

# THE ABCs OF A POWERFUL PROFESSION

For 2017 and Beyond

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- The central role of power in the centennial vision
- Defining power: "...any force resulting in behavior that would not had occurred had the force not been present" (Sneed, 1991, p. 58)
- There are different types of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert
- Referent power
  - Developed through interpersonal relationships
  - Accessible to all
  - Closely related to professionalism/how you present yourself to the world

- Increasing your referent power through the ABCs

## Appearance

- There is not one optimal way to present yourself; it varies with local culture, age, and other factors.
- First impressions predict short- and long-term relationship development
- Initial judgments about others are made quickly with thin slices of information based on appearance
- Enclothed cognition: concept that clothing can affect the wearer's mental processing. Therefore, dress not only influences how we are perceived by others, but also how we think.
- Using appearance to enhance referent power
  - Consider the norms of your environment. When in doubt, ask!
  - Choose more formal clothing for important occasions
  - More formal clothing does not always equate to increasing referent power. It is always based on the context.

## Behavior

- Using body language of power (expansive postures) can increase feelings of power and confidence
- Holding "power poses" can increase testosterone, increase feelings of power, increase risk tolerance, and decrease cortisol (stress hormone)
- Embodied cognition: concept that our physical experiences, including the positioning of our bodies, affects our thinking
- Non-verbal behaviors have 5 times the importance of verbal messages
- Using behavior to enhance referent power
  - Use power posing/expansive postures to physically and mentally prepare for challenges or stressful situations
  - Put your best face forward!

- When you pretend to feel powerful, you can actually become more powerful.

## Communication

- According to Benfari, Wilkinson, and Orth (1986), “people value straightforward and non-contradictory messages” (p. 15). They recommend developing both your verbal and non-verbal channels of communications.
- Maintaining clear and effective communication is complicated by the myriad platforms for communication, including email, social media, and text messaging.
- “Net Generation”: cohort born between 1982 and 1991 who have grown up with the internet. They have a different relationship to technology and different expectations for communication than previous generations.
- E-professionalism: “the attitudes and behaviors (some of which may occur in private settings) reflecting traditional professionalism paradigms but manifested through digital media.”
- Although there are many benefits to technology, there are also challenges, especially the blurred distinction between personal and professional lives
- Using communication to enhance referent power:
  - Organizations can set clear guidelines for use of social media.
  - Individuals should ask their employers about social media guidelines and policies and then follow them.
  - Strive for clarity in your professional communications and understand the communication culture of your work setting or school.
  - In general, if you think sharing something on social media could be problematic, don’t do it!
  - Sample of Guidelines from Mayo Clinic:  
<http://sharing.mayoclinic.org/guidelines/for-mayo-clinic-employees/>
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- Closing – Vision 2025

## Selected References & Resources

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