

LEADING WITH PRESENCE

what it is, why it matters and how to get it.

Dr Andrew A Parsons & Dr Barbara Mariposa

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by

**Dr Andrew A Parsons & Dr Barbara
Mariposa**

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About the Authors

Dr. Andrew Alexander Parsons, BSc, MSc, PhD.



Andrew initially trained as a Pharmacologist and Neuroscientist. Working predominantly in Industry he has over 90 peer reviewed publications and contributed to several Educational Books. With changes in the Companies business strategy he moved into Executive Leadership. He was instrumental in creating External Innovation platforms within the Industry. He worked across organisational and cultural boundaries and developed an interest in the impact of Human Factors (HuF) including Leadership and Culture in complex systems. He has Project Leadership roles within the Pharmaceutical HuF Special Interest group at the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors.

He now works supporting early stage innovation Companies and also as an Executive and Therapeutic

Coach supporting individuals thrive through personal and professional challenges.

**Dr. Barbara Mariposa MBBS, BSc, MFPHM (1),
MICFEA**



Dr. Barbara is a medical doctor with a background in psychiatry and public health. Public health looks at the wider determinants of population health, epidemiology, finance, management, and health care systems delivery. This experience plus previous work in communication training, management consultancy, emotional intelligence and mindfulness led her to work in the field of leadership and personal development, and to create her own programme of seminars, workshops and courses, Mind Mood Mastery.

Dr. Barbara is particularly passionate about the link between personal wellness and social change, the micro and the macro, and a systems approach that generates powerful communication and collaboration across borders, be they inter-personal, inter-professional, or international.

She is an experienced public speaker and the author of two other books published in 2016: "The Kindness Habit: transforming our relationship to addictive behaviours" and "The Mindfulness Playbook".

Reviews

"In today's complex and uncertain world, Presence is the key currency of leadership. In this book, Andy Parsons and Dr. Barbara Mariposa explore what having and leading with Presence means. Through simple techniques that encompass the whole person, the Presence Pyramid model and associated tools deliver a pragmatic, relevant and highly valuable book for anyone wishing to lead in the 21st century.

Leading with Presence brings clarity (why?), context (how?), simplicity of understanding (so what?), and practical tools (what next?) to demystify a hitherto enigmatic concept.

Scientifically heart-warming, this book is a must read for leaders, managers and professionals looking to develop their Presence in the workplace."

Kirsten Samuel

CEO, Kamwell, The Employee Wellbeing Company.

"I write this review with the experience of my own [...] anxiety fuelled depression. Today we live in a very anxious world. A world where at work we are expected to do more with less and be available 24 hours 7 days a week. Our work seems to become all-encompassing in our lives and begins to identify us. Laid over this technology-overload, lack of downtime, over-stimulation, sedentary lives, and fatigue, are all the

ingredients to illnesses such as depression and anxiety. We have forgotten to recover and appreciate the need to take time-out and care for ourselves.

This short book is therefore much needed and timely. It hits the spot to help overstretched people (parents, partners, children, employees, managers, leaders) maximise their potential and wellbeing simultaneously. Simple, easy to read, full of useful and scientifically validated tools, and based on the authors' unique and highly memorable model, the Presence Pyramid, it will help everyone recapture the energy and engagement to live their lives and do their jobs better - bring out the best in themselves and the people they work and interact with. Presence is the missing link for effective people skills, and a key ingredient for mental health in today's fluctuating and pressured working environment. "Leading with Presence" is pragmatic, punchy and performance-orientated - read it then put it into practice."

Geoff McDonald

Former Global Vice President, HR UNILEVER. Global Campaigner and Advocate for Mental Health, Co-Founder Minds At Work Movement.

Preface

The Presence Pyramid arose from what we saw as a need to bring together key aspects of leadership in a practical and easily applicable way.

It's based on the many years of experience working with people in a wide range of circumstances and situations, during which we have each built up a broad foundation of knowledge, skills, and expertise.

We wanted to create a tool to demystify and make accessible the apparently elusive but essential quality of Presence.

In our thinking, Presence is the feature that distinguishes leaders who engage and empower effectively, both at the individual and organisational levels, producing unquestionable impact on top line and bottom line growth.

What sets the model apart is its simplicity. It is targeted at people in positions of authority and power within organisations, people who are in need of a tool to help them deal with the complexity of human relationships and the sometimes chaotic and uncertain workplace of today.

This book is our call for people in positions of power, status and authority to advance the skills and qualities of true leadership.

What does this mean? Perhaps it's best to start at the end - what true leadership looks like in terms of results.

Our assertion is that authentic leaders create engagement and growth. They empower the people in their organisation to deliver exceptional results without sacrificing personal well-being. They recognise that the people ARE the business. A thriving business means thriving people. Excellence in leadership brings out the best in everyone and produces an outstanding impact with vision and heart.

We also call on each and every one of us to bring ourselves to the ever-changing world of business as leaders. Rather than assuming that leadership is given only by power, status and authority, we consider that, to thrive and succeed in the 21st century work environment, we must empower the leadership capabilities that we all have.

Presence is a core component of authentic leadership. In the coming chapters, we will explore what Presence is, why it matters and how you can get it.

As the world of work evolves, it is increasingly obvious that the old hierarchical organisational models are too rigid and slow to change. In today's business world, command and control leadership models are not responsive enough to allow innovation, growth and impact. International networks within and between organisations, and digital connectivity on a global scale demand excellent communication skills, better

utilisation of fewer resources, and a new kind of flexibility at a personal and business level.

This is why Presence matters. It brings with it the qualities needed to deal with the difficulties that are constantly thrown at us, the turn of events no-one can foresee, to communicate effectively even when things get heated, to smooth cross-cultural dialogue within and between businesses.

Previous notions of Presence may imply that it is a) a somewhat nefarious quality that you either have or you don't have, b) that it goes hand in hand with charisma and certain facets of personality, and c) that it is tied in with power. People with personal power have Presence. Presence brings with it personal power.

We break down the key components of Presence into readily applicable chunks that you can build on, improve and make real in your day to day life. Each chunk depends on skills and abilities you already have as a given in the wiring of being human. There is no magic ingredient that some people have and others don't.

A key concept on the road to improving Presence is mindfulness. Mindfulness is the ability to notice what is happening now, to focus our attention where we want it to be, and to accept that what has already arisen in this moment is exactly as it is. Nothing mysterious about that. We all do it every day. By strengthening the mental muscles so we see what is actually in front of us instead of our habitual mental constructs based

on the past, we are strengthening our Presence, the ability to be present.

This is not a book about mindfulness as such - there are plenty of those around. We will, however, give guidance and tips on how to develop more self-awareness, as an essential ingredient for improving Presence. When we start to master Presence, we enhance our ability to lead, with influence and integrity, with intelligence and passion.

1. INTRODUCTION

This book will enable you to improve your leadership Presence and achieve sustainable success.

We have developed the concept of the Presence Pyramid through our work in which we have noticed some recurring patterns that might be familiar to you.

These include:

- Stress, overwhelm and burnout.
- A lack of time, energy and resources.
- A relentless drive to improve and innovate with less.

We are presenting the Presence Pyramid model, together with clear guidance for implementation, to help you function successfully and free up more energy. We want you to be able to navigate the complexities of modern working life sustainably, making the most of what you already have.

How are you coping with the pace of change at work?

How do you feel you are doing as a leader right now?

Are you meeting the expectations of your staff, your deadlines and deliverables?

The Presence Pyramid is a powerful and practical tool to assist you in being at your best. The effects are felt not just by you but also by the people you work with and manage. The three dimensions of the Presence

Pyramid, somatic awareness, adaptability and intention, will be clearly explained with common sense tools and skills for you to use immediately to develop greater leadership Presence.

Other common areas of difficulty we observe are:

- Different professional and cultural languages causing mismatch and disconnect in communication.
- Unconscious bias giving rise to dubious decision-making, especially under pressure.
- Exhaustion and lack of engagement limiting the potential for innovation and success.

Our claim is that the missing ingredient that will transform these problem areas is Presence. We need people in positions of power, authority and status to be clear, decisive, energised and purposeful.

How can you, as a leader, do this without further expenditure of your most precious resource, your own energy?

The Presence Pyramid model shows you how. It will also guide you to a better understanding of how you are seen by others and how you can improve the way you are seen as a leader. The four faces of Presence as represented by the Presence Pyramid, are explained. These are Openness, Impact, Learning and Integrity, vital ingredients to master for you to

function successfully as a leader with minimum energy expenditure.

Our aim is that “Leading with Presence” will be an enjoyable, enriching and useful experience, and one that contributes to effective and dynamic professional relationships.

2. WHAT IS PRESENCE?

Let's start with the most difficult bit - "What is Presence?"

Attempting to answer that question is a bit like asking "What is love?" Everyone knows what it is, and yet it is hard to define.

With Presence, as with love, the conundrum is that the tool we use to define it, our intellect, is the main reason we don't experience it. To be present requires that we are able to notice and be in touch with our experience directly, with what is happening now. This is difficult in an era that is head-driven, data-rich, and information crazy.

What's the opposite of Presence? Where are we if we are not present? We're lost in thought, stuck in our heads, ruminating about stuff that already happened or tied up in thoughts worrying about a future that usually never happens. We are absent from our own lives, living it out in front of computer screens, stuck in meetings, queues, office politics, under pressures we can't control.

It's easily done. Our brains have to deal with huge amounts of incoming information from our senses. This sensory input is dealt with through a series of filters in the neural pathways of the brain, constructed on the basis of past experience.