



# The Power of Presence

## Unlock Your Potential to Influence and Engage Others

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Hands-down, executive presence is the corporate “it” factor. It’s directly linked to your ability to get noticed, forge trusting relationships and get others on board with your vision.

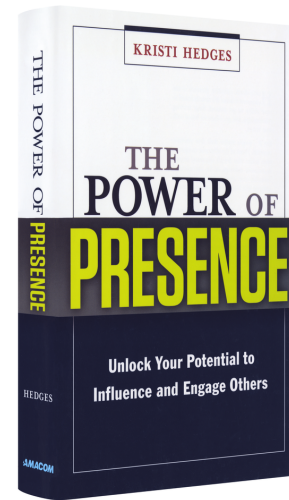
But few people realize their true presence potential. Think of the otherwise competent team leader who doesn’t command respect in executive meetings, or the overextended boss who never seems to know what’s really going on with his employees or how to motivate them.

The good news is that limitations such as these are not set in stone. In fact, they’re completely surmountable with the strategies and exercises in *The Power of Presence*, a highly readable and deeply insightful book that cuts to the heart of presence — what it is exactly and how to get more of it.

*The Power of Presence* shows everyone how to improve their presence. Author Kristi Hedges has witnessed even the highest-level people struggle to connect and communicate, often tangled by nerves and confused about how others perceive them. Her experiences have helped her develop the unique I-Presence™ model, which is equal parts communication aptitude, mental attitude and authentic style.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to use the I-Presence model to be clear and confident in any situation.
- Ways to forge strong relationships and build trust with others.
- How to inspire and motivate others to create solid followers.



by Kristi Hedges

### CONTENTS

#### Part I: Intentional: Understanding and Managing Your Presence of Mind

Page 2

#### Your Actions Are Speaking So Loudly I Can Hardly Hear What You’re Saying

Page 3

#### Part II: Individual: Forging Strong Relationships

Page 4

#### Part III: Inspirational: Communicating to Build and Motivate Followership

Page 5

#### Bringing It All Together: Presence in a Pinch

Page 8

# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

by Kristi Hedges

**The author:** Kristi Hedges is a communications expert, entrepreneur and certified leadership coach whose clients include Fortune 500 corporations, global professional services firms, entrepreneurial businesses, national associations and the U.S. government. She's a leadership contributor to Forbes.com and Entrepreneur.com and a speaker for Vistage International and The Founder Institute. She lives in the Washington, D.C. area.

*The Power of Presence: Unlock Your Potential to Influence and Engage Others* by Kristi Hedges. Copyright © 2012 by Kristi Hedges. Summarized by permission of the publisher, AMACOM, a division of American Management Association, Intl. 225 pages, \$22.00, ISBN-13: 978-0-8144-1773-7. To purchase this book, go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com). Summary copyright © 2016 Soundview, Inc. [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com), 1-800-SUMMARY.

## Introduction

What is it about some people who can get others to follow with ease? What qualities do they possess that engender trust? How can presence be learned if one's own skills aren't enough? The I-Presence model is the secret sauce of executive presence. It is equal parts communication aptitude, mental attitude and authentic style. It combines a supportive inner mindset with the outer skills needed to create the natural, confident, consistent leadership presence we all seek. It consists of three pillars. I-Presence is at once intentional, individual and inspirational.

**Intentional.** Your beliefs shape every aspect of your presence, from body language to the actions you choose to undertake. Therefore, it is critical to get your head around what type of presence you want to demonstrate, the values you want to convey and how that matches up (or doesn't) with how others currently perceive you.

**Individual.** We connect with individuals, not with the hierarchical concept of a leader or manager. Whether with employees, customers, investors or the marketplace at large, these connections drive business, loyalty and career success. And counter to what you may believe, building these connections doesn't involve having all the right answers or working harder than everyone else.

**Inspirational.** What tools are in your toolkit when you want to inspire others? What's the best way to address a group and get people excited? What do powerful communicators do that's different?

You need to focus on and leverage your greatest potential as a leader — your own presence. ●

## PART I: INTENTIONAL: UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING YOUR PRESENCE OF MIND

### What Are You Thinking?

The first pillar of the I-Presence model is being intentional. Having an intentional presence is defined as understanding how you want to be perceived and subsequently communicating in a manner so that you will be perceived in the way you want. It means aligning your thoughts with your words and actions. And it requires a keen understanding of your true, authentic self as well as your impact on others.

There are different kinds of intentions. Some are broad and relatively stable, such as when you declare, "I want to be a visionary leader." Others are situational, such as, "In this strategy session, I must be the catalyst for change." Taking the time to have the discussion with yourself about what you want to accomplish with your presence may seem more like pop psychology/self-help than hard core executive training, but guess again. Taking the time to figure out what you want your presence to convey is a critical and powerful first step. That is the image of yourself you want to keep in mind — it's your mental aim.

As you develop your mental aim, you also need to determine what conversation is currently in your head and how it may need to change. Even when you aren't paying attention, your internal conversation is always happening. Do any of these negative thoughts sound familiar?

- I can't speak in public.
- I'm not a people person.



1-800-SUMMARY  
service@summary.com

1-800-SUMMARY (240-912-7513 outside the United States), or order online at [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com). Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 511 School House Road., Suite 300, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at \$99 per year. Copyright © 2016 by Soundview, Inc. **Available formats:** Summaries are available in several digital formats. To subscribe, call us at

1-800-SUMMARY (240-912-7513 outside the United States), or order online at [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com). Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Andrew Clancy, Executive Editor; Ashleigh Imus, Senior Editor; Kylie O'Connor Graphic Designer; Andy Ghillier, Contributing Editor

## SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

---

- I'll appear self-promoting.
- I'm an introvert and can't network well.
- I'm just not good in these situations.
- I don't have what it takes to play the office-politics game.

If this is where you are placing your mental focus, you can bet it's showing up in your presence, and maybe even screaming. The intentions that we hold in our head, either positive or negative, create mental shortcuts that become a veritable path of least resistance. The more we think something, the easier it is for our mind to process it. That's why it's critical to be fully aware of any negative thoughts blocking your progress. Knowing what our limiting thoughts are, and replacing them intentionally, is the only way to create a different possibility. Eventually, the possibility becomes the new and improved shortcut. ●

---

### Your Actions Are Speaking So Loudly I Can Hardly Hear What You're Saying

Our actions prove (or disprove) what we say about ourselves. They are signals for receivers to decode so they can learn what we're all about. Actions can either underline or undermine our executive presence. If you want to be seen as trusted and credible, then your actions must be in alignment with your intentions, both stated and unstated. It's the only way to be received with clarity.

In terms of how people perceive and interpret you, two types of action are of equal importance:

- Micro-Actions (your body language, facial expressions and tone of voice).
- Macro-Actions (how you spend your time, what you do and your consistency).

Body language is most often promoted as the key to effective communication in our personal and professional lives, but paying too much attention to how you stand, talk, gesture or present can erode authenticity — and for many people, confidence as well. Because body language is a vehicle to get your message across, it should be in alignment with your message while feeling natural to you. Focusing on the use of tricks to convey something you aren't feeling distracts you and undermines your intentional presence.

Your macro-actions include where you show up or don't, what you produce or deliver, how consistent you are and whether you keep your promises. All eyes go to our actions because they are the backbone of presence.

We trust actions more than anything — they speak louder than words, after all. But what happens is that real life steps in, and we get busy. And that leads to a lot of unintentional actions. We take shortcuts. We put out fires. We let things slide and hope that no one will notice. Or we try to do everything and spread ourselves way too thin.

Managing your presence means committing to managing your actions as carefully as your words. For most people, it means you have to make choices about the actions you want to emphasize. The best place to start is by choosing the actions that make up your core values or, in other words, your personal-presence brand. Actions are the communications we trust most. Your work on presence won't get off the ground unless you begin to notice, and then to understand, and then finally to change your micro- and macro-actions. ●

---

### Stopping the Negativity Loop

Nearly everyone struggles with nervousness, anxiety and insecurity in high-pressure situations where we care deeply about the outcome. It happens to even the most successful and dynamic communicators. Negative thoughts can build momentum into a downward spiral that drags your thoughts, feelings and actions down with it, with each thought reinforcing another until you have a full-blown negativity loop.

Negativity loops destroy intention. They are akin to a heavyweight pro fighting a lightweight amateur. You can win only if you take away the big guy's strength. You do that by disputing the negativity and turning it into optimism. Recognize those stressed-out thoughts for what they are: catastrophizing with little or no root in reality. ●

---

### Presence as Perception

Presence is part communicating in alignment with your intention and part being received with clarity. You can't figure out how you are doing with the latter without some form of feedback, formal or otherwise. Finding out the effect you have on others gives you a helpful framework for focusing on your own presence.

Getting feedback is necessary. Pursue it, digest it and internalize it. Most important, keep in your mind the entire time that there's no right way to have a strong presence. One size does not fit all. Much of how we experience others is filtered through our own experiences and completely biased. One person may gravitate toward the strong way you open a meeting, while you will seem overly brash to someone else because

## SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

you remind him of a dictatorial co-worker. You are viewed through others' subjectivity.

Conducting a presence audit can be a simple but remarkably valuable process that only involves four steps:

**1. Pick the Right People.** Select five people you know and trust to be part of your feedback circle. Choose people who are accustomed to seeing you in the kinds of situations where you are looking for feedback. While it's important that you trust the people and find them credible, make sure you don't just choose people that you like. Steer clear of those who will avoid conflict or tend to soft-pedal.

**2. Ask for Participation.** Without question, this is the hardest part, so you have to frame your request correctly. You want the people in your feedback circle to know that you are sincere, that you won't hold a grudge and that you are seeking feedback for your own personal development. Explain that it's not about what any one person says but what themes emerge from the group. This can help ease the burden for the people participating and allow them to speak more freely.

**3. Ask Two Simple Yet Powerful Questions.**

- a. What's the general perception of me?
- b. What could I do differently that would have the greatest impact on my success?

**4. Manage Your Own Reaction.** You'll get information that's as good as your ability to receive it. People will be looking to see what effect their feedback has on you in real time. Even though you are the one soliciting the feedback, every cell in your body will want to explain and defend yourself. Pay attention to your own presence during this feedback process, and really listen. Don't interrupt. Don't offer explanations or make excuses. If you ask questions, they should be only to clarify. Then smile and express sincere gratitude for the gift you've just been given.

In cultivating executive presence, intention is your aim. It creates the basis from which everything else follows. By practicing intentionality, your presence will benefit immensely, even if you do nothing else. But if you want to build the kind of compelling presence that draws others to you, then you need not just intention but connection. ●

### PART II: INDIVIDUAL: FORGING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

## Go Ahead, Trip Over Your Own Perfectionism

The second part of I-Presence is about individual connections — how we bring people closer to us, invite

them in and build trust. If intention is your aim, then individual connections are your target. In the workplace, strong connections make us more productive employees, better co-workers and motivating leaders. For leaders, and in particular those new to leadership positions, it's a frustrating experience to learn that your title only gets you obedience (if you're lucky). Winning over hearts and minds requires a nuanced approach of making yourself someone others want to trust and follow.

Whether you are a leader or not, without connection you will lack presence. You may have the perfect oratory skills, deliver impeccable work and have the focus of a laser, but if you aren't someone that others relate to on a human level, you will at best be admired but never fully trusted.

### Balancing Competency and Vulnerability

Too much competency can be intimidating. Too much vulnerability can be read as weakness and ineffectiveness. But when we show our power alongside our humanity, others will connect to us. It's the combination that creates great presence. Consider what qualities make for a great boss or colleague. The answers are always the same: Most of what makes a leader or colleague memorable to us is the connection piece. "All business" is never how we describe the people who have meant the most to us. The competency piece is simply the price of admission. You felt a connection, and chances are you worked harder for them.

### You're the Only One Who Believes You Can Be Perfect Anyway

Hand in hand with the "all business" persona is the perfectionist. Perfectionism may get you admiration or even flat-out respect. But it will never get you the connection that renders it possible for someone to come into your office and tell you something you really need to know, despite the fact that it's difficult to say.

The funny thing about perfectionism is that while we may endeavor to embrace it in ourselves, no one else buys it. They can see right through it. They know when your confidence is actually just boasting, or how that catch in your throat reveals insecurity, or how your ever-present right answers don't always turn out so right in the end. Perfectionism creates the opposite of connection. One person's perfectionism causes guardedness in others. It sabotages openness, which is precisely the quality that gives us tremendous comfort in our leaders and colleagues. ●

## SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

### Trust: The Ultimate Gatekeeper

Trust is foundational to presence. You need other people to feel comfortable enough about your motives and credibility to invest in you as a person. The more trust, the larger the investment. And if you are deemed untrustworthy, you'll have the opposite of investment — distance, suspicion and even sabotage.

Trust is complicated because it's partly fact-based and partly emotional. We also have different trust standards for the workplace than we do in our personal lives. We tolerate more gray area around trust at work because we don't always expect as much from people in the workplace. It's assumed that leaders may act in their own self-interest or that ambitious colleagues will use others to get ahead. And getting a handle on our own general trustworthiness is tougher still.

Coming from a place of trust is a conscious decision. In every interaction, we can choose who we want to be and whether we will lead through our values or tuck them away in our back pockets. In the toughest of situations we can be distracted into thinking that a Right Way prevails over our way because that's what worked for someone else, or because we're unsure of ourselves or perhaps because well-meaning advisors recommended it. But if you know what you value, you can usually find a path to effectiveness that supports whom you want to be. ●

### A Note to Emailphiles, CrackBerry Addicts and TurboTexters

Presence is a full-contact sport. With each layer of information, we understand more of the other person. Writing gives us baseline information, verbal intonation a layer more and finally body language provides a giant leap in understanding. Nuanced messages are communicated far more effectively in person.

#### Management by Email

Managers know that they need to be in front of their teams to deliver their vision, rally the troops and tackle uncertainty — in other words, the big stuff. But emails and texts tend to be a convenient default in the day-to-day realm of getting work done. Most managers will say that they use email in the interest of saving time. It's easier to delegate projects through email than by catching people on the phone or in their office between meetings. But when assigning work, the most important aspect is to be clear about your expectations. This generally requires a

give-and-take about content, resources and deadlines. If that process is absent, you are likely to run into a lot of time-consuming inefficiencies.

Any communication that could be interpreted as bad news should never be sent via email. First of all, for the recipient, getting a negative email feels rotten. You're missing valuable context. You can't ask questions or present your side. It shreds your productivity. When you get such an email, you don't read it and get back to work. You stew on it. Send it to your spouse. Update your resume. In the absence of important cues from the sender that would make the communications productive, there's usually nothing to act on. If the manager's goal is to correct behavior or direct attention to a problem, a negative email accomplishes very little of that.

Employees frequently complain about the volume of emails from their managers. It's not that they don't expect emails. It's simply that they want to get some work done in between reading so many emails. Check your sent box and see if you're emailing the same people more than three times per day. If you are, then you may be managing by email. Try to consolidate your correspondence so that your team feels less barraged. Or try an old trick: Just get up and walk down the hall.

#### 24/7 Emails

Constant emailing is mainly an issue for the manager to address. If you want your team to be burned out and resentful, 24/7 emails are the way to go. Otherwise, give people the courtesy of having a life. And if you are on the receiving end, holding off on your response until the normal workday (assuming it's not truly urgent) or waiting 24 hours on the weekend is perfectly acceptable and gently establishes boundaries.

The final pillar of I-Presence is about being inspirational — using our presence to influence others. It's the quality most people generally associate with executive presence. ●

## PART III: INSPIRATIONAL: COMMUNICATING TO BUILD AND MOTIVATE FOLLOWERSHIP

### Inspiring Change From the Brain Down

Being inspirational means that you are a change agent. As corporate hierarchies have flattened and the demand for creative, conceptual work has risen, old models of

## SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

---

communication no longer work so well. You cannot say, “Do this because I’m your boss and I say so” and expect other people to automatically act or think differently. We need our teams and co-workers to take our ideas, internalize solutions and personally buy into them. We want to invite them into our way of thinking, not grab them by the neck to get there. When you inspire others, you are altering their thoughts, perspectives or actions. They are different as a result of your exchange.

### Change Starts with You

When it comes to inspiring change, there are two audiences you need to consider: yourself and everyone else. First think about how to change yourself. This first step of embracing and managing change in yourself is critical and, at times, the hardest to undertake. Second, consider how your ideas create change in others. What makes people either readily accept or flat-out reject your message?

There are universal human responses to change. Understanding them enables you to frame your own communications to be heard with optimal clarity. Here’s the easy part: Turns out that what makes it difficult for you to change is the same thing that makes it difficult for your audience to change. No one is trying to be intractable. You can blame it on the brain.

### Your Brain Prefers Life in a Worn, Comfortable Recliner

The brain strives for efficiency. Therefore, reinforcing our current mental maps, which are essentially our thoughts and perceptions, feels good to us. When we see information that confirms our existing perceptions, the grooves between point A and point B on our maps become better established. Energy is saved. When we see data that disproves our existing perceptions, our thoughts spend more time in our prefrontal cortex as we compare and contrast against existing mental maps. Loads more energy gets used.

Our brain is built to resist change because doing so enhances efficiency and saves energy. We are optimized to seek out information that confirms what we already believe to be true, and to avoid information that goes against our existing belief system. This is critical information to have about yourself as you encounter new ideas.

### Five Steps to Optimize Your Brain for Change

So where does that leave someone who wants to turn insights into action? We know that creating a new mental map is key, but to sustain a new mental map

— to wear the newly established grooves down so that they become a default path — we have to keep the focus on what we are trying to accomplish with frequency, intensity and deliberation:

**1. Make Room for Reflection Time.** Being reflective involves taking a cerebral step back. It’s not about forcing our full mental heft on the problem at hand. It’s about creating space to allow thoughts to come to us (and old mental maps to be dug out of our gray matter).

**2. Focus on Solutions, Not Problems.** Attention shapes our mental maps. By pivoting our attention we can begin to develop new modes of thinking and doing. When we are trying to create change, we have a far better chance of succeeding if we make a concerted effort to focus on solutions. (Of course we need to understand the basics of the problem, so we don’t repeat it, but beyond that, the future is in the solution.)

**3. Strike While the Aha! Moments Are Hot.** It feels great when we get that release of adrenaline from newly formed connections. We are primed to take action in that moment, but the clock is ticking on our excitement. You’ll have far greater success with change if you can capture that moment and act quickly, or at least create a path to action. The easiest action to take is to write down your ideas. Sketch out your thoughts in the moment, so you can recall them when the adrenaline rush is over and your brain is flooded with other thoughts.

**4. Just Do It (At Least in a Small Way).** Change is a process. If our brains sense some degree of certainty, then we are more likely to be open to change and allow it to happen. Incremental change allows us to gain some confidence and perspective and then try the next goal. It’s much more comfortable for people to envision a tangible, discrete step than to jump to a faraway place they’ve never seen before.

**5. Find Your Flow.** In his seminal work that created an eponymous business term, *Flow*, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi laid out his research findings on what creates intrinsic joy in our work and in our lives. Flow happens in those moments when we feel “in the zone,” when we are immersed in an activity, lose track of time and bring our full skills to bear. ●

---

## From Vision to Visionary

Vision is one of those barely tangible characteristics of executive presence that has great resonance. While we spot it immediately when it’s there — often by calling someone strategic or forward-looking — we are not sure what’s missing when it’s absent.

# SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

---

As an employee, you know which leaders have vision. They run the teams everyone wants to work on. They are the CEOs people drop everything to follow. They create a reality that we clamor to be a part of. They personalize our work effort. Alternatively, visionless leaders are in danger of cultivating teams with a feeling of purposelessness, of being disconnected from the whole. Typically, people on such teams are biding time until something better comes along.

In the workplace, a vision helps the leader and everyone else figure out what's important. A vision provides context amidst chaos. We need data plus context to make decisions that are useful, relevant and aligned with the organization's overall goals. Becoming the messenger or carrier of that vision, as the visionary, requires that you be aspirational (endorsing and encouraging potential) and personal while also articulating a vision that is shared and active (woven into the nuances of everyone's working life). ●

---

## Declarations Create Possibilities

Your presence is conveyed by the way you communicate in total. Part of that is through the words you choose. In essence, inspiring through language is about painting a picture of what the future could be. It includes the use of declarations, just as Steve Jobs demonstrated when he first took the stage at Macworld in 2007 and declared, "We're going to make history together today." Inspirational language steps us into a bigger game. After all, it's tough to inspire by playing small.

Declarations create and clarify vision for others and ourselves. They help to define that all-important sense of purpose around our work. They offer a promise of something more, of greatness. They are made individually and shared. They inspire followership. Declarations are compelling, ambitious, strong, direct and enticingly risky. They show confidence in oneself and in the power of the collective. They force us to push ourselves and play on a bigger stage. They provide a rallying point that brings a group together. ●

---

## Strategic Shock Value and Other Ways to Create Shining Moments

While many leaders bristle at being in the spotlight, people expect it. It's not about personal ego but about accepting the role and learning to play on a bigger stage. Part of being inspiring is simply being interesting. Having a point of view on a wide range of industry

issues, telling relatable stories and making bold statements allow you to use the leadership stage to bring more attention to your company.

### There's Bad Interesting and Good Interesting

It's hard to define exactly what makes a person inspiring or interesting. To a certain degree, good interesting is in the eye of the beholder. There's no magic to it. It's about authentic presence: being intentional, presenting our real selves, sharing stories, exposing vulnerability or showing empathy. Being good interesting means staying in alignment with our executive presence intention and bringing our full selves to our communications. It's about accepting the spotlight and using it to a greater and positive advantage.

On the flip side, as hard as good interesting is to define, it's remarkably easy to identify bad interesting: being outrageous for attention, misrepresenting yourself, taking the credit from deserving peers, grandstanding for personal gain or always having to have the last and loudest word.

### Shining Moments in the Daily Grind

To bring the concept of the good interesting down to the practical level, look for opportunities to pivot the daily grind into opportunities to shine:

**Networking Events.** Turn your purpose around. Instead of asking someone for something, focus on those who may benefit from your advice or your experience. When you bring down your self-orientation, you not only boost trust, but you also set yourself apart from the majority of the people attending the event.

**Internal Meetings.** Most often reviled as a colossal waste of productive time, these meetings present an opportunity for you to convey your presence by acknowledging the elephant in the room and committing to minimizing the waste of everyone's time and establishing ground rules to make the meeting fun, creative and productive.

**Speaking Engagements.** Whether you dread them or tolerate them as a necessary evil, speaking engagements are typically thrown together at the very last minute with the intention of being professional but by no means controversial. Pivoting this perspective presents these engagements as shining moments — opportunities to inform, inspire and entertain.

**Press Interviews.** Restrictive corporate communications policies typically limit the frequency of such interviews, but when they do happen, the standard operating procedure is to stick to the key points and tow the company line. But reporters are people too, and being appreciative of their objectives and endeavoring to be as

# SUMMARY: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

engaging as possible will separate you from the herd and earn you more opportunities to build your presence in future interviews.

**Sales and Client Meetings.** Most of the time, these meetings are content driven and focused on getting the audience to like/respect/pay us. Demonstrating credibility is paramount. PowerPoint is the weapon of choice. The audience probably has their guard up in anticipation of being sold or over-promised. Turning this into a shining moment by focusing on building trust above all else increases your presence, your likeability and your credibility. You'll also come across as refreshingly different, interesting and memorable. ●

## Bringing It All Together: Presence in a Pinch

The three "Is" of the I-Presence Model — intentional, individual and inspirational — follow a specific path from inward to outward. That's exactly how presence works. It starts with you, builds through your connection to others, and ultimately catalyzes through your communications. Each piece is important on its own, and it is the combination that catapults leaders to a new level.

Since being intentional implies thorough preparation before a big meeting, presentation or important conversation, here is a distillation of the core principles of the I-Presence Model that form a Prep Guide:

**Prepare with Intention.** Whether you have 30 minutes or 30 days to prepare, always start with intention. Everything flows from it. You may think this is the easiest part to skip when you are pressed for time. But it's actually the most critical.

**Align Your Physicality to Your Intention.** Hopefully you've rehearsed and have a strong sense of how you want to appear when you take the stage (literally or otherwise). Remember the three-part body check: face, gestures and posture.

**Find the Connection Points.** Connection is about finding the humanity in others. If you want to strengthen your presence, consider how to foster trust and empathy. For many of us, this requires attention and deliberation.

**Use Language to Inspire.** Setting a compelling vision through language is a key part of managing change. Even the best vision is meaningless if it can't be communicated and received clearly.

Remember, as you head into that all-important meeting, you already have every ounce of presence you need in

various parts of your life. All you are doing is integrating them to present your best self — your strongest presence — more purposefully and frequently. Don't try to be perfect. It's not about using every best practice you've ever learned or reshaping your personality. Set an intention, go with what's authentic for you and wow them. ●

## Afterword

While presence itself is open to interpretation, here are a few pieces of advice that will help you on your path to strengthening it.

Pay attention. The simple act of noticing your own behavior and that of others, in a deeper way, will create an ongoing focal point on presence. When someone inspires you (or fails to), take a moment to understand why.

Maintain a sense of humor. Learn from your mistakes, and learn to laugh at them, too. Remember, things are rarely as bad (or as good) as you think they are.

Be brave. It's hard to extend yourself by trying new behaviors, especially when failure can mean public embarrassment. Summon the courage to be uncomfortable. You won't get anywhere by playing it safe. Put yourself out there.

Go easy on yourself. No one is perfect, and yes, that includes you. You'll notice 90 percent more of your mess-ups than anyone else will. Smile, and keep going.

Don't get hung up on doing the right anything. What works for one person can bomb for someone else. Presence is your personal essence; it's a unique composite of behaviors. You'll encounter many people who will tell you that you must do it their way. Keep an open mind. But if it feels foreign to you after trying it a few times, skip it.

When all else fails, walk tall, keep your head up and look people in the eye. ●

### MORE SV CONTENT ON LEADERSHIP

*Access these and more in your Soundview Online Library:*

**Summary: Executive Presence by Harrison Monarth.** Harrison Monarth provides the techniques to help you leverage the power of perception in your favor.

**Webinar: 50 Ways to Enhance Your Presence and Impact at Work by Simon Tyler.** Simon Tyler argues that without wisdom, purpose and authentic intention, your impact is empty. You need a sense of what motivates and inspires you. Through your passion and belief in your purpose, people will want to follow your ideas.