

Lead With Presence

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PAC Leadership Summit

Lead With Presence

Executive presence isn't about being the loudest voice. It's about making the room listen when you speak. It's the unshakable confidence, the clarity of message, and the ability to inspire action—even in the most high-stakes moments.

- 1 | Presence of Mind Cultivates Executive Presence**
- 2 | Message Framing & The Power of Storytelling**
- 3 | Command the Room: Non-Verbal Communication**
- 4 | Navigating Difficult Conversations**
- 5 | Question & Answer Session**

Why Executive Presence Matters: A Story About Everything Going Wrong.

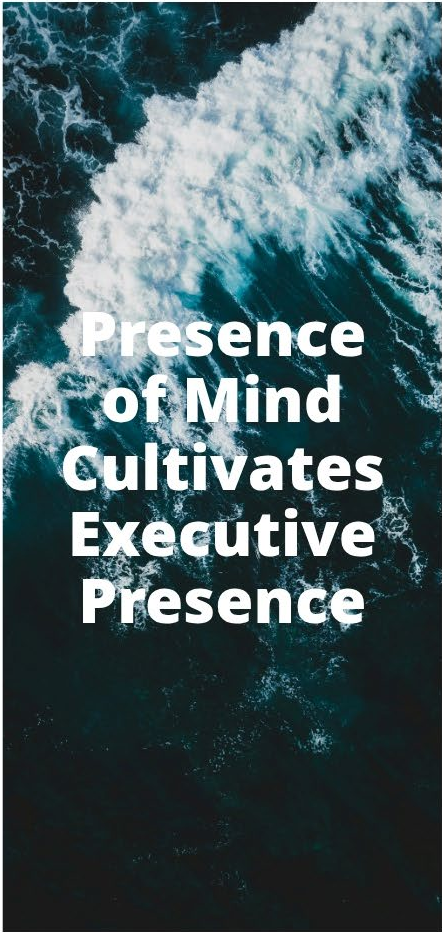


- **Why presence of mind matters going into high-stakes conversations and presentations**

- “Life is available only in the present moment.” — Thich Nhat Hanh
- Real-time information is only available when you're fully present.
- Cultivating emotional distance.
- Curiosity as a superpower.

- **Practical tools for centering yourself in high-pressure moments**

- Preparation in advance to reduce stress in the moment.
- Breathing exercises, movement, meditation, and mindfulness exercises.



**Presence
of Mind
Cultivates
Executive
Presence**

- **Persuasion vs. winning the conversation**
- **Bringing your message down to earth**

Case study: Telling a story to engage stakeholders.

- **Why storytelling works**
 - **Stories engage the whole brain**—emotion, movement, senses. We don't just hear stories—we **live them neurologically**.
 - **Stories Build Connection** Trigger **oxytocin** → builds **trust** and **empathy**.
 - Help us **relate across differences** and feel shared humanity.
 - **Stories Make Info Stick** Stories follow a familiar arc (setup → conflict → resolution). Help us **organize, retain, and recall** complex ideas.
 - **Stories Inspire Action** Stories create **meaning**, not just information. They move people to **care, decide, and act**.



- **Posture and body orientation**

- Stand or sit upright with shoulders relaxed.
- Avoid slouching or crossing arms, which can seem defensive.
- Angle your body slightly toward the person or audience you're engaging with to show attentiveness.

- **Eye contact**

- Make consistent, natural eye contact with individuals in the room (3–5 seconds per person before shifting).
- For virtual meetings, look into the camera when speaking.
- Avoid staring, which can be intimidating—aim for warmth and attentiveness.

- **Gestures that complement speech**

- Use your hands to emphasize key points or transitions.
- Avoid repetitive or distracting gestures (e.g., fiddling with a pen, shuffling papers, looking at cell phone).
- Mirror your content: open palms to express honesty, precision gestures for specific facts, etc.

- **Vocal qualities & pacing**

- Vary your tone for emphasis; avoid monotony.
- Speak clearly and pause intentionally to allow ideas to land.
- Reduce filler words (“um,” “you know”) through practice and deliberate pacing.
- Pause: Use silence before or after a key statement to increase impact.



**Command the
Room: Non-
Verbal
Communication**

- **Empathy**

- Acknowledge without agreeing.
- Identify what drives the other person's perspective.

- **Mirroring**

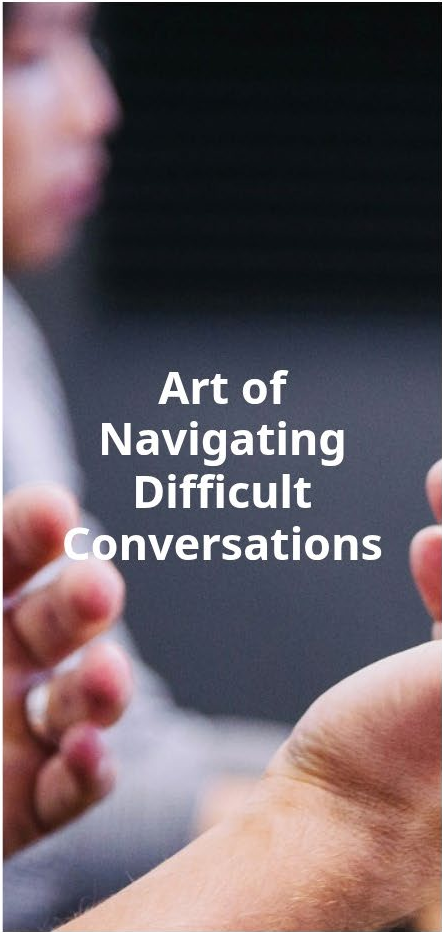
- Repeat the last 1-3 words your counterpart said to demonstrate listening and create active rapport.
- Use language like, "to your point" or "as you discussed"

- **Labeling emotions**

- It' sounds like or it seems like...
- Helps surface unspoken feelings.
- Disarms defensiveness.
- Demonstrates deep understanding.

- **Get to no to move on**

- People hate delivering what they perceive to be "bad news."
- Getting to "no" creates clarity and a path forward.
- Would it be unreasonable to...?



**Art of
Navigating
Difficult
Conversations**

Questions?

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