

## Opportunities to Practice

I am a big believer in the power of practice. It takes the same skills to present a TED talk as it does to have an engaging conversation with a stranger. People respond to someone who is confident, open, engaged and present. Notice how I didn't say perfect...there is simply no such thing. I adore seeing someone who is authentic and unique and utterly human, meaning they may fumble, but they are confident enough to gracefully handle the flub and keep going. These skills take practice so you need to exercise these muscles in real-life situations.

Do not, I repeat, do not, wait until your big moment to shine. The key to being prepared is to actively seek and take advantage of opportunities to practice in everyday, low-stakes situations. For example, you want to ask your boss for a raise? Create a low-stakes situation in which you want a desired outcome from a conversation that is parallel to asking for a reward for your great work. To practice, ask a co-worker for something you need or want. You can be genuine in your request. The key is creating the intention to practice and then noticing the skills and behaviors you used to be persuasive, confident and calm.

## Take Action:

- Set the intention to practice. Remember, the way you will see results is if you put these lessons into ACTION.
- Actively seek opportunities to connect. That may mean attending more networking events, chatting with more strangers every week or finding new people to connect with at work.
- Get out of your comfort zone. You grow when you expand. If you're feeling uncomfortable with the above activities, you are heading in the right direction. Good for you!