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How to Develop a Strong Presence



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How to Develop a Strong Presence

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Table of Contents:

INTRODUCTION

PART I

Chapter 1: Looking In the Mirror

Chapter 2: What Makes You A Leader?

Chapter 3: Finding Your Inner Presence

PART II

Chapter 4: Presence

Chapter 4.1: Posture

Chapter 4.2: Eye Contact

Chapter 4.3: Handshakes

Chapter 5: Body Language

Chapter 5.1: What to Avoid and Why?

Chapter 6: How to Efficiently Express Yourself by Using Your Voice

Chapter 7: Being bold

Chapter 7.1: Use that Charm

Chapter 8: Making a Connection

Chapter 8.1: Everyone Needs to Practice

Part III

Chapter 9: Keeping the Momentum

Chapter 10: Making a First Impression Last

Chapter 11: Taking Control of Any Situation

Chapter 12: Projecting the Charisma Within

Chapter 13: How to Command a Room

CONCLUSION

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PART 1:

1 Looking in the Mirror

How you see yourself is crucial to how you can perform every day. If you have low self esteem, don't look after your appearance, then that will reflect in your daily life. The mirror not only shows you what you look like physically but how you are doing emotionally too. If you check your reflection then you will be aware not only of any defects in your appearance, but also what messages your body is giving out.

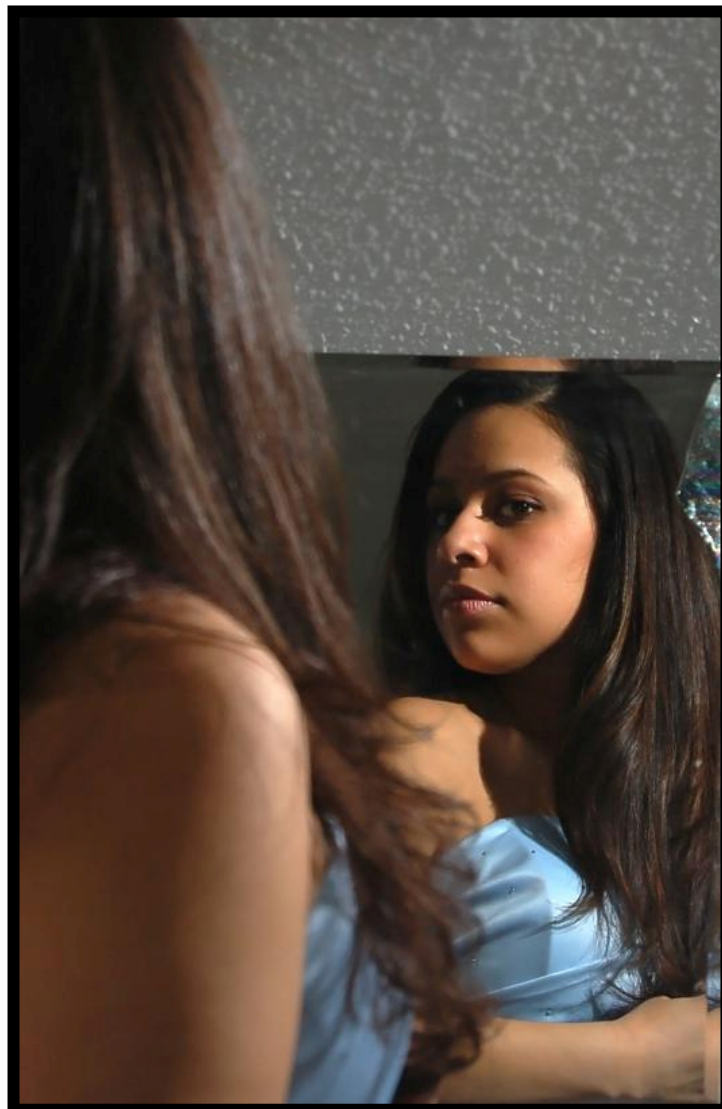
Is your posture poor? Aside from the health issues this causes there is also the signs that it is giving out to all those you come into contact with. Don't just check your clothes, hair and make up when you look in a mirror. Make sure you look deeper and check your expressions. If you are frowning or scowling then you are sending out a message to all those you meet that you don't want them to approach you because you look so unfriendly. People may worry that if they so much as ask you what time it is you will bite their heads off! Practice smiling into the mirror. At first it will seem very strange because the smile will be forced. Perhaps you will fare better if you think about something funny or imagine you are having your photograph taken. This will enable you to practice making the laugh more natural. Simply opening your mouth, and allowing your teeth to show, has a big effect because it makes your face light up and shows that you are friendly. If a smile is genuine it will reach your eyes - there is nothing worse than a fake smile! Disney in America has a sign backstage which tells everyone who is not in a Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck costume to check the mirror and make sure their smile is in place! That is one of the reasons why Disney is so popular - the entire staff appear so happy (regardless of what they feel like in reality) that it rubs off on everybody else. By that simple method of checking their smile is in place, the Disney staff bring out the inner child in everyone.

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Happy with your smile and the expression in your eyes? Now check the position of your head! No, I don't mean is still on top of your neck - I mean is it frigid (showing you are tense) or sagging which will show you are depressed or tired? Aim for a natural position where your ears are in line with your shoulder blades. Practice inclining your head to show that you are interested in what somebody is saying so that when you have to do this for real it won't seem strange.



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Moving swiftly down to your shoulders - tension will show in your shoulders. Not only is this uncomfortable and will give you a headache, but it can give out the wrong impression. Shoulders should be back but relaxed - you don't want to look too much like a Sergeant Major because that is off putting. Of course, you may wish to adopt this posture if you want to show you have authority and make people listen to you but it is not advisable as a general rule.

Arms should be relaxed by your side and hands loose - if you a clenching your fists unconsciously people will pick up that you are holding back your anger (even though you may not be - it may be a natural habit but not everybody knows that). If your hands are loose you will unconsciously tell people that you are open and approachable, which will endear you to them. **Never** stand with your arms or legs crossed because that shows you are defensive and don't want people to get too close - this goes for any situation where you may face questions - a job interview or a police interrogation for example.

Finally, watch what your feet are doing! Are they tapping nervously, or are you standing feet together? If you change your position and stand with your feet apart (hip width is the best) this will improve your balance and also tell people that you would like them to speak to you! If you practice looking at your posture and body language in the mirror you will soon find that you are naturally aware of what your body is doing and saying.

“Remember, happiness doesn't depend upon who you are or what you have, it depends solely upon what you think.

- *Dale Carnegie*

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Let's get a little more in-depth now. When you look at your reflection in the mirror, do you like what you see? And I'm not talking about your physical appearance anymore, though that does in fact play a huge role in being accepted into today's society, it's not really where we have to start focusing our attention on – it comes later. If you're going to care of what others think of you before caring about what you think of yourself, you're going to face difficulties when trying to find your Presence.

Self-acceptance is the first step towards becoming a confident person, in addition to it being the first step to finding that Presence you've been looking for. Self-acceptance actually begins during your childhood, with the influence of your family and important people playing a major role, directly or indirectly molding who you've become today. You determine your level of self-acceptance by how greatly you feel you are accepted by the above mentioned important people in your life, since the attitude of others towards you has a great effect on how you perceive yourself and even determines your attitude toward yourself. By recognizing that other people think highly of you, you'd have managed to boost your self-esteem right up, effortlessly. However, in order to actually build a healthy and strong personality, you will need to understand yourself and your feelings.

How can one gain self-acceptance? In simple terms, this is usually achieved through self-disclosure. In order for you to truly understand yourself, or to quit regretting and worrying about things that may have happened in your past which are negatively reflecting on your life today, you will have to first be able to unveil yourself to at least one person and get everything off your chest; let someone else carry a burden for you. Make sure the person you're consoling is someone you not only trust, but are certain will not make you feel guilty or ashamed over what happened all over again. You're looking for a comforter, not a lecturer.

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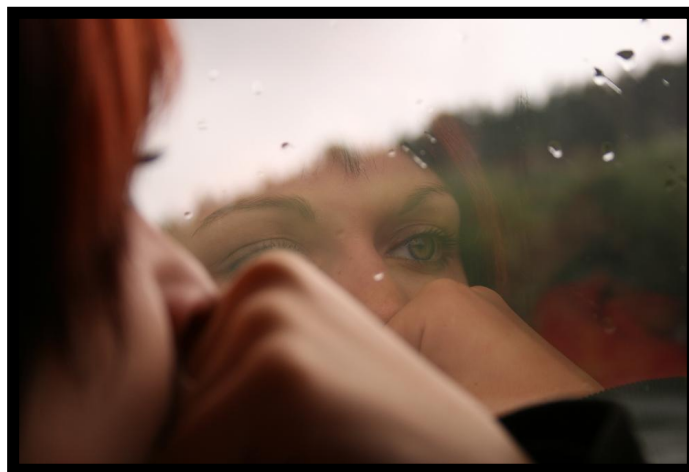
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The second step towards developing a strong personality that others will admire you for, is self-awareness, which is actually semi related to self-disclosure. You can't achieve self-awareness before achieving self-disclosure since you can only obtain awareness after being fully able to disclose what you're truthfully feeling and thinking to someone – only then do you in fact become aware of those emotions and thoughts. It's even better when the person you've unveiled yourself to is someone who simply listens and does not cut your train of thoughts with comments and criticism – since you will then have a clear opportunity to become more aware of who you are and why you do things you do. It's only then you are able to begin developing a perspective, sometimes known as aloofness.

We've now reached the third step to becoming someone we can be proud of, and it's one of my personal favorite parts. After going through the process of self-disclosure and then self-awareness – we reach self-acceptance. You can now accept yourself for the person you truly are, with your good and bad character and appearance traits, and with your strengths and weaknesses.

Once you have developed an ability to stand back, reflect on yourself and to frankly admit to others that you may in fact not be perfect but are who you are, you begin to enjoy a sense of self-acceptance like none other you've ever felt before.



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2 What Makes You a Leader?

To be a leader, you don't have to be a government official, a CEO, a millionaire or a person in a position of authority; you can be in the same position as any of your colleagues, friends, associates or acquaintances and still be a leader.

A leader is a person from whom others consistently seek guidance, direction, ideas, explanations or opinions. It is someone they feel comfortable with but at the same time know they can look up to, someone who will inspire them and show them the way. It is someone who would represent others and stand up for what they believe in and help them formulate new ideas.

A leader is also someone who can get people to cooperate and do things together; it is a position of responsibility as leaders' actions not only affect them but everyone they represent.

While some leadership techniques may appear to be manipulative, a smart leader is one that makes everyone feel important and gets people to cooperate and offer their support willingly.

Who can be a leader?

With all the extensive qualities that have been mentioned, you may think that a leader is some kind of superman or superwomen or that it is only for the gifted. Well, if we look back at some of the greatest leaders we had in the history of mankind, we'll find that many started their lives as ordinary, perhaps shy and even somehow uninspiring people and then life events encouraged them to change their behavior to become very successful leaders.

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So the good news is that almost anyone can become a leader. If you are willing to change and you are not only ready but eager to acquire the qualities of a leader, there's no doubt that you will become one.

It may take some longer than others but at the end of the day if really want to be a leader, if you want it badly, then you will become one.

So what does it take to be a leader?

Despite what many may think, leadership isn't about being persuasive and using the right words to motivate a crowd. It is really a combination of qualities and actions and not a specific characteristic:

- A leader is someone with a different perspective: someone who reflects on things and sees them differently
- A leader is always heading towards something. They always have something going on that's a lot more significant than others. You may not have the best education, background or experience but if you have something really big going on, if you're passionate about it, people around you will be inspired and they will follow.
- A leader can look round, observe and find solutions so people can follow. If people believe that you will always come up with solutions, they will perceive you as a leader
- Leaders look ahead. If you tend to look ahead and take steps to prevent problems that could occur before they do, people will look up at you and will follow you. Even if you cannot solve these problem, you'll at least be better prepared to resolve them and people will recognize you as a strong leader.

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- Leaders ask others to take action. Most people know what they want but are not confident enough to take the action to get there. You as a leader will call for that action. You do not even have to find what the action is, it is usually pretty obvious, and you just have to call for it. How much easier can it be?
- Leaders are honest and truthful. You cannot lose your integrity and you have to do or at least be seen to do what you have promised. This will make people respond to you and increase the number of followers.
- Leaders are motivated and confident. If you are passionate, motivated and strongly believe in what you do and say, people will catch the positive vibes and follow you.
- Leaders share their knowledge and vision and lift people from their petty daily preoccupations and bring them together and unite them in pursuing a worthy cause. If you share your knowledge with others, people will appreciate it and if you share your vision and how things will take shape and you do it with passion as you strongly believe in it, you will inspire and motivate others and your vision becomes their vision.
- Leaders care about others. True and successful leaders really care. Not only should you show that you care, but if you should really and truthfully care about others.
- Leaders understand how to communicate. Communication is about building and forming a relationship with others, it is not about directing others what to do. This is why even initially somehow shy or not very outgoing people can be leaders as they build healthy relationship that they can maintain.

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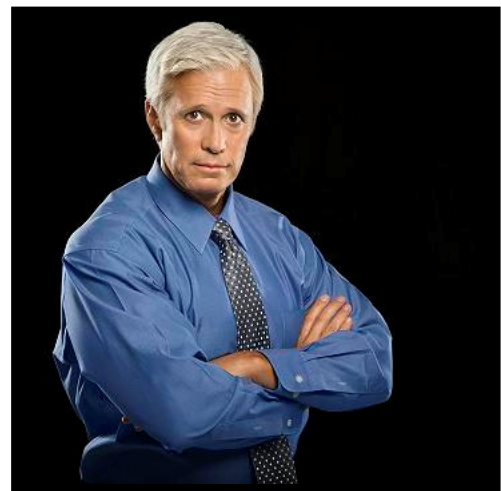
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Other qualities:

Charisma is certainly desirable and helpful for a good leader, but some people just don't have it. Do not be concerned if you're one of these people, you can still be a good leader. It's not an essential quality. Many of the greatest leaders in history didn't have the charm or appeal of some of their followers but they had the passion, the vision and the various other characteristics that we discussed earlier which made them great leaders.

How to be a good leader?

A leader is someone who would take people where they would like to go but a good leader is some who would take people where they wouldn't go on their own. Well, that's a very powerful statement. A lot of people want to do something, get somewhere, and achieve their goals, but they're not sure how. They're searching for someone to tell them how, rather than them struggling on the way. These people will never be leaders, they are followers, they are looking for leaders, so do not worry, you do not have to find you followers, they will find you. Most people take the easy way, so they are natural followers. Remember this when you are in the midst of a crowd, most of these people around have chosen the easy way, they are followers, **you are the leader.**



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3 Finding Your Inner Presence

If you are going to find your inner Presence it is vitally important to cultivate it so it seems natural. Believe it or not it is possible to learn to have presence - we will deal with some techniques in a later chapter but for now let's take a look at how you can work on it for yourself. Perhaps one of the most important things you can do is have a belief in yourself. Low self esteem does a lot of damage emotionally and it has a huge impact on how other people see you.

You **must** learn to accept that when somebody gives you a compliment they usually mean it - it does not give a good impression if you brush it aside and say they are wrong because that makes them feel as though you are fishing for compliments. Even worse is if you tell somebody you admire that you are not as good as them at something - this indicates that you are putting yourself below them which, whilst a huge boost to their ego, will not make them feel they can instinctively trust you because, let's face it, if you don't believe in yourself then how can anybody else?

In effect, this is all about acting. When you take it down to the bare bones, everybody feels insecure at times but some people are better at hiding it. People are drawn to those people who come across as confident. If you speak to an actor at a theater, try asking him how he felt before he came on stage? Most will tell you that they were shaking and felt nauseous but when they came on and said or sung their first line the nerves faded slightly, then even more when they got their first laugh. By the end of the show the actor was very confident but some of them have been in such a state behind the scenes that they sometimes fear they cannot walk on and say anything! If they do their job right they will increase ticket sales for the show - I know an actress who has such great stage presence that people have no choice but to return to the show several

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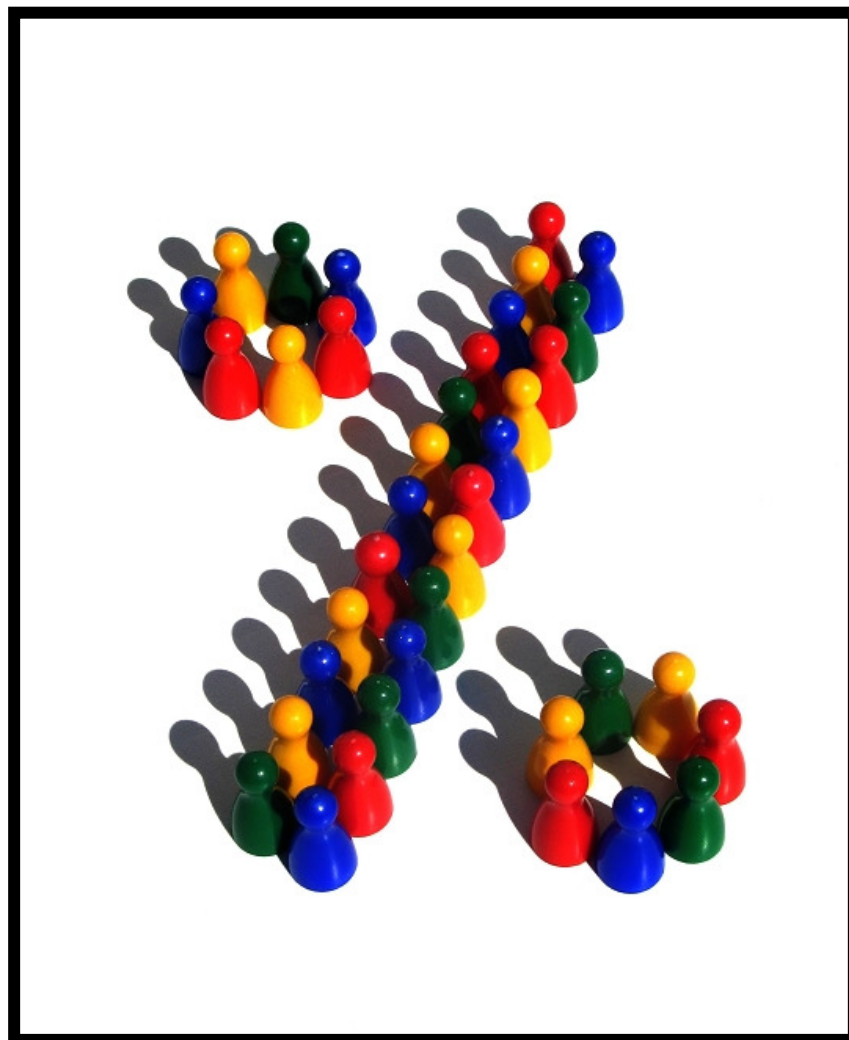
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times because they miss so much the first time they see it - their eyes are riveted on her.

It is the same with finding your inner presence - you are playing the role of somebody who is charming and charismatic and you can achieve great things worthy of an Oscar winner if you play your part right. Your aim in this performance is to be memorable to everybody in the room whether you talk to them or not! They will be talking about you.

If you see a special car - say, a Limousine - in a car park packed with ordinary cars like jeeps, fiestas and minis, then you will notice it even though it hasn't actually **done** anything, it has attracted your attention because it is so different from everything else in the area.



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Appearance is just as important as posture. Some people deliberately cultivate a pale and mysterious look, but that sometimes just makes them look ill! It is preferable to have some color all year round if you have a pale complexion. These days, it is not difficult to maintain a healthy tan and you don't even need to go on holiday because tanning lotions or towels are readily available at very low cost. You may find that having a tan in winter, for example, will be a good conversation starter because people will ask where you have been for your holidays. Your outfits can have a great effect because how you are dressed affects your bearing. You need to adapt your clothes to suit the situation - for example, a business suit is not appropriate if you are going to a barbecue! If you want to attract the attention of the woman of your dreams you can dress in a style you know she likes - whether that's because of her favorite dance or culture. For example, if you know that she likes a punk rock style then you can go to the event dressed in leathers which will grab her attention, but you would be likely to turn her off if you dressed as a cowboy!

Most actors have their "groupies" - those hangers on who don't really know what they are doing there but they can't get enough of the person. They spend as much of their time as possible following them around and trying to get their attention. Ironically, the more the actor pretends not to care that they are there, the more they flock to him! The actor is being very clever here because he knows he can manipulate the situation to his own advantage - he only has to say he wants an ice cream and one of his fans will go out and buy him one, hoping to please him enough to make him pay them more attention. More often than not, the groupies will pay for the things the actor wants, trying to buy his friendship.

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Once you have found your inner presence, you too will find yourself surrounded by people wanting to be your friend because they want you to appreciate and respect them. They really want this for themselves and sadly they know they will never get it, not realizing they, too, can learn how. As a result they become fixated on what you represent and try to live out their dreams through you.

It is crucial to know when it is time to move on because nobody can act forever and occasionally the mask will slip. If you feel this is about to happen, make an excuse and walk away from the situation - this will prevent them from realizing the truth which is that you are simply well dressed, have a way with words which makes you sound suave and sophisticated. If people got to know you in a personally then they would see that you are just an ordinary person and they will lose that true adoration of you that they have at the beginning. This is why you should always keep them at arms length - they will never get a chance to find out what you are really like!

“Are you bored with life? Then throw yourself into some work you believe in with all your heart, live for it, die for it, and you will find happiness that you had thought could never be yours.

- *Dale Carnegie*