

## **EMBODIED LEADERSHIP- *CALM AT THE CENTER OF THE STORM***

*Would you like to increase your capacity to lead others?*

*Charismatic leaders understand that their presence speaks “louder” than their words. They know how to create an organizational environment that inspires others to step up and take risks.*

*But how can leaders remain centered in the face of the uncertainty and turbulent change facing their organizations? This is the challenge we will address together.*

*In this presentation, drawing mainly from the theories of Aikido and NLP, you’ll learn how to access and use the information transmitted by your body to help you quiet your thinking mind and communicate with confidence.*

*As an embodied leader you’ll inspire others to believe in themselves and the likelihood of success.*

### **Session Overview**

#### **1. Learning objective of the session**

The main objective of this session is to give you an experiential understanding of how your non-verbal behavior (your “presence”) directly influences your capacity to remain solution oriented when the unexpected happens, and influence others to do the same.

#### **2. The issue addressed will be**

The session will address the need leaders have to remain centered and solution oriented when dealing with high speed change and uncertainty in their organizations. To be comfortable giving up what no longer works, by developing a sense of inner strength, clarity, and alignment.

#### **3. Design of the session—delivery methods and training techniques**

I’ll begin by demonstrating how embodied presence affects one’s sense of self, and the belief others have in a leader. The main learning examples will include:

A) The Aikido practice of developing a state of “mind-body coordination”. Understanding how balanced posture and a relaxed body leads one to feel centered and ready for action.

B) Presenting the NLP concept of "somatic syntax", to give an experiential understanding of how the body communicates in a sophisticated, complex, and complete manner.

Next, I'll work with one member of the audience to help them address a challenge while maintaining a sense of embodied presence. During the course of this demonstration the group will be engaged in a discussion of what they observed in regard to how embodied presence impacts one's ability to remain solution oriented and focused on a positive outcome.

The group will then break up into small teams and be given specific tools to practice staying focused and centered when challenged by external events, or negative responses from others. They will be asked to use the same format initially presented in the front of the room.

Finally, I will field questions, facilitate discussion amongst the group, help people understand how they can improve upon the results they achieved, and orient them towards practicing what they learned during the session.

#### 4. What you will learn and how you will benefit

You will come away with a clear experience of the role Embodied Leadership plays in determining your ability to successfully engage in and manage change. By learning how to use your body in order to generate and communicate a centered confidence, you will walk away with practical tools you can use in your everyday life, at work or at home.

#### 5. Why the session is relevant to OD practitioners

The capacity to embody a centered confidence when faced with high speed change and uncertainty is one of the greatest attributes any leader can possess. When a leader manifests embodied presence, what they think, say, and believe in all come across in a congruent manner. At such times, others will be inspired to follow their example and work towards creating a future that fulfills the goals of the organization.

## **The Language of the Body-Somatic Syntax**

The language of your body is at least as sophisticated, systematic, and complete as the verbal language you speak. The "wiring" for your somatic language begins its development while you are inside your mother's belly, and it forms the foundation of your verbal language patterns, memories, learned responses, and emotional make-up. This language spoken and understood by your body is what enables you to make meaning out of your experience prior to understanding your native tongue. It remains your primary means

of understanding your experience, throughout the course of your life. In her book "Molecules of Emotion," Candace Pert says there are "information molecules" that orchestrate the chemical reactions that run our system. She refers to these molecules as the basic units of a "language" used by cells throughout the organism to communicate. In his book "The Second Brain," Dr. Gershon says that neurotransmitters are the "words" nerve cells use for communicating. These renowned scientists are telling us that we all "speak," "listen to," and understand a primary language that does not depend on our verbal abilities. This "other" language is what in Seishindo we call "the language of the somatic self" or "the language of the body" as described above. In NLP and Seishindo we say that approximately 85% of the meaning of a communication is delivered via everything *other than* the actual words we speak. The words (verbal language) we speak are considered to be the digital component of the communication. "How" we deliver the words is the analogue component of the communication, (the "somatic language" of the communication). Somatic language includes our posture, movements, tone of voice, speed and rhythm of our talking, and our breath and pausing.

Somatic language (the language of your body) does not use or require verbal language although it interacts with it continually, like a music group improvising with a singer, or a horse and rider traversing a path in the forest. The language of your body facilitates a primary communication and information exchange that makes it possible for you to connect to and understand, the workings of your body and brain, your personal sense of "self", your relationship with others, and the world around you. Your somatic intelligence makes it possible for you to make sense out of your experience *prior to* conceptualizing or verbalizing what is taking place. It is part of the "mammalian consciousness" shared by all mammals. Somatic intelligence is intuitive and relational in nature and seems to direct us to join with other life. Just like words are systematically and artfully joined together to form the content of your verbal language as spoken by your cognitive self, the various components of your sensory experience are systematically and artfully joined together to form the language of your somatic self. This language makes it possible for you to intuitively understand and direct all of the massive information exchange your body takes part in, in collaboration with the brain. It is a language of immediate experience as compared to verbal language being a communication of abstractions. Your body is a tireless worker, attempting to protect and nurture you at every given moment. It is crucial that you learn to appreciate, understand, and heed what it has to say!

When observing and interacting with somatic language, it is of great importance to notice how you "set the context" of the communication with your body *prior to* actually

talking/performing. What you do prior to talking and or performing is what is known as “pre-movement”. For example, ask a person to perform an action that they have little confidence in- You will likely notice their posture slumps ever so much, they have a catch in their breathing, and they look down, *prior to* talking/performing. This “pre-movement” will to a large extent determine the results they achieve, and their emotional experience during and after talking/performing. When a person changes their pre-movement, they change the results they achieve, and their sense of competence and confidence.

## **Practical Experience**

*A fundamental principle of both Seishindo and NLP is that each person is made up of "knowledge networks" that are distributed throughout the entire body. These networks are organized and orchestrated by a sophisticated body language that determines the way you think, feel, and respond to life's many challenges and opportunities.*

### ***“Little by little”***

As always, it’s important to speak slowly and purposely while absorbing yourself in the moment and connecting with your counterpart.

1. Person A thinks of a learning/performance challenge, and states what it is.
  2. Person B asks Person A to “Please *slowly* talk about or perform your challenge”. Person A is to talk or perform for 20 seconds to one minute.
  3. Person B then asks Person A “Please tell me what you most noticed in regard to your body, tone of voice, breathing, and or what you were seeing or hearing, as you talked or performed?”
  4. Person A remarks on what he/she noticed. For instance Person A might say, “I noticed a catch in my breathing.”
  5. Person B asks Person A to “Please talk or perform again while noticing (in this case) *your breath*”.
- [Important note: If for instance Person A states “A catch in my breathing” or “Tight

shoulders”, Person A asks Person B to notice their “breath” or their “shoulders” rather than “a *catch* in your breath” or “*tight* shoulders”]

6. Person A is to talk or perform again, for 20 seconds to one minute.

7. Person B stops the performance when it seems appropriate and asks “Please tell me again what you most noticed this time in regard to your body, tone of voice, breathing, and or what you were seeing or hearing, as you talked or performed?”

8. Person A answers. For instance: “I noticed my face felt tense.”

9. Person B instructs Person A, “This time perform again while noticing *your breath and your face*.”

10. Person A is to talk or perform for 20 seconds to one minute.

11. Person B asks Person A to once again report on their experience.

Continue until one or both parties notes “there is a meaningful change or awareness”, whatever that might be.

***One of the main purposes of this Practice is to help you realize “Your somatic mind is talking to you all the time, letting you know what it would like, and what needs to be different. The questions to consider are “Are you honoring and listening to the communication of your body?” Are you responding in a generative manner?” “No response” is one of the most powerful responses we can communicate!***