

Maia Beatty's

Practical Tools for Powerful Presence™

Use the Qualities of Great Speakers to Increase the Power of Your Personal Presence

by Maia Beatty

You can learn a lot about powerful presence from the qualities of great speakers—those people who “have you at hello” when they walk in the room. What do they know that you need to know?

*The quality of your personal presence is obvious
the moment you walk into a room.*

What does your personal presence say about you when you walk into a room?

Do you walk in like you are royalty—ready to engage with others as if they were royalty as well? If not, keep reading! You'll find ways to start doing so in this article.

Three behaviors are at the heart of powerful presence:

1. Focus your attention on your audience—whether it is one person or a multitude
2. Breathe easily and calmly—so you can make the most of the natural pauses when you are not speaking, but listening
3. Have a conversation—a dialog that incorporates input from the other person or people

The focus of this article is six categories of specific behaviors that people with powerful presence exhibit when speaking in public. Whether you consider yourself a public speaker or not, you can still use these behaviors in any context where you are interacting with others. Your audience can be one person—or a multitude.

First, we'll look at all six categories to reveal the profile of powerful presence. Then you can take an assessment that will give you even more details on these behaviors. You can see how you're doing—and what steps you can take to gain a more powerful presence.

The Profile of Powerful Presence

Think of people who exude powerful presence. What criteria determined who you chose? It's possible that even though you recognize their powerful presence, you might not be able to identify specific behaviors. The power of their presence lies in the congruence of everything about them, from their smile to their warm handshake, to the feeling you get that—of all the people in the room—they are speaking only to you.

If you could explore the components of powerful presence, odds are high that each individual behavior would fit into one of these six categories:

- **Connects with you immediately**

You instantly feel that you matter to them, that they are listening to you.

- **Confidence**

It's clear that they believe what they are saying, so it's easy for you to believe it, too. There is a marked absence of apologies or attempts to prove anything.

- **Credibility**

It's clear that they know what they are talking about, that they have experience behind them. They know enough about their audience to get their message across in a way that is appropriate for their listeners.

- **Attractiveness**

They have an inner energy that indicates that they see themselves in a positive way—no matter their age or style. “Who they are being” draws you to them more powerfully than any fashion or style; they are happy with who they are.

- **Engaging**

They are in conversation with you, in a way that makes it clear that you are just as important to the outcome as anything they say or do. They are flexible and adaptable; they dance with whatever shows up. They play to their strengths in ways that connect you to your own.

- **Inspirational**

They make an impact. After being in their presence, you want to go out and take action. They show you what they have overcome in such a way that you see your own strengths and possibilities.

If you have ever once demonstrated any of these qualities anywhere, you can choose to use them again, anytime you want to. For more specific strategies, take the assessment below and discover some hidden talents you may not know that you have!

Powerful Presence Assessment

Instructions:

- **First pass:** Go through this assessment and check each of the behaviors you have ever used. If you did it even once, it counts!
- **Second pass:** Once you have completed the first pass, go back and circle the behaviors you use regularly.
- Find out your level of **Powerful Presence** at the end of this article.

Category 1: Connect with the audience immediately

1. I can keep my attention on the audience, not on myself.
2. If my attention comes back to me, I can shift it immediately back to the audience and the room.
3. I go early and meet as many people as possible before I speak.
4. I know how to connect with an audience so individuals feel like I am talking only to them—they feel as if I know them.
5. I have an aura of personal warmth—I know how to “warm up a room” (any size room).
6. I am genuine, open and authentic when speaking to others.
7. I make “friends” in the audience or with others in a meeting.
8. I learn the names of people in my audience and refer to them in my program.

9. I know how to “own” the room: I set it up early and claim the space as my own, so my audience feels like they are being welcomed into my home when they arrive.
10. I handle any technical issues ahead of time so I am not distracted—my audience knows that they have my complete attention.

Category 2: Confidence

1. When I am speaking or presenting or at a meeting, I claim the space around me and invite others into it.
2. I am comfortable in my own skin and at home in my body.
3. I know that I am graceful.
4. I have great eye contact.
5. I can relax myself at will.
6. I have energy—not too high or low—just the perfect “cruising speed” for my audience (one person or a roomful of people; a professional event or a personal conversation).
7. I can regulate my own energy to meet the needs of the situation.
8. I have powerful voice projection—I use my breathing to vary its depth and strength to suit the occasion.
9. I am articulate—I know how to have impact with my words and my presence.
10. I can think on my feet and respond to whatever occurs.
11. I can improvise in the moment.

Category 3: Credibility

1. When I am speaking, I know my topic—and my three main points—so I never memorize a script.
2. I tell my audience where we are going and how we will get there—right up front.
3. I know how to build my reputation to be seen as an expert.
4. I do my homework before the presentation or meeting so I know my audience—their needs, challenges, and opportunities.
5. I have appropriate handouts/products/books.
6. I keep the pace moving at the appropriate tempo for the audience and the topic.

Category 4: Attractiveness

1. I know how to dress to please myself and be comfortable with what I am wearing (instead of following someone else’s fashion sense).
2. My grooming is impeccable.
3. I have a sense of humor and fun.
4. I am approachable and warm.
5. I am trustworthy, sincere and honest.
6. I take the audience seriously, but not myself.
7. I hear what is really being said in a conversation, even if it is not voiced—my audience feels “known.”
8. I know how to focus my attention on the audience as well as everything that is happening in the room.
9. I am authentic when I speak—and I feel “real” to my audiences.

Category 5: Engaging

1. I know my strengths.
2. I *use* my strengths.
3. I can hold the attention of a room when I am in it.
4. I create a positive impact that remains even after I leave.
5. I *love* my audiences and they can feel it!
6. I adapt my presentations to the audience—it's a dialogue, not a monologue.
7. I know how to use everything that is happening in the room to get my message across.
8. I am not afraid to be controversial in the service of my message.

Category 6: Inspirational

1. I am not afraid to share my mistakes or use them to illuminate what can be accomplished.
2. I am genuine in my connection to the audience.
3. I share my strategies to overcome obstacles—because I had to fall down first before I could get up.
4. I give my audiences the feeling that they are not alone—I am right there with them.
5. I make it easy for people to learn from me.
6. I am willing to let the audience shine—and share the spotlight as appropriate.

Your Personal Presence Score

Step 1: Go through this assessment and check each of the behaviors you have ever used. If you did it even once, it counts!

Step 2: Go back and circle the behaviors you use on a regular basis.

Step 3: Count the number of circled behaviors and see when you fall in the ranges below. While this is not a scientific assessment, you will get a sense of the level of your **Personal Presence**.

20 points or less: If you took the time to complete this assessment, you are interested in improving your personal presence—and that is the most important thing. You will want to take every opportunity to practice the behaviors listed in this assessment. Taking a class like *PowerSpeak* is a good way to jump start this process.

21 to 40 points: You have a good level of personal presence. You may want to spend time practicing the behaviors that are not already part of your repertoire. Working with a speaking coach will help you focus on your specific needs and take you to the next level.

41 to 50 points: You have Powerful Presence! Go out and change the world.