

Being Authentic

A research by my acquaintance, Prof Francesco Gino of Harvard Business School, concluded that being **authentic** in **first meetings** lowers our own anxieties and **improves our performance**.

This contradicts what many of us are conditioned to believe, that is, we should cater to the likes, dislikes and preferences of the other person (who is really quite a stranger), often by guessing, looking around their rooms for clues or mirroring their body language. I have long advocated that doing so inhibits our strengths and uniqueness as individuals.

However, we should take into account cultural norms when we are in a new country. Recently, three of my clients asked very mindful questions during our coaching sessions-

- "Is my French accent acceptable? Will people here understand me?"
- "Can I shake a Malay lady's hands?"
- "Do Singaporean & Malaysian Chinese see Chineseness the way we China Chinese view Chineseness?"

Hope Prof Gino's research helps, whether you are -

- prospecting a new client,
- going for a job or promotion interview,
- meeting an important person for the first time, or,
- pitching for grants or fresh funding.

Coaching that helps individuals get unstuck from their professional situations and accelerate

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