

**Presence and Speaking Checklist 2023**  
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**Preparation**

- Prepare with detail and intention.
- Think about what you DO want, not what you DON'T want – manage your inner critic.
- Magnify the positive and minimize cognitive anxiety.
- Learn and practice primal/abdominal breathing to maintain a centered, stable core.
- During practice sessions, focus with concentrated energy, not effort.
- Hear the sound and feel the piece before you play.
- Bring the stage demands to the practice room.
- Practice performing, let go of self-monitoring, evaluating, and problem-solving.
- Choreograph your mental routine.
- Create and visualize your subtext, projecting it into the hall with physical and mental awareness.
- Practice the musical aspects of stage performance with body awareness.
- Practice specifically for the demands of the performance.
- Practice taking risks in the practice room.
- Practice playing with 100% expression.
- Find permanent solutions to fewer problems at a time.
- Blocked versus random practice. Find what works best for you!
- Memorize and practice text delivery.
- Warm up, practice, and record.
- Remember why you are there!

**Physical aspects of presence preparation**

- Take care of your physical appearance. Wear appropriate clothes, shoes, etc.
- Learn to walk on stage intentionally and connect with the audience immediately in the second circle.
- Keep your eyes off the floor.
- Connect with the audience and smile; invite the audience to come to you.
- Be aware of your arms and hands and what they do as you speak.
- Are body movements helping or hindering/creating strength or weakness?
- Allow specific movements to express your thoughts and musical ideas.
- Maintain strength, but not tension, in the centered, primal torso.
- Practice bowing.

**On the day of the performance**

- Create a calming routine conducive to creating a focused and energized performance.
- Float above fear, redirecting negative thought processes.
- Notice anxiety, allow it to happen physically, breathe deeply and carry on with positive self-talk.
- Meditate or take time to center yourself appropriately before walking on stage.

**On stage**

- Dress appropriately.
- Acknowledge and trust your performance preparation.
- Allow the right brain function to dominate/allow your imagination to soar.
- Redirect negative self-talk by staying in the moment.
- Give yourself permission to let go.
- Interact/communicate with your fellow musicians and the audience.
- Perform, smile, and enjoy yourself!

### An expressive voice is a present voice!

- Prepare spoken text well in advance of the performance.
- Practice spoken text to create 'being in the moment'.
- Map out phrasing, breathing, word accents, and vocal modulation.
- Body awareness - check body posture and alignment. Are you free of stress and tension?
- Be aware of your arms and hands and what they do as you speak. Are they being specific?
- Good abdominal breathing – free and supported with energy.
- Check the body for tension and misplaced effort – jaw, neck, upper body, and legs.
- Speak in phrases and pause for breath in long sentences.
- Accent important words and pronounce final consonants.
- Slow down! Your audience needs to be able to compute and absorb your words and message.
- Speak with projection, clarity, and confidence.
- Modulate your voice according to the message you are communicating.
- Maintain a smooth/legato speech pattern.
- Use eye contact as you communicate. Smile with your eyes.
- Speak your truth and deliver with confidence.
- Speak with focus and intent. To practice this: hum and maintain this position without nasality.
- Avoid harsh glottal attacks on initial vowel sounds.
- Resist the breath rising into the upper body, causing the voice to become constricted (gravel-like sound produced when the vocal folds rub or bang against each other).
- Avoid shouting, screaming, and loud, unsupported laughter and speaking.
- Avoid talking in noisy environments, which can cause constriction or general vocal fatigue.
- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice!

### Maintain good health

- Eat and exercise to stay healthy – avoid processed food and soda drinks as this can cause GERD.
- The quality of your voice matters – hydrate! It is vital for the vocal folds to be lubricated with water so they can function efficiently.
- Avoid smoking, and avoid smoke-filled environments.
- Avoid dry and polluted environments.
- Take care of your voice if you are sick. Steam with a vaporizer if you suffer congestion due to a cold or flu.

### Resist

- Throat clearing and coughing are highly traumatic to the vocal folds and should be minimal. If you feel like clearing your throat, swallow instead. Throat clearing will only shift mucus around, not get rid of it.
- If you are sick and coughing constantly, use a cough suppressant.
- Glycerin throat lozenges are very helpful if your throat is dry.
- Avoid taking antihistamine medication unless necessary, as it will dry out the throat.

### Do

- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice!