

Training and Culture

# Owning Your Excellence: The Authentic Foundation of Professional Presence

Professional Development Series January 2026

KC Capers MBA, CCMP

Ph.D. Candidate Organization and Management: Leadership

School of Business, Liberty University

Transformational Leadership Speaker, Trainer, Mentor, Coach

Contents

INTRODUCTION: Your Presence Is Your Power ..... 2

LEARNING OUTCOMES ..... 2

KEY DEFINITIONS ..... 3

    Professional Presence ..... 3

    Authenticity ..... 3

    Executive Presence ..... 3

    Self-Awareness ..... 3

THE THREE A'S: Building Blocks of Professional Presence ..... 4

    Attitude ..... 4

    Appearance ..... 4

    Approachability ..... 4

KC'S COACHING CORNER ..... 5

    🎯 TIP: Practice the "3-Second Presence Check." ..... 5

    ⚡ HACK: The "Mirror Message" Method ..... 5

    ✓ BEST PRACTICE: Conduct Quarterly Presence Audits ..... 5

KC'S NUGGETS: Memorable Wisdom to Guide Your Journey ..... 6

    💡 "Your presence is your permission to lead." ..... 6

    💡 "Authenticity is not permission to be unprofessional; it's permission to be human." ..... 6

    💡 "Confidence is cultivated, not inherited." ..... 6

REFLECTION ON YOUR LEARNING ..... 7

    Your Scores Guide Your Next Steps ..... 7

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY ..... 8

YOUR NEXT STEPS ..... 10

    Choose Your Path ..... 10

SUPPORT & RESOURCES ..... 11

CLOSING: Your Presence, Your Excellence ..... 11

### INTRODUCTION: Your Presence Is Your Power

Every day, you enter rooms where decisions are made, opportunities are created, and influence is exercised. **Within seven seconds**, people form impressions that shape how they respond to you, what they believe about your capabilities, and whether they trust you with greater responsibility.

**Here's the truth: Professional presence is not about perfection; it's about authenticity with intentionality.** This session explores how your attitude, appearance, and genuine approachability shape your professional identity, amplify your influence, and transform organizational culture around you.

***Your presence is not accidental. It's cultivated. And today, you'll learn exactly how to own it.***

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

**After this session, you will be able to:**

- Understand how professional presence shapes opportunities and influences organizational culture
- Apply the three A's (Attitude, Appearance, Approachability) to build authentic credibility
- Develop strategic self-awareness that creates unshakeable professional confidence
- Create an action plan for cultivating executive presence aligned with your values

## KEY DEFINITIONS

### Professional Presence

The intentional way you show up in professional contexts, combining attitude, appearance, and approachability to create an authentic impression that builds trust and credibility.

*Example in practice:* When you walk into a meeting prepared, professionally dressed, and genuinely engaged with others, you're demonstrating professional presence that signals leadership readiness.

### Authenticity

Aligning your external presentation with your internal values and genuine self—being real rather than perfect, bringing your whole self to professional contexts while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

*Example in practice:* Sharing your honest perspective in team discussions while respecting others' views demonstrates authenticity, builds connection, and fosters trust without appearing unprofessional.

### Executive Presence

The ability to inspire confidence in others through communication, appearance, and gravitas, signaling that you're leadership-ready regardless of current title or position.

*Example in practice:* Speaking with clarity and confidence during presentations, maintaining composure under pressure, and demonstrating strategic thinking show executive presence that positions you for advancement.

### Self-Awareness

Deep understanding of your values, strengths, emotional patterns, and impact on others—the foundation for intentional presence and authentic leadership.

*Example in practice:* Recognizing that you become quieter under stress and intentionally choosing to speak up anyway demonstrates self-awareness that strengthens your presence and expands your influence.

## THE THREE A'S: Building Blocks of Professional Presence

### Attitude

Your mindset and emotional energy—the internal state that shapes how you engage with others and respond to circumstances, encompassing positivity, openness, growth orientation, and resilience.

*Example in practice: Entering a challenging meeting with curiosity rather than defensiveness, maintaining composure when receiving critical feedback, and approaching obstacles as opportunities demonstrate an attitude that builds credibility and invites collaboration.*

### Appearance

Your visual presentation and polish—how you show up physically through clothing choices, grooming, body language, posture, and energy level, signaling respect for yourself, others, and the professional context.

*In practice, dressing **appropriately** for your **industry and role**, maintaining good posture during conversations, ensuring your appearance is neat and intentional (not perfect), and carrying yourself with confidence demonstrate an appearance that signals readiness for leadership.*

### Approachability

Your accessibility and warmth—the signals you send through eye contact, facial expressions, body language, and tone that communicate you're open to connection, conversation, and collaboration.

*Example in practice: Making eye contact when greeting colleagues, **smiling genuinely** when others approach you, uncrossing your arms during discussions, and asking questions that show interest demonstrate the approachability that builds relationships and **psychological safety**.*

KC'S COACHING CORNER

*Tips, Hacks & Best Practices*

 **TIP: Practice the "3-Second Presence Check."**

Before entering any professional space, pause for three seconds to check:

- **Attitude** — Am I open and positive?
- **Appearance** — Am I put-together and polished?
- **Approachability** — Is my body language welcoming?

**Why this matters:** Research shows that first impressions form in seven seconds. These three seconds of intentional preparation dramatically improve how others perceive and respond to you, transforming your presence from accidental to strategic.

 **HACK: The "Mirror Message" Method**

Post a sticky note on your bathroom mirror with one word representing how you want to show up today—examples: "confident," "open," "energized," "calm."

**Why this works:** This simple visual anchor primes your mindset each morning and creates consistency between your internal intention and external presentation. Update your word weekly or when you need to shift your focus.

 **BEST PRACTICE: Conduct Quarterly Presence Audits**

Every three months, ask three trusted colleagues:

*"How do you experience my professional presence? What's one thing I do well, and one thing I could improve?"*

**The impact:** This feedback loop reveals blind spots and helps ensure that your self-perception aligns with others' experiences. Research shows that people who regularly seek and act on feedback about their presence advance 40% faster than those who rely only on self-assessment.

**Action step:** Document the feedback and track patterns over time to measure your growth.

### KC'S NUGGETS: Memorable Wisdom to Guide Your Journey

#### "Your presence is your permission to lead."

**Professional presence creates leadership authority regardless of title.** When you show up with intentional presence, people naturally look to you for guidance and trust your judgment. This is how you build influence before you have formal power.

**Practical application:** Your professional presence directly determines the opportunities you attract and the perceived leadership readiness of others. **Intentional presence**, cultivated through **Attitude**, **Appearance**, and **Approachability**, signals competence and credibility, thereby creating opportunities for advancement. When you master the **Three A's**, you position yourself as someone ready for greater responsibility and influence.

#### "Authenticity is not permission to be unprofessional; it's permission to be human."

Bring your genuine self to work while maintaining professional standards. You don't have to be perfect to be professional; you just have to be **real**, **respectful**, and **reliable**.

**Practical application:** Aligning your *external presentation with your internal values* creates a genuine connection that builds lasting credibility. **People follow leaders who are real, not perfect.** When you show up as yourself intentionally, you create trust and psychological safety that deepen relationships and multiply your influence.

#### "Confidence is cultivated, not inherited."

**Professional confidence comes from self-knowledge, intentional practice, and strategic presence.** Every time you show up with awareness and intention, you're building the confidence that transforms how others perceive and respond to you.

**Practical application:** Strategic self-awareness and intentional mindset development create unshakeable confidence. **Confidence comes from knowing yourself deeply, committing to continuous growth, and practicing strategic presence consistently.** Every interaction is an opportunity to strengthen your presence and build the confidence that positions you for excellence.

## Professional Development Series Workbook

### REFLECTION ON YOUR LEARNING

Rate each statement on a scale of 1-10 (1 = Strongly Disagree | 10 = Strongly Agree)

Instruction	Scale
Rate each statement	1-10 (1 = Strongly Disagree   10 = Strongly Agree)

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand how professional presence shapes opportunities and influences organizational culture

\_\_\_\_\_ I can explain the three A's (Attitude, Appearance, Approachability) to a colleague

\_\_\_\_\_ I see how authenticity and professionalism work together, not opposite each other

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm confident I can apply the 3-Second Presence Check before important interactions

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm committed to practicing intentional presence in my daily work

\_\_\_\_\_ I feel more capable and equipped after this session

\_\_\_\_\_ I know my first step to cultivate more substantial professional presence

### Your Scores Guide Your Next Steps

Score Range	Interpretation	Recommendation
8-10	You're ready to apply this learning with confidence	Use the KC Coaching Corner tips to accelerate your growth
6-7	You grasp the concepts but would benefit from additional practice	Try one technique this week and reflect on what happens
Below 6	You'd benefit from additional support	Schedule time with KC or a trusted mentor to discuss your questions

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

*Take 10-15 minutes to reflect on these questions. There are no right answers; these are for your personal insight and growth.*

1. As you reflect on today's session, what one insight most surprised you or shifted your thinking about professional presence?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. When you think about the three A's (Attitude, Appearance, Approachability), which one represents your greatest strength? Which one offers your biggest opportunity for growth?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. If you fully embodied authentic professional presence in your current role, what would be different? How would it change your relationships, opportunities, or impact?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. What might prevent you from showing up with intentional presence, and how could you address that barrier?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. What is one specific action you will take in the next 7 days to practice intentional professional presence?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Choose Your Path

**LEVEL 1: QUICK START (This Week)**

Practice **the 3-Second Presence Check** before your next three important interactions. Pause, check your attitude/appearance/approachability, and adjust. Notice how this micro-habit shifts your confidence and others' responses.

- I commit to practicing the 3-Second Presence Check before meetings, presentations, or key conversations by

---

---

---

---

**LEVEL 2: IMPLEMENTATION (This Month)**

Conduct a **Presence Audit** by asking three trusted colleagues for feedback about how they experience your professional presence. Listen without defending, identify one pattern to strengthen, and create an action plan.

- I commit to completing my Presence Audit and creating my action plan by

---

---

---

---

**LEVEL 3: TRANSFORMATION (This Quarter)**

Develop your **Executive Presence** by working with a coach or mentor to identify your gaps in presence and create a 90-day development plan. Practice intentionally, seek regular feedback, and track your progress toward leadership readiness.

- I commit to launching my Executive Presence development plan by

---

---

---

---

### SUPPORT & RESOURCES

- **Accountability Partner:** Connect with another participant for monthly check-ins on presence goals
- **Coaching Sessions:** Schedule one-on-one coaching with KC to develop your executive presence strategy
- **Next Session (February):** "Speaking with Impact: Transforming Your Voice into Your Competitive Advantage."

### CLOSING: *Your Presence, Your Excellence*

You now have the framework, the tools, and the wisdom to cultivate a professional presence that opens doors, builds influence, and positions you for leadership. Remember: excellence begins from within and radiates outward.

***Your presence is not accidental. Starting today, it's intentional.***

Own your excellence. The world is waiting for what only you can bring.