

Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



Presence by Amy Cuddy

Why Read *Presence*?

“I’m hoping to show you that learning to find presence in the most challenging moments isn’t only good for you, it can yield great benefits for others as well. Presence gives you the power to help others in their most challenging moments.”

“The way you carry yourself is a source of personal power – the kind of power that is the key to presence. It’s the key that allows you to unlock yourself—your abilities, your creativity, your courage, and even your generosity. It doesn’t give you skills or talents you don’t have; it helps you share the ones you do have. It doesn’t make you smarter or better informed, it makes you more resilient and open. It doesn’t change who you are; it allows you to be who you are.”

While this isn’t a book that focuses on explicit leadership skills, it is a book that will help leaders and followers at all levels hone those “soft skills” that are such a large part of being a leader. Command presence in particular is an important tool in the leader’s toolbox, and *Presence* by Amy Cuddy provides some new ways of thinking about presence, how our body language, behavior, and mindset can help establish how others see us, and how we see ourselves. This book is full of interesting ideas and easy tips and tricks for becoming a better person, better leader, and better follower. The ideas found in inside can be applied at any level of leadership, and in almost any situation.

There are several videos featuring leadership lessons from the author available online. Find some of them at the links below, or by using an internet search engine.

- **Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are (21 minutes):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-Mh1QhMc>
- **How your posture impacts the mind (7 minutes):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWWGRXsKHZc>

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

Blog: <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

Professional Reading Program: <https://www.nwccg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>

Main WFLDP page: <https://www.fireleadership.gov>

Presence Discussion Questions

Chapter One: What is Presence?

How do the author's ideas about presence align with the concept of command presence in leadership? What's your personal definition of presence, or being present? How does presence relate to authenticity in a leadership setting?

Chapter Two: Believing and Owning Your Story

Have you spent any time thinking about your core values? How does your authentic self compare to any idealized values of your organization? What can you do to maintain and express your authentic self while also supporting the needs of your organization (crew, module, station, agency, department, etc.)?

Chapter Three: Stop Preaching, Start Listening: How Presence Begets Presence

How important is it to simply "show up" as a fire leader or follower? What's the relationship between trust and presence? Why is important to listen as a leader? What are the benefits of listening?

Chapter Four: I Don't Deserve to Be Here

Have you ever felt like an imposter as a fire leader? How about as a follower? Did you overcome it? How? How can you use that awareness of this kind of behavior and thinking to be a more confident leader and follower?

Chapter Five: How Powerlessness Shackles the Self (and How Power Sets It Free)

What do you think about the ideas of personal power and social power? Do you agree or disagree? Why might personal power be important for leaders and follower in the wildland fire organization? How can you use this information about power to be a better leader? How about a better follower?

Chapter Six: Slouching, Steepling, and the Language of the Body

How does body language influence command presence? Are you going to be more aware of body language after reading this chapter? What are some "watch out situations" for body language? Can body language send the wrong message?

Chapter Seven: Surfing, Smiling, and Singing Ourselves to Happiness

What are your thoughts on the idea that bodily expressions cause emotions at some level? How do the ideas in this chapter relate to the concept of mindfulness? How can being present, mindful, focused on breathing and your body, be valuable to a leader or follower?

Chapter Eight: The Body Shapes the Mind (So Starfish Up!)

How often do you find yourself assessing others based on their body language and posture? Do you ever send the wrong signals with your posture and body language? What are some things you'll think about doing differently? Were you surprised by anything in this chapter?

Chapter Nine: How to Pose for Presence

What did you think of the tips for presence in this chapter? Did you try any of them? What were the results if you did? Were there any that jumped out at you in a “huh, I do that” kind of way? How do these tips about posture tie into ideas about command presence as a fire leader?

Chapter Ten: Self-Nudging: How Tiny Tweaks Lead to Big Changes

What are some small nudges you can do today that will help develop your presence as a leader? As a follower? What are some ways you can nudge those around you to help them achieve their leadership goals and potential?

Chapter Eleven: Fake It Till You Become It

Did any of the examples in this chapter resonate with you? Which ones? Why or why not? Going ahead, how will you use the ideas and tools in this book to be a better leader and follower?