

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

POWER POSING: CHANGE YOUR BODY TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

Overview

Body language affects our thoughts, feelings, and physiology. This meeting will teach you how to use your body to increase your confidence in high-stakes situations when personal presence matters most.

Meeting Goals

- Understand how your body language influences the way you think and feel about yourself
- Practice using your body to shift your mind-set

Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch Amy Cuddy's TED Talk, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are," individually or as a group at leanin.org/power-pose
- Bring a copy of this PDF
- Bring your One Action Update (if you're doing this)



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Meeting Agenda

🕒 Approx. 1 hour 35 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes
Warm up, catch up, and get going **p.4**

2 Educational Activities 🕒 Approx. 50 minutes
Learn from experts and one another **p.5**

- **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 5 minutes
Take a few minutes to review the core strategies presented in the “Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are” video **p.5**

- **Activity 2: Body Language Audit** 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes
Take stock of your own body language **p.7**

- **Activity 3: Practicing for Success** 🕒 Approx. 35 minutes
Identify your favorite power pose and when you might use it **p.9**

3 One Action 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes
The little push you need to go for it **p.11**

4 Wrap-Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes
What’s next and a few final words **p.13**

Optional Worksheet
One Action Update **p.15**

Meeting Guide

Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with one another and ourselves. One by one, fill in the sentence below and share it with your Circle. Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- I feel least powerful when . . .
- I feel most powerful when . . .

Step 2: Member Updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting. The goal is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: “Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update].”

Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 50 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

As you kick off today's meeting, review the key takeaways from the video, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are," individually or as a group:

Body language influences how others think and feel about you

Body language is an important part of how we communicate, influencing everything from hiring and promotion decisions to the outcomes of political races.

Body language also influences how we think and feel about ourselves

Studies show that body language affects our thoughts, feelings, and physiology. For example, research has shown that just as being happy makes us smile, smiling makes us happy (a phenomenon known as the facial feedback effect).

People use nonverbal cues to display power

Expressions of power involve expanding the body to take up space, while powerless positions involve contracting or becoming smaller. (Check out Lean In's "Power & Influence" video and guide at leanin.org/education/power-influence/ for more information on how to use body language to influence others.)

We can measure physiological differences in powerful people

Power activates the psychological "approach system": powerful people are more action-oriented, assertive, confident, optimistic, and resilient. They also tend to have higher circulating levels of testosterone (the assertiveness hormone) and lower levels of cortisol (the stress hormone). These hormones rapidly fluctuate in response to social cues in both women and men.

Activity 1: Key Takeaways (cont.)

You can change your mind-set using your body

Research suggests that posing can change your hormone levels. One study found that holding a power pose for two minutes increased testosterone by 19 percent and decreased cortisol by 25 percent, mirroring the differences measured in powerful people.

Power posing is effective in high-stakes situations

High-stakes situations (like job interviews, stressful social encounters, and public speaking engagements) offer great opportunities to practice reducing stress and increasing confidence through power poses.

Fake it until you become it

Many people experience “impostor syndrome,” or feeling like a fraud. They approach high-stakes situations with dread, execute them with anxiety, and leave them with regret. Power posing for just a minute or two can increase both your confidence and enthusiasm in these difficult situations. By “faking” your way through challenging moments, you’ll build organic confidence in your expertise and abilities. It’s important to point out that the only person you’re tricking is yourself—you’re tricking yourself into having the confidence to reveal the skills, knowledge, and competencies you already possess.

Activity 2: Body Language Audit

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

To better understand how your body can shape your mind-set, take stock of your body language in this simple ten-minute exercise.

Step 1: Check in with your body

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Without shifting or adjusting your posture, take note of how you are sitting. In the space below, describe the physical position of your body from head to toe. What are your head, neck, and shoulders doing? How is your torso positioned? Where are your legs, knees, ankles, and feet?

Next, check in with how you feel in this posture. What thoughts pop up when you hold your body this way? How would you describe your presence within the Circle at this moment?

Activity 2: Body Language Audit (cont.)

Step 2: Reflect on your body audit

 Pair activity

 2 minutes per partner, 4 minutes total

Break into pairs. Take two minutes each to answer a few of the questions below, sharing your reflections on your body language with your partner.

- What observations did you make about your body language during the audit? Were you expanding or contracting in space?
- How did your body language impact your physical presence within the Circle?
- What connection did you find between your body language and how you felt?
- Were you posed in the way you typically hold yourself? If not, what was different and why?
- What did you learn about your own body language that may come in handy in the future?

Activity 3: Practicing for Success

🕒 Approx. 35 minutes

This activity will help you identify times when you might need to boost your confidence. You'll also practice using power posing to change your mind-set.

Step 1: Identify times when you need a confidence boost

 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes per member, 20 minutes total

A high school reunion. A public speech. A job interview. A stressful meeting with your boss. These are all moments when we feel like we're being evaluated socially and when stress and intimidation can hold us back. If you find yourself feeling hesitant to speak up in these situations or like you don't belong (even when your qualifications prove that you do!), you could probably use a confidence boost.

Spend two minutes each describing a time when you could have used a confidence boost.

- What was the situation?
- Describe the physical sensations you associate with the situation (e.g., tightness in your stomach, fluttering in your chest).
- What was your reaction to the situation/your feelings? What did you do?
- Did your feelings affect your performance?

Activity 3: Practicing for Success (cont.)

Step 2: Practicing power posing and more subtle expansive postures

 Pair activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

Power posing offers an effective tactic for boosting your confidence in preparation for a high-stakes situation. (Note that using power poses in actual interactions is not effective, as it can be unnecessarily domineering. In interactions, adopt open, good postures that signals both confidence and engagement.) In this activity, you'll try out a power pose to see how it changes your outlook.

Break into pairs. Spend about five minutes trying out each of the four poses below with your partner. Spend about a minute trying each pose and considering where you might see yourself using it.

- **Wonder Woman:** Stand with your hands on your hips and your feet shoulder width apart.
- **V for Victory:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and stretch your arms out into a V, as if you just crossed the finish line at a race.
- **The President:** Recline in your chair with your hands clasped behind your head. Prop your feet up or spread your knees wide to take up space.
- **The CEO:** Stand at the head of the table with your feet spread wide. Lean over and place your hands on the table, keeping your chest pointing forward and your head held high.

Next, discuss with your partner:

- Which pose did you like best?
- Which pose(s) would you do in public? Which would you do in private?
- Which pose felt most natural? If none of them felt natural, why do you think that is?

Now pick your favorite pose and hold it for a minute (or as long as feels comfortable to you).

Finally, spend two minutes sharing your experience with your partner. Use these questions to help you:

- How do you feel after trying out your favorite power pose?
- How has your body changed after holding the power pose in comparison with the body audit?

One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

Step 1: Identify the action you’re going to take

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

As we’ve discussed, power posing is about faking it until you become it. Internalizing the feelings of power from these poses will help you be your best self, even in high-stakes situations. It’s about increasing your personal power by allowing your body to “trick” your mind into feeling confident and open. When we are in this state, we can access and bring forth our best qualities and abilities when we most need to. We can be present.

Consider an upcoming high-stakes situation in your life. How can you use power posing before the situation to help you bring your fullest, most confident self?

One Action (cont.)

Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle

 Group activity

 1 minute or less per member, 10 minutes total

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statement:

- In the next month, I plan to use my body to change my mind-set during . . .

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering on one another as you go.

Housekeeping Note: We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 15 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update.

Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting, including day and time, location, and food and drink responsibilities. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who is going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting so you can brainstorm improvements going forward.

Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

 Group activity

🕒 1 minutes or less

As you wrap up the meeting, look around the group. People might be taking up more space than when you first came together, or the group dynamic may have shifted to become more energetic. Then check in with yourself. How do you feel after practicing power posing? Go around the Circle and share one word that sums up how you feel in this moment.

Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following pages for a One Action Update Worksheet.

One Action Update

Use the following prompts to prepare your One Action Update before your next meeting, to maximize your time with your Circle.

- Prior to power posing before my high-stakes situation, I felt . . .

- After power posing, I felt . . .

- After the situation concluded, I felt . . .

- In the end, I learned that . . .