### **Enhancing Personal Presence**

When speaking about personal presence, it is important to differentiate between organizational hierarchy and personal presence. Your personal presence is independent of your position within the organization. You can learn and practice skills and behaviors to feel and seem more confident in all your interactions. For example, just taking a deep breath and holding your head steady can create an inner sense of calm and an outer presence of confidence.

Take a moment to evaluate your personal presence. Check those behaviors you demonstrate frequently. Acknowledge those high personal presence behaviors you demonstrate (your strengths). Good job—you're on the right track! Then take a moment to look at those high personal presence behaviors you did not check (your learning edges). How could you improve yourself in these areas?

Our behavior reinforced by our appearance—signals our importance or lack of importance.

Keith Johnstone

#### Signals of Low Personal Presence

- Have unsteady eye contact
- Speak in fragments and use many qualifiers
- Sound out of breath when speaking and do not pause
- Move the head around a lot while speaking
- Speak while touching the face
- Stand with toes turned in
- Move body in stiff and constricted way and allow feet to wander
- Sound stressed with voice going up at the end of sentences
- Avoid or fill silences

#### Signals of High Personal Presence

- Maintain steady eye contact
- Use grammatically complete sentences and few qualifiers
- Take full deep breaths when speaking and use pauses
- Move head very little when speaking
- Speak without touching the face
- Stand with feet planted beneath hips
- Own the space and use deliberate gestures
- Sound warm and confident with voice going down at the end of sentences
- Use silences

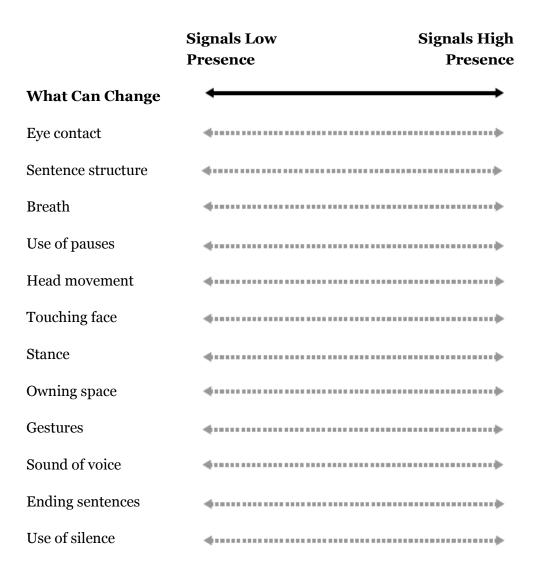
# **Enhancing Personal Presence** continued

Review the above list and think about what signals you probably gave out.
How you look at and evaluate other people is probably not unlike how others are evaluating you. They
use the same signals to determine your status.
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So, think back to another event where you walked into a room full of people you didn't know. What
assumptions did you make about other people's status? Why did you assume this? What were they
signaling to you that caused you to make this assumption?

Ask one of your colleagues to watch you at your next meeting or presentation and evaluate your personal presence using the form on the following page. They should indicate where you fall on each of the dimensions by placing an "X" on the scale (these dimensions are described on the previous page).

## **Enhancing Personal Presence** continued

Watch your colleague and evaluate his or her personal presence in each of the following dimensions. Indicate where he or she falls by placing an "X" on the scale.



No behavior is insignificant. When we interact together, our brains are counting the blink rate and registering even the tiniest movement.

Keith Johnstone