



## TIPS FOR MAKING VIDEOS

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**The Unitarian Church in Westport**

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(compiled from the first two modules of Peter Bowden's *Video Ministry Academy*)

### **FLEX**

F=Frame

L=Lighting

E=Environment

X=Excuse me - How do I look?

### **F Frame**

- Generally, put yourself in the middle of the frame. Imagine the frame divided into thirds. Your eyes should be just above the top third. This is called the theory of thirds.
- There may be times when you want to be off center. Let's say you're doing a meditation and you have a statue of Buddha to your side (slightly behind you), or hanging wind chimes. If you're going to be off-center, do it for a reason, not by mistake.
- Avoid placing the camera too close. People get weirded out when they can see nose hairs or moles.
- Avoid situating yourself flat against a wall. The image then risks looking like a mug shot.
- Make sure the recording device has you in focus!

### **L Lighting**

- The lighting should be consistent and controlled. Do not place yourself under a skylight because sunlight changes with cloud cover or darkness.
- Place two lights on either side of you to create a slight twinkle in your eyes. If you are not using two lights make sure that your light is even- not that part of you is lit and part in shadows.
- Avoid strong overhead and strong side lighting as they cast shadows on your face.

## **E Environment**

- Check the contents of the room around you. Is there clutter? Is the bed made? Do you have stacks of papers? Make sure that the background is not too busy. Avoid things like bright tie dye curtains or paintings with loud colors and shapes. Keep the backdrop simple.
- Be aware of objects around you that may look like they're growing out of your head. That plant may be lovely but when the branch looks like it's growing out of your ear, not so.
- Slightly contrasting colors between what you're wearing and your background help. For example, with a beige background, don't wear beige. We don't want your body to disappear. (This isn't camouflage!) And don't go to the extreme- white background wear white or vice versa. Enough contrast to make a difference, not to overwhelm.

**X Excuse Me, How Do I Look?** Have you shaved today? Anything caught in your teeth? Are your clothes wrinkled? Make sure you look presentable for, say, church.

## **Other Tips**

- Look straight into the camera lens, or whatever device you are using to record. Find the lens!
- Smile a lot!
- Be engaging!
- Look up constantly if you are reading a script.
- If reading a script, try to fasten it as close to the eye-level of the recording device lens
- Get to the point early. No long introductions. Be prompt with the main message.
- Tell a story. Use this strategy: Me, We, You. Start with *my* story, then *our* story, then end with *you* to inspire action.
- Smile a lot!!!