Presence and Presentation Skills

Understanding Presence

“There is no truth there is only perception” – Gustave Flaubert

We are all aware when someone has a powerful Presence. We all have a Presence but it doesn’t always work effectively for us. We want to create a positive impact on the people around us. We want to be noticed and we want others to listen to us. To do this we need to understand how we individually acquired the Presence we have and how it is perceived.

Your presence is made up of 4 components – physical, vocal, intellectual and emotional. Your thoughts and feelings are reflected by your voice and body. The clarity and power of your key messages depends largely on how well your voice and body operate.

This in turn is affected by how entitled you feel to be heard, listened to, take up space, etc.

EPI: Entitlement -> Presence -> Impact

You have to acknowledge and accept your sense of entitlement (lack of entitlement or over entitlement) and how it manifests in your voice and body. You need to be aware of when your sense of entitlement is affecting you negatively. When you have this awareness you can then learn techniques to work around it.

Think of presence as POW.
Your Presence can be pushed, it can be open, or it can be withheld.
You want to have Open Presence.

Open Presence

You may have heard the phrase – ‘be present’. When you are present it means you are right there with the person/people you are talking to; listening, sharing, commenting, accepting. When you are really present it means every part of you is congruent, working in harmony in that moment - physically, vocally, emotionally and intellectually.

When you are really present, your personal Presence is as open as your body and voice allow it to be.

Open Presence allows you to be in control and very powerful. You can build strength under it to give you authority or you can soften it to nurture. As long as it remains open and not pushed or withdrawn you are in control.
In Open Presence there is give and take. You give of your voice, your energy, your body, your thoughts, your emotions and the listener will give back in kind. (In an ideal world)

There are many ways to help you be present and have an open presence.

★ Think ‘I see you’ when you meet someone.
★ Be physically aligned, and grounded.
★ Breathe – deeply and well.
★ Keep your body language open.
★ Listen.
★ Focus your attention.
★ Release your voice and allow it to resonate.
★ Stay centred
Personal Presence

Physical Presence – be noticed

Vocal presence – be heard

Intellectual Presence – focus, listen, and be clear.

I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.”

Indira Gandhi

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**Structure and Deliver with Clarity**

**Know Who, Why and What.**

- Who are your audience?
- Why you, why them, why now?
- What do you want, what do they want, what do they need?

**Structure**

Lead your audience through logically, step by step. The audience must be able to understand and follow at all times.

- Know your outcomes and objectives.
- Make sure your original premise is strong and defendable.
- Know what you want your audience to: Learn, Feel, Do.

**Create a Frame**

Put your argument or ideas into a context that is useful to your desired outcomes and that will appeal to your listeners.

**Pods**

- Organise your ideas into pods.
- Each pod contains the idea, a few points and a story, case history or image to illuminate the idea or one of the points.
- Put your pods in an order so that each pod moves logically into the next one.
- Develop transitions between the pods so that the presentation or argument flows.

**Moving the Audience to Action**

When presenting many people just ‘inform’ or ‘tell’ or ‘ask’. These words do not encourage much emotional connection. If the audience is not responsive many of us get caught up in ‘convincing’ the audience of the value of their information. This can have a negative response.

If you want to influence your audience to take action you need to inspire, motivate and empower.

**‘Best thing’ and ‘Ready for’**

This may seem simplistic but it keeps the development of performing skills moving forward in a positive process oriented way.

After a presentation or key meeting, ask yourself;

“What was the best thing about that?”

and then - “What am I ready for next time?”

There is always a ‘best thing’. Sometimes just getting through it is the ‘best thing’.

“What I hear I forget
What I see I remember
What I do I know”

Chinese Proverb.

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