



LEAN IN

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

POWER AND INFLUENCE

Overview

The factors influencing how people see you are surprising: words account for only 7 percent of how people judge you. In this meeting, you will learn the body languages of authority and approachability and how to use both styles effectively.

Meeting Goals

- Understand when you naturally feel authoritative and approachable
- Practice shifting interpersonal dynamics through your body language

Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch “Power and Influence” individually or as a group leanin.org/power-influence
- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Remind everyone to bring her One Action update (if you’re doing this)



Brought to you in partnership with...

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Meeting Agenda

🕒 Approx. 105 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes
Warm up, catch up, and get going **p.4**

2 Education Activities 🕒 Approx. 60 minutes
Learn from experts and one another **p.6**

- **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 5 minutes
Take a few minutes to review the core concepts of the “Power and Influence” video **p.6**

- **Activity 2: Personal Inventory** 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes
Identify when you feel authoritative and approachable **p.8**

- **Activity 3: Practicing Skills** 🕒 Approx. 30 minutes
Practice shifting the dynamic in a situation or relationship **p.10**

3 One Action 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes
The little push you need to go for it **p.11**

4 Wrap Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes
What’s next and a few final words **p.13**

Optional Member Materials
One Action Update **p.15**

Meeting Guide

Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

Step 1: Icebreaker



Group activity



Approx. 10 minutes

In this icebreaker, take turns practicing thirty-second introductions—and then share what you saw and heard.

Split up into groups of three to four members, depending on your Circle size.

Each person should take thirty seconds to introduce herself to the group. When it's your turn:

- Say your name
- Describe what you do
- Tell your group something they don't already know about you

When everyone in your group has finished with her introductions, take a moment to reflect on how each member used her body while communicating. Without mentioning names, briefly jot down a few specific things members did with their bodies that were memorable. This could include things they did with their voices, faces, hands, heads, or even breathing. What impact did this body language have? How did it impact your opinion of them? How did it make you feel?

Things I noticed about other members' body language	The messages and feelings it conveys to me

Before wrapping up, come together as a Circle and share the body language you observed during your group's introductions. When it's your turn, share a specific example of body language—and the messages and feelings it conveyed to you. (If time is running out, have a few members volunteer to share their insights.)

Check-In (cont.)

Step 2: Member updates

 Group activity

 2 minutes or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update]."*

Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 60 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, review the key takeaways of our "Power and Influence" video individually or as a group:

People decide how competent you are in a fraction of a second

Factors used to determine your competence: 7 percent words, 38 percent presentation, and 55 percent body language.

There is a body language of power

Body language communicates power and status—who is leading and who is following. It also communicates psychological distance—feeling close or feeling remote.

Body language can shift the dynamics of relationships, interactions, and outcomes

To be perceived as authoritative, act high. To be perceived as approachable, act low. Do not try to act high and low at the same time. Match your body language to the message or intention.

Change your body language to change how you feel

Changing your body position changes how powerfully you behave. Hold an expansive pose or constricted pose for two minutes to change your body chemistry. An expansive pose will make you feel dominant or authoritative. A constricted pose releases stress hormones.

Male and female leaders may behave the same but they're perceived differently

Women who appear competent are often perceived as less likable. Women considered likable are often thought to be less competent. Men don't face this trade-off. Women can begin to address this dynamic by knowing when to act high and when to act low.

Activity 1: Key Takeaways (cont.)

Leaders can find success in knowing when and how to use different power styles

Effective leaders are comfortable moving between authoritative and approachable states, depending on the situation and goal.

Playing high

“Playing high” is the basis of being authoritative.

- Keep a still head
- Speak in complete sentences
- Hold eye contact while talking
- Move smoothly
- Occupy maximum space
- Lean back
- Slow down
- Spread your body to a full, comfortable position
- Look down at someone (tilt your head back a bit)

Playing low

“Playing low” is the basis of being approachable.

- Nod in agreement
- Smile even when it's not funny (a fake smile showing the top teeth)
- Hold your hands near your face while speaking
- Sound breathless or start sentences with “um”
- Speak haltingly and in incomplete sentences, edit as you go, trail off
- Adjust what you are saying to make others understand; explain yourself
- Yield to the higher-status person in speaking—let her take the lead and drive the conversation
- Take up as little space as possible; space constrains your body
- When walking, move out of another's path
- Check others' eyes briefly, looking for understanding and acknowledgment
- Look up at the other person, tilting your head down
- Lean forward to check the other person's responsiveness

Activity 2: Personal Inventory

🕒 Approx. 25 minutes

Step 1: Identify when you feel authoritative and approachable

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Spend a few minutes reflecting on when you feel authoritative and when you feel approachable. How and when does it play out? Whom are you interacting with?

When do you feel authoritative? With whom and how? You act high while being authoritative.

When do you feel approachable? With whom and how? You act low while being approachable.

Activity 2: Personal Inventory (cont.)

Step 2: Share with your Circle



Group activity




2 minutes or less per member

One by one, go through the following questions to share what you learned about yourself and an example from the past month.


- When and with whom are you authoritative?
- When and with whom are you approachable?
- Share one example from the past month when you acted authoritative or acted approachable. What happened?

Activity 3: Practicing Skills

 Approx. 30 minutes

Now that you have started to identify when you feel authoritative and approachable, how will you use this to shift dynamics in your life? In this next activity, you'll practice shifting the dynamic in a situation or relationship.

Step 1: Practice shifting dynamics

 Pair activity

 5 minutes per partner, 10 minutes total

Break into pairs. Take turns answering the questions below about how you would like to shift the dynamic in a current situation or relationship—in other words, when do you want to be seen as more authoritative or as more approachable?


- What is your goal for the situation or relationship?
- What is the current power dynamic?
 - How do you act?
 - How do others act?

Once you've both answered the questions, practice what you might do to be seen as more authoritative or more approachable to shift the dynamic. Then, practice moving between playing high and playing low during a single conversation—but don't do both simultaneously. Can you find ways to seem approachable in parts of the conversation and authoritative in others?

After five minutes, switch and let your partner share.

Step 2: Share with your Circle

 Group activity

 2 minutes or less per member

One by one, briefly recap your conversations with the group and share what you learned. Be sure to touch on the following questions:

- What is the current power dynamic in the situation you chose to role-play with your partner?
- What is your goal for the situation or relationship?
- What did you see or learn in practicing with your partner?

One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

Step 1: Identify the action you’re going to take

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Think of something important coming up. This could be either a positive or stressful situation where you want to shift the power dynamic. In the next month, try acting high or acting low to make this shift. Remember, you can start with small adjustments.

Write down all the details of this upcoming situation. What is your ideal outcome?

Imagine ways of moving strategically between being authoritative and being approachable in this situation. How will you use acting high? How will you use acting low?

One Action (cont.)

Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle



Group activity



1 minute or less per member

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statements:

- Over the next month, I want to shift the power dynamic in ...
- To do this, I plan to ...

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering one another on as you go.

Housekeeping Note: We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. One page 15 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update. Individually or as a group, you can decide to bring the worksheet to your next Circle meeting.

Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting: day and time, location, food and drink. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who's going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting and brainstorm improvements going forward.

Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less

Think of how you are feeling at the end of this meeting. Stand up and take a step back from the group so you have space to move your arms. Try assuming a constricted posture and then saying how you feel ("Today I'm feeling ..."). Everyone can say her statement together at the same time. No need to go one by one. Notice how you feel about what you're saying in this position. Now, try switching your position to pose in an expansive posture. Pause to notice how your body feels with the change and then say the same statement. Notice how your posture changes your feeling about what you are saying.

Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following page for an optional member activity.

One Action Update

Use the following prompts to give your One Action update during your next meeting. You can even prepare your answers ahead to maximize your time with your Circle.

- By acting high/low, I was able to shift ...

Describe the relationship/situation you shifted

- As a result of acting high/low, I noticed ...

Describe the outcome of your actions

- During this process, I felt ...