



Projecting a Confident Presence

A great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.

—John Maxwell

According to the landmark study by Professor Albert Mehrabian, someone's initial perception of another person's communication breaks down three ways:

Verbal (*what we say*) _____ %

Vocal (*how we sound*) _____ %

Visual (*how we appear*) _____ %

Posture

The way you hold your body is called your *posture*. As we discussed in earlier units, what your audience sees when you walk on-stage has a large impact on their overall impression of you as a speaker. Therefore, it is essential that you become aware of what your body language communicates to an audience. Does it enhance or detract from your message?

Maintaining proper posture will allow you to begin your speech or presentation from an open, neutral position. Proper posture can also help to reduce the possibility of injury and can actually make you stronger. By aligning your joints properly, muscles are able to activate and more easily perform their specific functions or movements.

When presenting or speaking, a speaker should begin from a relaxed, neutral and open position. We will call this your **Home Base Position**.

Posture reflects the attitude of life.

—Kyle Yamashiro



EXERCISE: Finding Your Home Base Position

To experience what a strong home base position feels like, follow these steps:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your weight evenly distributed.
2. Make sure your knees are unlocked.
3. Center and lock your pelvis to avoid shifting and swaying.
4. Let your arms, hands, and fingers relax by your sides.
5. Hold your chest open and elevated.
6. Keep your shoulders relaxed.
7. Keep your chin parallel to the ground.
8. Focus your eyes forward.

In what areas of your body do you tend to hold tension?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A sound mind in a sound body is a short but full description of a happy state in this world.

—John Locke

As a speaker, your body and your voice are your instruments, much the same way a cello is an instrument for the cellist. Employing a thorough and consistent warm-up is critical for a speaker to be able to deliver a successful speech or presentation. A proper warm-up will increase the supply of blood and oxygen to the muscles, increase coordination and release any unwanted muscle tension in the body.



EXERCISE: Warming up Your Instrument

Shortly before going in front of your audience, take five minutes to loosen and warm-up your body.

1. **Neck:** Let your head fall forward and stretch the neck muscles. Next, rotate your left ear to your left shoulder and your right ear to your right shoulder.
2. **Eyes:** Alternate from a squinting (little eyes) to wide-eyed (big eyes).
3. **Face:** Alternate between your biggest expression (surprise) to your smallest expression (sour) to engage the muscles of the face.
4. **Tongue:** Stretch your tongue to your nose, your chin, and your cheeks.
5. **Lips:** Blow air through your lips to make a motorboat sound.
6. **Jaw:** Mimic chewing a very large piece of bubble gum to stretch the jaw muscles.
7. **Shoulders:** Roll shoulders in a circular motion. Then reverse the direction. Shrug and release.
8. **Arms:** Extend your arms and rotate them in a circular motion. Reverse.
9. **Wrists:** Rotate your wrists in a circular motion. Reverse.
10. **Fingers:** As if your fingers are dripping with water, vigorously shake them dry.
11. **Back:** Mimic the motion of hugging a tree to stretch out the back muscles.
12. **Chest:** Mimic the motion of crushing an orange between your shoulder blades to stretch out your chest.
13. **Legs:** Shake out any tension in your legs. Follow with deep knee bends.
14. **Ankles:** Standing on one foot, rotate your opposite ankle in a circular motion. Repeat on the other foot.

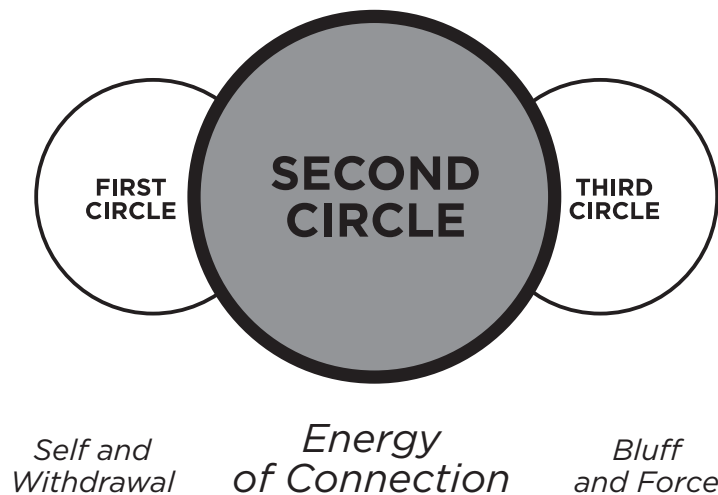


Presence allows experience.

—Patsy Rodenburg

The Three Circles of Energy

The way you communicate with others affects how people perceive you and how effectively you are able to convey your message. Acting teacher and voice coach Patsy Rodenburg divided human energy into three basic circles:



FIRST CIRCLE

FIRST CIRCLE: Self and Withdrawal (energy moving inwards)

The first circle of energy is generally self-focused, more about taking than giving. First circle energy closes you off in a bubble so you appear disengaged, the energy moving inward, making your message impossible to mutually engage in conversation and demonstrate positive presence.

First Circle Characteristics:

- Shallow breathing
- Limited or no movement
- Limited or absent gestures
- Ineffective eye contact
- Limited facial expressions
- Visible lack of energy/passion
- Tense body posture
- Monotone and low volume


**THIRD
CIRCLE**
THIRD CIRCLE: Bluff and Force (energy moving outwards)

The third circle of energy is generally more passionate or enthusiastic but isn't always effective. This energy is outward facing, simply blasted at an audience. Energy is moving outwards and you don't receive anything back. Unable to listen to others around you, the focus is on yourself.

Third Circle Characteristics:

- Gestures that are too broad
- Tense body posture
- Loud or unnecessary volume
- Shallow breathing
- Facial expressions that are too big
- Excess or nervous energy in body
- General, unspecific movement
- Ineffective eye contact

**SECOND
CIRCLE**
SECOND CIRCLE: Energy of Connection (energy moves in and out)

The second circle of energy is the ideal circle to utilize when communicating with others. You are present, alert, and available to others. Second circle energy is focused and passionate, effortless and efficient. You hear and are heard. You notice details about others and acknowledge their feelings.

Second Circle Characteristics:

- Facial expressions support intention
- Expansive and appropriate gestures
- Eye contact is consistent, not constant
- Breath is controlled and supports voice
- Movement is purposeful
- Voice is free of monotone
- Voice is clearly audible
- Body posture is tension-free



Which circle of energy is utilized when someone is described as the following?

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| • <i>Timid</i> | • <i>Obnoxious</i> | • <i>Insecure</i> |
| • <i>Impatient</i> | • <i>Open</i> | • <i>Friendly</i> |
| • <i>Committed</i> | • <i>Distant</i> | • <i>Arrogant</i> |



Presenting While Seated

While most formal presentations take place with a speaker standing, some meetings or presentations, because of space constraints or audience size, occur in less formal settings such as boardrooms, conference rooms, or offices.

Below are some tips to remember when presenting while seated:

1. **Keep your energy up.** When presenting while seated, it is easy to let all of your energy drain into your chair instead of focusing it outward toward the person you are addressing.
2. **Watch your posture.** Don't slump or sag in your chair. This may make you appear overly casual or too relaxed. Even when presenting while seated, it is important to utilize a strong Home Base Position. Keep your spine straight (but not stiff) to communicate that you are present and alert.
3. **Modulate gestures; don't eliminate them.** Continue to use expressive gestures. Also, since your audience is closer to you, your gestures can be smaller in size.
4. **Connect through eye contact.** Keep your eyes up and try not to look down at the table while you are speaking. Make sure you share your eye contact with the entire group, connecting with every person at the table, including the people sitting on either side of you.
5. **Breathe.** Since presenting around a table is a more intimate setting than a formal presentation, every facial expression or emotion that registers will be seen and interpreted by your audience. Because of this, it is important you stay relaxed and project a confident presence at all times. Utilizing core breathing will help you do that.
6. **Plant your feet.** Because your audience is seated so closely, keep your feet planted firmly on the floor to ground yourself. This will help limit extraneous movement such as shifting and fidgeting that could make you appear less than confident.
7. **Keep your hands above the table.** Keep your hands on the table—either folded or near each other—when you are not using them for gesturing. Be careful not to fidget with objects such as rings, pens or paper clips as this can be distracting to an audience.