



Rock Star Communication
Take It to the Next Level

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The Path to Presence

“What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself.”
Abraham Maslow

Three Ingredients of Nonverbal Intelligence:

- Aware
- Adaptable
- Authentic

What is presence?

At its most basic level, presence is your nonverbal persona.

To grow your Presence:

Autopilot



Awareness



Action

Four Components of Presence:

- Mind
- Body
- Space
- Others

MIND: Stories*

At your tables, discuss possible explanations for each of the following events:

Event One

Two colleagues are talking as I enter the room. As soon as I enter, they stop talking briefly. Both look at me, and then continue talking.

Explanation #1: _____

Explanation #2: _____

Explanation #3: _____

Event Two

In the middle of our meeting, the other person frowns, rubs his forehead, and looks down.

Explanation #1: _____

Explanation #2: _____

Explanation #3: _____

Event Three

My spouse says he/she will be home at 6:30. He/she actually arrives at 7:30.

Explanation #1: _____

Explanation #2: _____

Explanation #3: _____

*Exercise based on Chalmers Brothers' *Language and the Pursuit of Happiness*.

Breathing: The Vehicle for Presence

“For breath is life, and if you breathe well you will live long on earth.”
Sanskrit Proverb

Autonomic Nervous System: Sympathetic subsystem and Parasympathetic subsystem

Sympathetic = Fight or Flight

- Activated by shallow breathing, breath holding or hyperventilation.
- Releases stress hormones (cortisol, homocysteine and cortisol).
- Fight response increases blood flow/oxygen to arms.
- Flight response increases blood flow/oxygen to the legs.
- Routes oxygen to the limbic system (instinctual, “reptile” part of the brain) and bypasses the prefrontal cortex (logical, rational, creative part of the brain).
- Communicates we are in survival mode.
- Others feel agitated or threatened in our presence.

Parasympathetic = Rest and Digest (Calmness)

- Activated by deep breathing.
- Releases “feel good” hormones (prolactin and oxytocin).
- Relaxes muscles.
- Increases oxygen to the prefrontal cortex (logical, rational, creative part of the brain).
- Communicates calm, confidence.
- Others feel safe in our presence.

Most of us breathe poorly:

- We only use 30% of our lung capacity.
- We do not use our diaphragms at all.
- We breathe too quickly and shallowly (15-20 breaths per minute instead of 10).

Authenticity shows people WHO we are. Breathing shows people HOW we are:

Breathing:

- ...gets oxygen to our brain so we can think clearly.
- ...gets communicated.
- ...is contagious.

Constructive Rest

During Constructive Rest, your body is resting but your mind is active and working. The best position for Constructive Rest is lying on the floor with knees bent.

Close your eyes and build awareness in these areas:

- 1) Senses
 - Listen.
 - Feel your clothing on your body, the floor beneath you, the temperature in the room, etc.
 - Notice small movements in your body.
- 2) Muscles
 - Consciously relax your muscles.
- 3) Breathing
 - Listen to your breathing.
 - Notice how it affects movement in your body.
 - Work toward slow, deep, even breaths.
- 4) Space
 - Notice how much space you take up.
 - Become aware of the room you are in.
 - Expand your awareness beyond the room, including above and below you.

Once you have finished Constructive Rest, don't try to "hang on" to thoughts or feelings you experienced. They are in your mind, even if you are not conscious of them.

Body: Body Language & Voice Pattern

“The body says what words cannot.”

Martha Graham

Body Language

- Authoritative Body Language
 - Weight is evenly distributed when standing or sitting.
 - Toes point forward.
 - Head is still and straight.
 - Palms face down when gesturing.
 - *Communicates expertise.*
 - *Use when SENDING information.*
- Approachable Body Language
 - Weight is unevenly distributed when standing or sitting.
 - Toes don't point forward.
 - Head bobs, stretches forward or tilts to the side.
 - Palms face up when gesturing.
 - *Communicates openness.*
 - *Use when SEEKING information.*

Voice Pattern

- Authoritative Voice Pattern
 - Voice is flat and curls down at the ends of statements.
 - “Bond. James Bond.”
 - *Use when SENDING information.*
- Approachable Voice Pattern
 - Voice modulates up and down and curls up at the ends of statements.
 - Mr. Rogers: “Won't you be my neighbor?”
 - *Use when SEEKING information.*

Voice Patterns and Breathing

- **Approachable + high** breathing = whiney, victim
- **Authoritative + high** breathing = angry, impatient
- **Approachable + low** breathing = friendly, open
- **Authoritative + low** breathing = definitive, fair, consistent

Exercise: I'm Doing What!?!?

As you watch your partner does the following and check what applies:

1. STANCE

My partner:

- stands with weight evenly distributed over both feet.
- stands with weight un-evenly distributed over both feet.
- wobbles back and forth.
- is doing some sort of disco move that's oddly intriguing.

2. GESTURES

My partner:

- gestures with palms down.
- gestures with palms up.
- gestures with palms facing each other.
- doesn't gesture.
- has jazz hands.

3. HEAD

My partner:

- bobs or tilts his/her head while talking.
- holds his/her head still while talking.
- appears to be doing the robot.

4. VOICE

My partner:

- speaks with a rhythmic voice.
- speaks with a flat voice.
- speaks with a breathy voice. (creepy)
- has a weird voice. (Wow, you're mean.)

5. SPACE FILLERS

My partner's preferred space filler is:

- "um/uh"
- "OK"
- "you know"
- "so"
- "hoochie mama"
- other: _____

Space: Claiming

“We live in very unnatural surroundings. We live in square rooms, in cities with traffic... When we become unnatural in our life patterns, we become unnatural in our breath patterns.”
-Chungliang Al Huang

Claiming Space—Why?

- We can only have Presence in the space we claim.
- We can only connect with others in the space we claim.
- We can only communicate confidence by claiming space.

Claiming Space—How?

- Mind
 - Become aware of the space you want to claim.
 - Feel your presence filling that space.
- Body
 - Ground yourself.
 - Plant feet if standing.
 - Set both feet on the floor if seated.
 - Use gestures.
 - The bigger the group, the bigger the gesture.
 - Pause and breathe.
 - The bigger the group, the bigger the pause.

Gesturing and Pause

- Pausing allows us to breathe.
- Pausing allows the audience to breathe.
- To get and maintain attention, gesture while speaking.
- Freeze the hands when pausing. Only move once you begin speaking again.
- Close your lips during the pause.
 - Avoid parting your lips before speaking and gesturing.
 - Time speaking and gesturing to begin at the same time.

OTHERS: Adaptability

Issue or Relationship?

When you see authoritative body language and voice pattern:

- Go to the issue
- Use authoritative nonverbals

When you see approachable body language and voice pattern:

- Tend to the relationship
- Use approachable nonverbals

This communicates that not only have you heard (nonverbally) how your listener would prefer to communicate, but that you also speak the same language.

Suggestions for Practice

MIND:

Morning Pages

(Taken from Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*.)

Each morning, after waking, write three, 8 ½ x 11 pages, longhand, of whatever is on your mind. *Do not stop until you reach the end of the third page.* This isn't "journaling" in the sense that you are reflecting and then writing. It's brain drain. Whatever is in your head, get it on the page.

Breathing Practice

After doing your morning pages, sit (or lie down) and focus on the breath. Doing this each and every day will help you get more present and in turn, help you grow your PRESENCE.

BODY:

Videotape Yourself

Take every opportunity to increase your awareness of your nonverbal communication. The best way to do this is to videotape yourself. We are often unaware of how we communicate nonverbally because we can't see ourselves.

SPACE:

Claim Space in Everyday Life

Practice claiming space while waiting in line for coffee, in a meeting, or while driving into work. Bring the space above, below, behind and in front of you into your awareness. Breathe into the space. Feel your presence expand.

OTHERS:

Become an Observer

Start listening to voice patterns of those around you. Does the voice curl up or curl down? Does the person speak with a rhythmic voice pattern or is it more flat? Watch body language too: does the person stand with weight even or lean to one side? Cock the head or hold it straight? Watching others will help you learn how to respond to their needs.

Notes

Recommended Reading

A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose by Eckhart Tolle.

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life by Rosamund Stone & Benjamin Zander.

The Gifts of Imperfection by Brené Brown

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World by Mark Williams

The Right Questions: Ten Essential Questions to Guide You to an Extraordinary Life by Debbie Ford

Take Time for Your Life by Cheryl Richardson

The Right to Write by Julia Cameron

The Willpower Instinct by Kelly McGonical, Ph.D.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change by Stephen R. Covey



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