

It is important to differentiate between organizational hierarchy and personal presence. Your personal presence is independent of your position within the organization. You can learn and practice skills and behaviors to feel and seem more confident in all your interactions. For example, just taking a deep breath and holding your head steady can create an inner sense of calm and an outer presence of confidence.

Take a moment to evaluate your personal presence. Check those behaviors you demonstrate frequently. Acknowledge those high personal presence behaviors you demonstrate (your strengths). Good job—you're on the right track! Then take a moment to look at those high personal presence behaviors you did not check (your learning edges). How could you improve yourself in these areas?

## Signals of Low Personal Presence

- Have unsteady eye contact
- Speak in fragments and use many qualifiers
- Sound out of breath when speaking and do not pause
- Move head around a lot while speaking
- Speak while touching face
- Stand with toes turned in
- Move body in a stiff and constricted way and allow feet to wander
- Sound stressed with voice going up at the end of sentences
- Avoid or fill silences

“Our behavior—reinforced by our appearance—signals our importance or lack of importance.”

—Keith Johnstone

## Signals of High Personal Presence

- Maintain steady eye contact
- Use grammatically complete sentences and few qualifiers
- Take full, deep breaths when speaking and use pauses
- Move head very little while speaking
- Speak without touching face
- Stand with feet planted beneath hips
- Own the space and use deliberate gestures
- Sound warm and confident with voice going down at the end of sentences
- Use silences

# Worksheet: Enhancing Personal Presence

Think back to the last group event you attended (meeting, party, conference, convention, etc.). Review the lists above and think about what signals you probably gave out.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How you look at and evaluate other people is probably not unlike how others are evaluating you. They use the same signals to determine your status.

So think back to another event where you walked into a room full of people you didn't know. What assumptions did you make about other people's status? Why did you assume this? What were they signaling to you that caused you to make this assumption?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---