

Controlling Facial Mimicry

Increase your awareness of, and control over, your own propensity for facial mirroring

Observing and Controlling the Smiling Reflex

1. On your next trip to the grocery store, see how many people you can catch smiling in response to your smiling at them. As you walk down the aisle and check out, purposely smile and notice how people respond.
2. During an average day or outing, count how often you smile in response to a smile from another.
3. Then, on several more outings, practice not smiling reflexively in response to some strangers smile – warning: this may be harder than you think, so don't be discouraged if it takes you several tries to get the hang of it.

Controlling Facial Mimicry of Athletes and Film Actors

1. While either watching television ,or at the movies, pay attention to your facial expression when an athlete or actor is expressing a strong emotion.
2. Identify which expressions are the most habitual for you to copy.
3. Practice not copying those expressions during subsequent television programs or films.

Exercise adapted from Rothschild (2006). Helper for the Helper: Self-Care Strategies for Managing Burnout and Stress