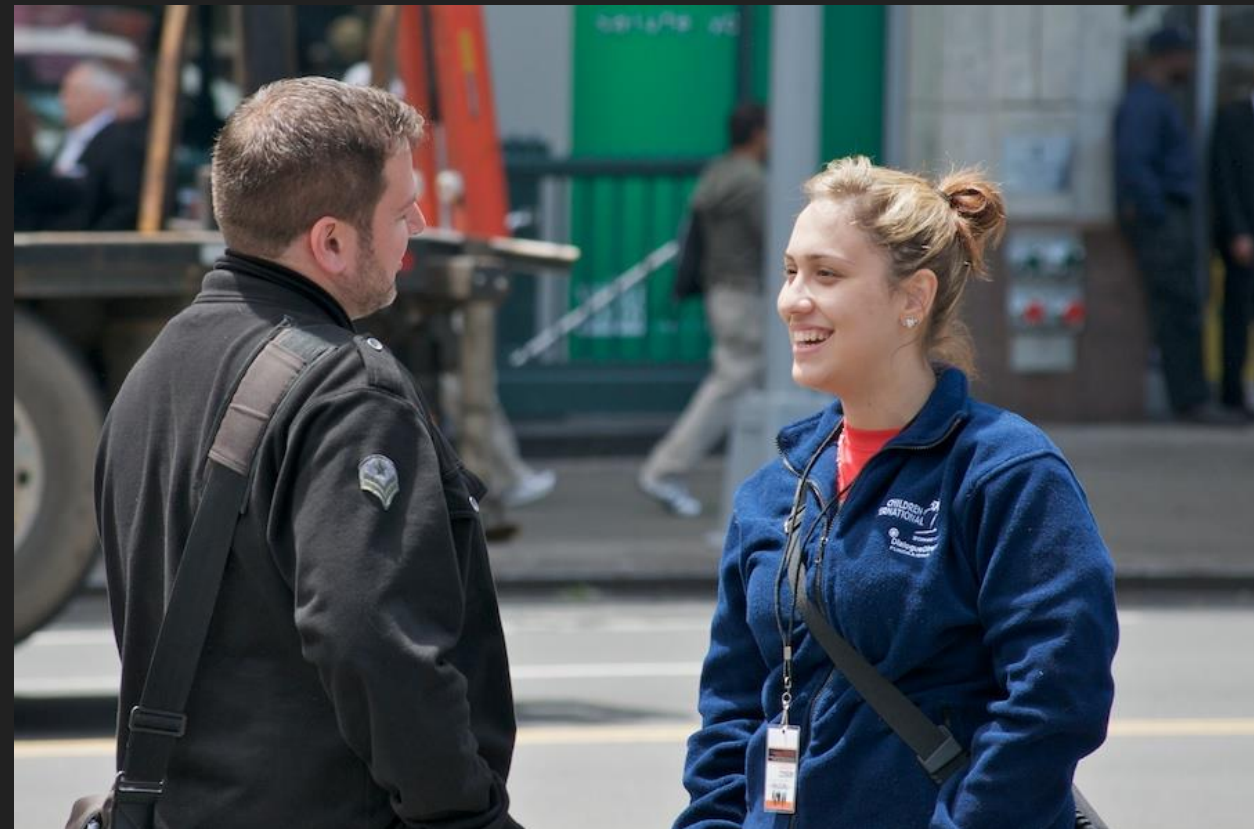








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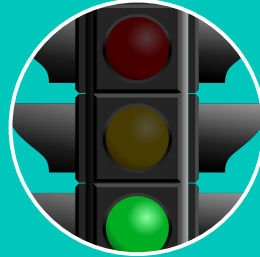


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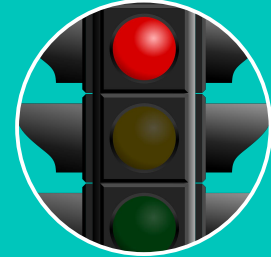
Body Language Summary



Look at the big
picture



If green, go
ahead!



If red, find out
what's wrong

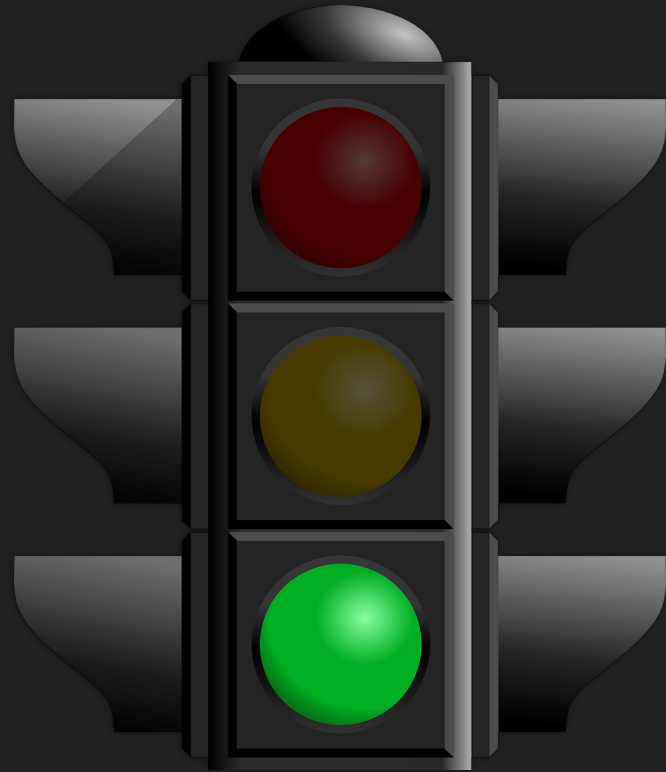


Your Body Language

People read
your body
language



Send green
signals to
attract friends!



Eye Contact



Eye Contact

1. Look at them when you are listening



Eye Contact

1. Look at them when you are listening
2. Look at them when you are asking questions



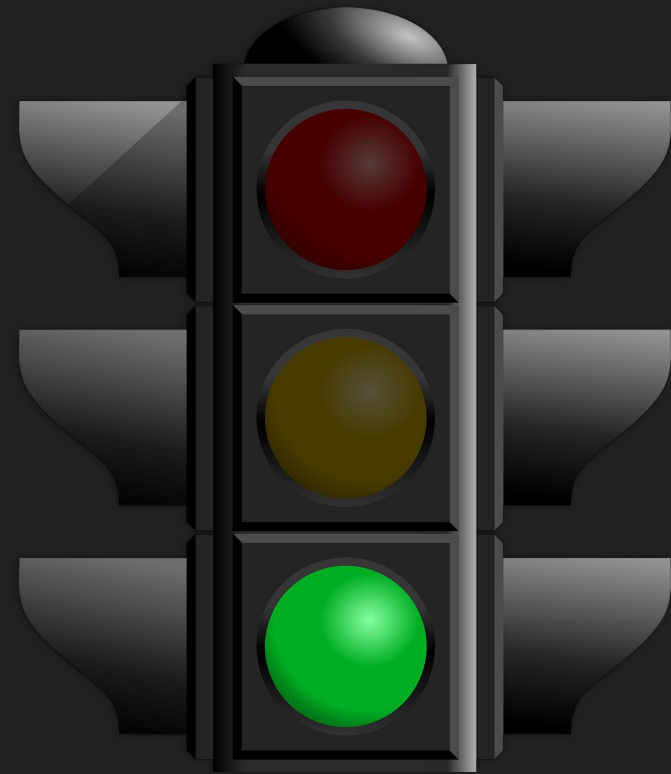
Eye Contact

1. Look at them when you are listening
2. Look at them when you are asking questions
3. Look away if you need to gather your thoughts (but look back when you're ready!)



3 Ways To Improve Body Language Skills

1. TV with a body language book
2. Acting class
3. Ask friends or family for help



Break 1

3 things you can do in 10 minutes:

1. Strike up a conversation with someone else
2. Stretch and grab some water
3. Notice the body language signals of others



10:00

Part 3: Level Up Your Social Life



Level One: Powering Up



Video Game Success

1. Spend many hours practicing
2. Try again after failure
3. Study expert strategies



Social Success

1. Spend many hours practicing
2. Try again after failure
3. Study expert strategies



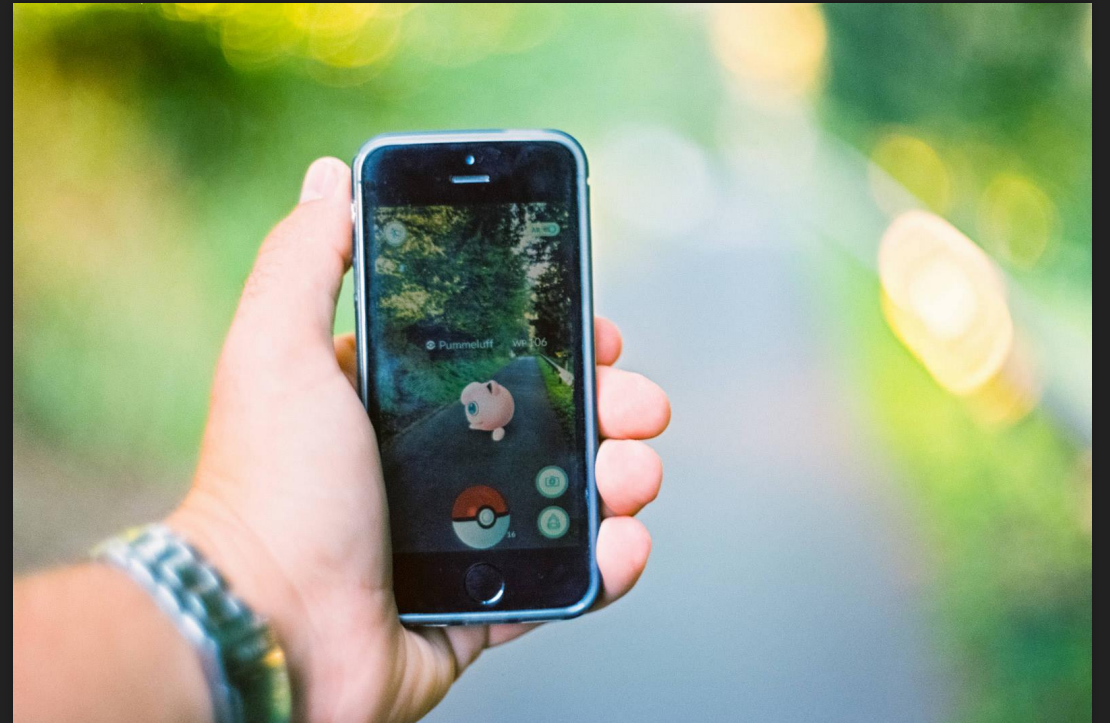
Level Two: It's Go Time



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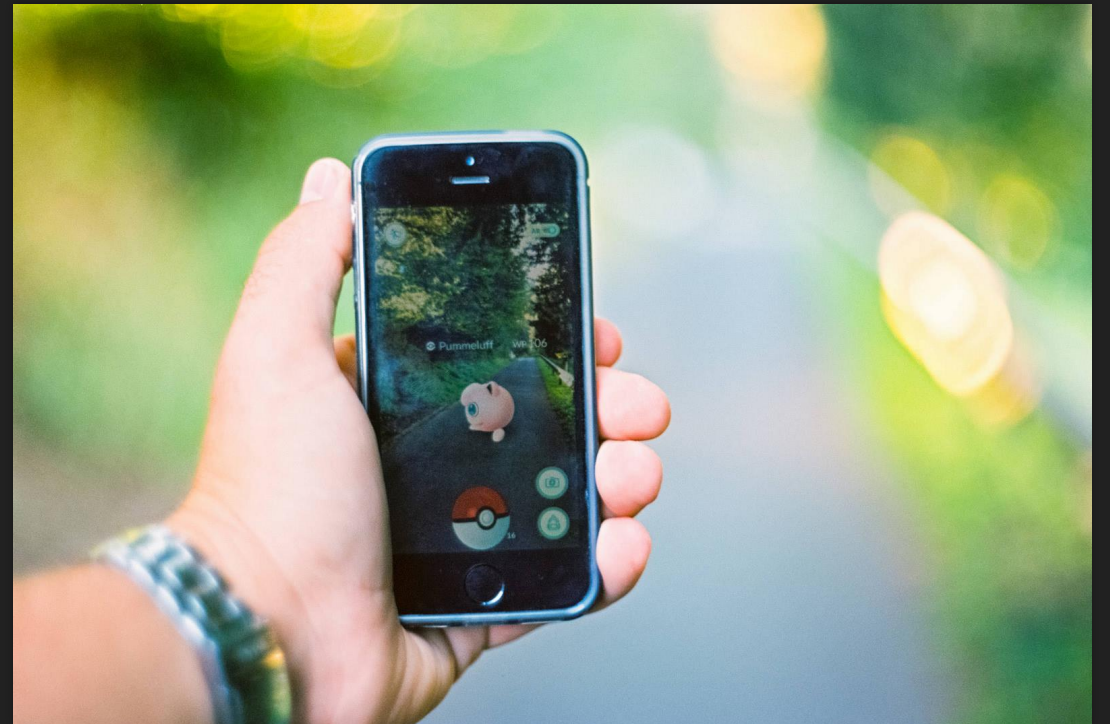
Level Two: It's Go Time

1. Go outside your comfort zone



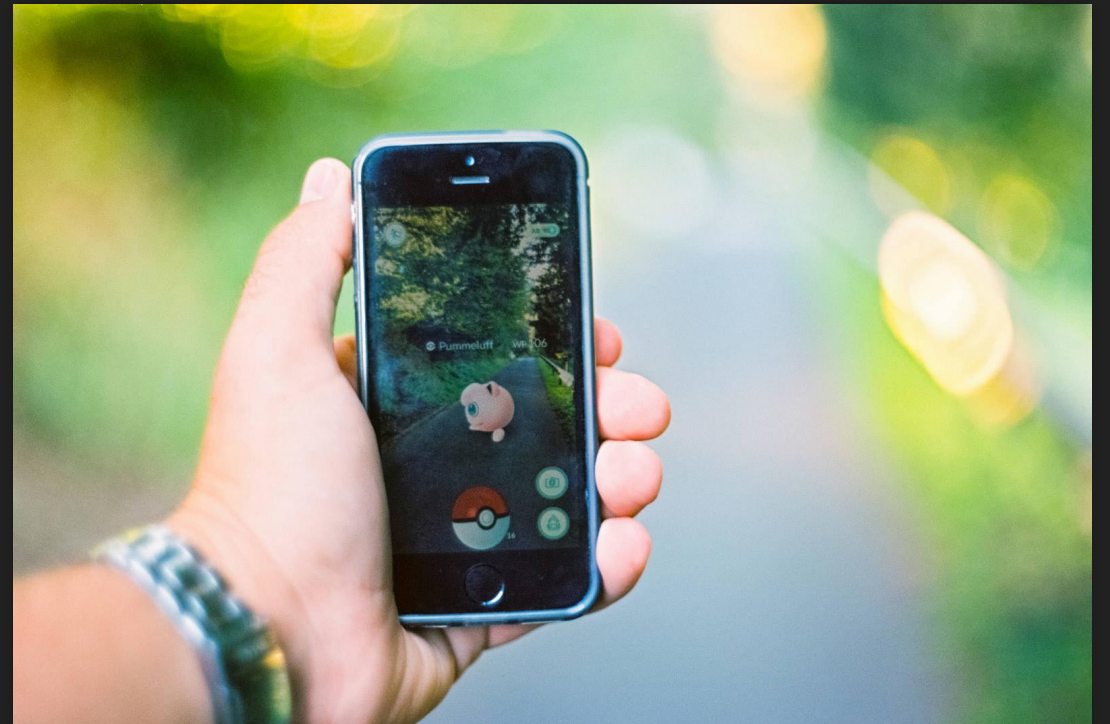
Level Two: It's Go Time

1. Go outside your comfort zone
2. Go to the right places



Level Two: It's Go Time

1. Go outside your comfort zone
2. Go to the right places
3. Go with specific goals in mind



Level Three: Conquering Fear



Level Three: Conquering Fear

1. Stand your ground



Level Three: Conquering Fear

1. Stand your ground



Level Three: Conquering Fear

1. Stand your ground
2. Breathe slow and deep



Level Three: Conquering Fear

1. Stand your ground
2. Breathe slow and deep
3. Challenge your anxious thoughts



Part 4: Helping Others Succeed



The Big Question

- How can we help others succeed socially?

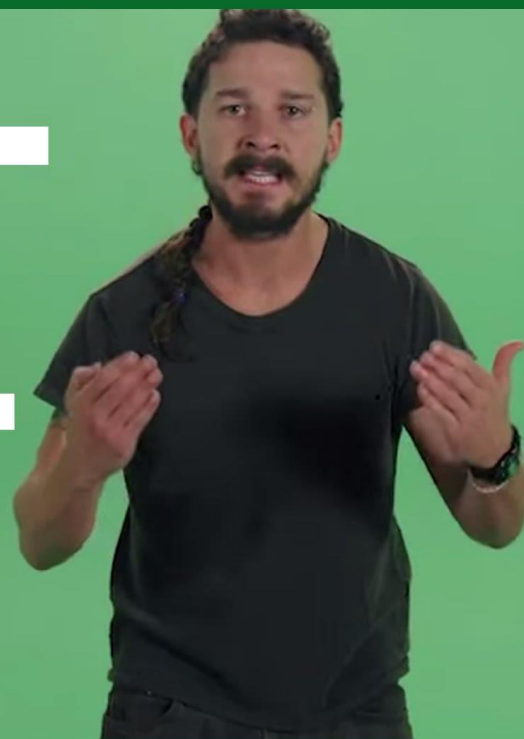


Failure Formula



The Temptation...

**JUST
DO IT**



The problem with “Just Do It!”

- Social interaction can be stressful, scary, or confusing
- They may not know how to do “it”
- It can turn into a power struggle



Another Temptation...



The problem with rewards

- They may only do the minimum necessary to gain the reward
- They may not maintain their behavior when nobody is looking
- It's hard to find good rewards!



Dr. Segar's Secret



Dr. Segar's Secret

If physical movement feels good,
people will do more of it

Dr. Segar's Secret

If being social feels good, people will
do more of it

Our Challenge

How can we create opportunities for others to find joy in social interaction?

Our Challenge

....And sneak in some social skills training while we're at it

Improv Theater

- Improves ability to react to others
- Provides tools for reducing anxiety
- Come to improv class!



Acts of Service

- Service trips
- Local nonprofits
- Secret Santa (but with acts of kindness instead of gifts)



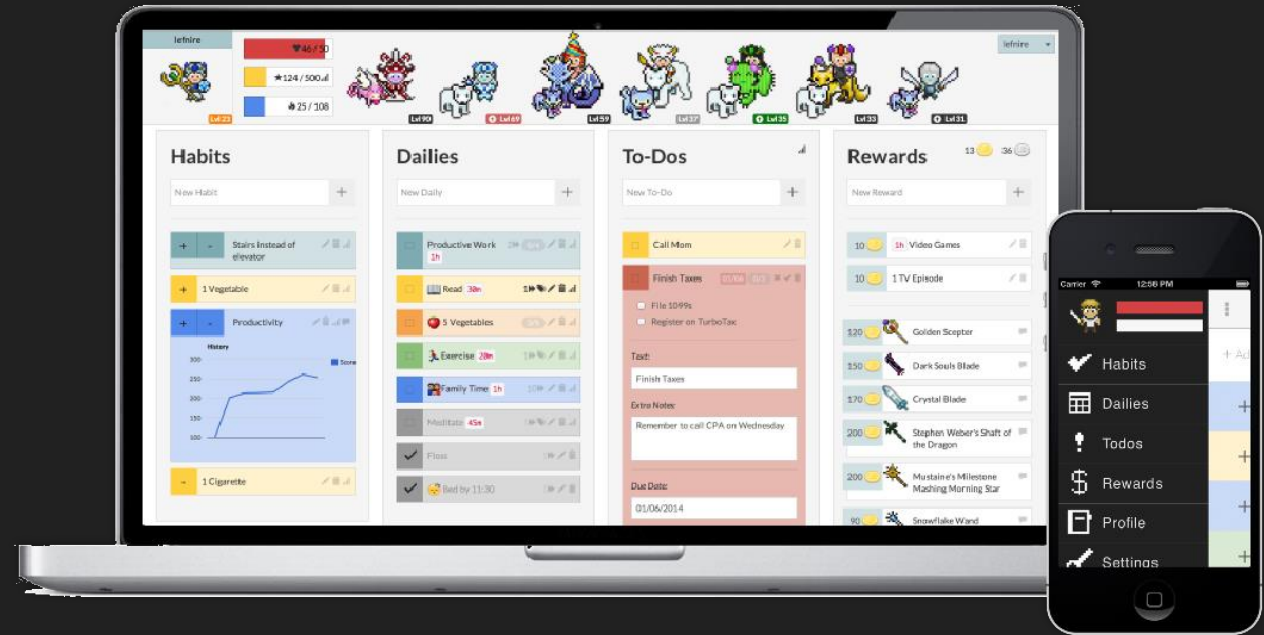
Role-playing Games

- Regular meetings with the same group
- Theory of mind from taking character's perspective
- Ask for help from local gaming shops



A few final thoughts...

- Gamify everything (HabitRPG.com)
- Be conscious of sensory or stress overload
- Start with small steps



Part 5: Make Your Plan



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Your Plan

Choose Your
Goals

Goal Setting

- Concrete, measurable goals
- Short term, medium term, long term
- Have others hold you accountable

Your Plan

Choose Your
Goals



Pick Social
Activities

Social Activities

- Expand your comfort zone
- Make new friends
- Ideas: Game stores, meetups, library events, volunteering
- More ideas: Cooking classes, theater classes, Toastmasters

Your Plan



Find A Mentor

- Someone you trust
- Therapist, parent, teacher, friend
- Give them permission to challenge you

Your Plan



Part 6: A Tale of Two Parties



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Part 6: A Tale of Two Parties



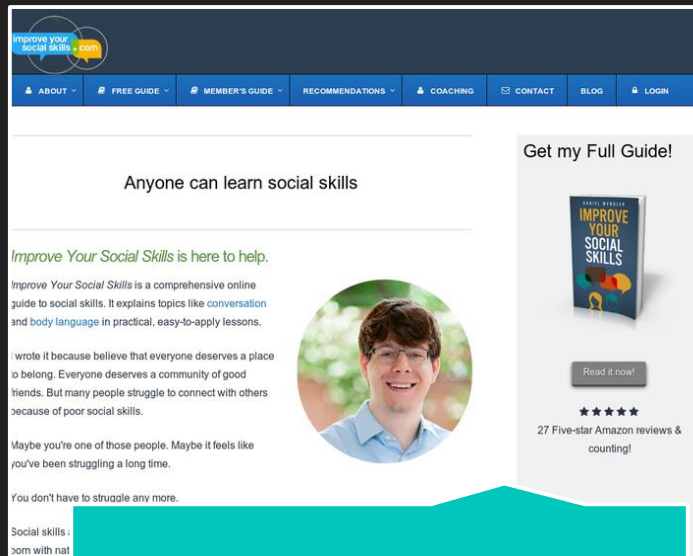
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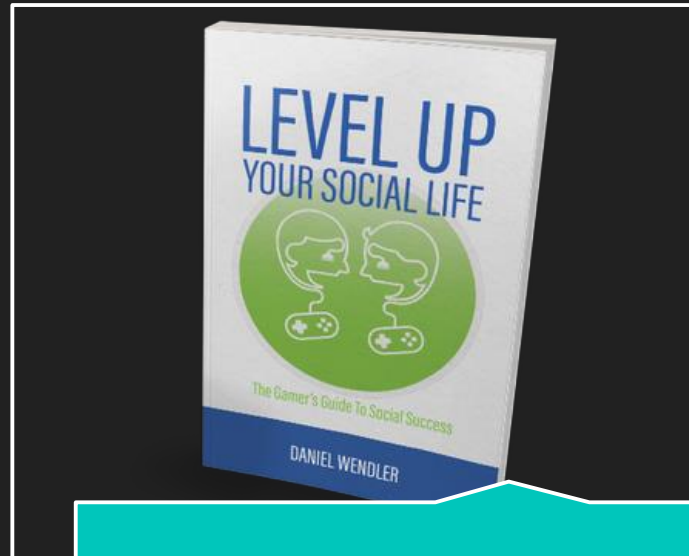
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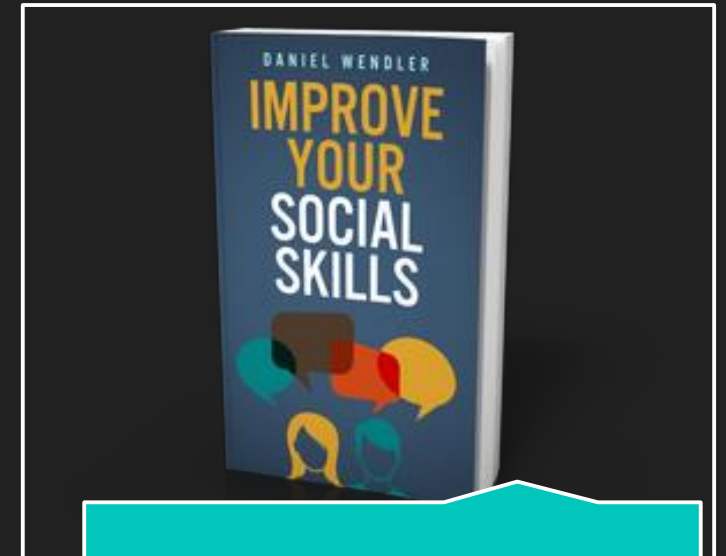
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