

A group of five diverse children are smiling and posing for a photo at a playground. In the foreground, a young boy with light brown hair and a red shirt is smiling. Next to him is a girl with dark skin and curly hair wearing a green shirt. To the right, a girl with long red hair and a black and white striped tank top is smiling. In the background, a girl with long brown hair in a yellow shirt and a boy in a teal shirt are also smiling. They are standing on a gravel surface with a purple slide and green trees in the background under bright sunlight.

All About Presence: Your Everyday Superpower

Dr. Shirls

All About Presence: Your Everyday SuperPower

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What Is Presence?

Presence is what happens when you give your full attention to the moment you're in. Whether you're talking with a friend, trying something new, or listening at school. When you're present, you notice what's going on around you, how you feel, and the things people say. You're not thinking about the past or worrying about what might happen next.

Why does it matter? Being present helps you:

- Make stronger friendships.
- Focus better in class.
- Feel more confident during sports or new experiences.
- Stay calm when things get tough.

Presence isn't about being perfect. It's about making the most of every moment, just as you are.



Why Presence Is a Superpower



At School

When you're present in class, you understand lessons better and remember more.



With Friends

Being present helps you connect and be a better friend. People love knowing you care!



Trying New Things

Presence helps you pay attention and feel less nervous when you do something new.

The Power of Posture

How you stand or sit matters! When your back is straight, and your head is held high, you feel confident and ready. Good posture also helps others see you as someone who believes in themselves. Slouching can make you feel smaller or less sure, even if you don't mean to.

Try this: Stand up straight, shoulders back, chin up, feet apart. Take a deep breath. How does your body feel? Now, try slouching over, letting your arms hang, and your head droop. Do you notice a difference?

Confident posture doesn't just change how you look, it changes how you feel inside. Practice in the mirror and see what kind of presence you can show with just a simple change in posture.



Eye Contact Magic

Making eye contact means looking at someone's eyes when you talk or listen. It helps people know you're paying attention, builds trust, and makes conversations feel friendly. When someone makes eye contact with you, it feels like they really see you! If looking someone in the eye feels tricky, try glancing at their nose or forehead. People won't notice the difference.

Eye contact also helps you remember what people say. Practice by talking to your friends or family while focusing gently on their eyes. Not too much, just enough that you both feel connected and comfortable. With practice, eye contact becomes easy and fun!



Shaking Hands & Saying Hello

Even though a handshake might seem more grown-up, it's a cool way to greet new people and show respect. Here's how to nail it:

1. Look the other person in the eye.
2. Smile.
3. Reach out with your right hand.
4. Shake their hand firmly (not too hard!)
5. Say, "Hello! My name is ____."

You can also just give a friendly wave or a high five. What matters is making the other person feel seen and welcomed.



Different places have different greeting styles. In your school or community, some people may prefer fist bumps, high fives, or simple waves.

No matter what greeting you use, add a smile and a simple "Hi!" to show you're friendly and open. When you greet someone confidently, it helps them feel good, and you'll feel more at ease too.



Friendly Greeting Boosters



The Power of a Smile

A big, real smile is the quickest way to show you care. It makes everyone feel welcome!



Pick Your Greeting

Whether it's a handshake, high five, or fist bump, choose the greeting that feels right for you and the situation.

Finding Your Voice

Speaking up can be scary, especially in front of others or when sharing your true thoughts. But your voice matters! When you share ideas, answer a question, or offer a suggestion, you let others know who you are.

Start by speaking clearly and at a good volume. If your voice shakes or your words mix up, that's okay; it happens to everyone.

Practice with friends or family. Try reading aloud, answering small questions in class, or even talking in front of a mirror. Remember, what you say is important, and people want to hear from you! Each time you speak up, you grow your confidence and your presence.



Voice Power Tips



Practice Aloud

The more you hear your own voice, the easier it gets! Read stories or jokes out loud to your pets, friends, or even stuffed animals.



Small Steps

Start by answering yes/no questions or sharing in a small group, then try bigger audiences when you're ready.

Listening Like a Pro

Great conversations need great listeners! When you listen to a friend, teacher, or teammate, you show respect and build stronger connections. Being a good listener means looking at the person, not interrupting, and really focusing on their words, not just planning what you'll say next.

Fun game: Try the "Mirror Listening" challenge! One person talks for one minute, and the listener tries to repeat back exactly what was said. It's harder than it sounds, and a cool way to sharpen your attention.



Dealing With Nerves

Everyone gets nervous. Yes, even adults! Nerves show up when you try new things, meet people, or speak in public. It might mean your heart races, your hands sweat, or your stomach feels jumpy. That's totally normal. The trick is not to get rid of nerves, but to work with them.

Try sharing feelings with someone you trust. You'll find out you're not alone! Each time you face your nerves, you get a little braver. Over time, things that make you nervous now won't feel as tough.



Meet Your Brain Buddies

Did you know your brain has different parts that help with feelings and thinking? Meet your two Brain Buddies! The Amygdala is like your alarm system. When it senses danger (even something like speaking up in class!), it sounds the alarm, and you might feel nervous or scared. The Prefrontal Cortex is your thinker. It helps you solve problems, plan, and make good choices.

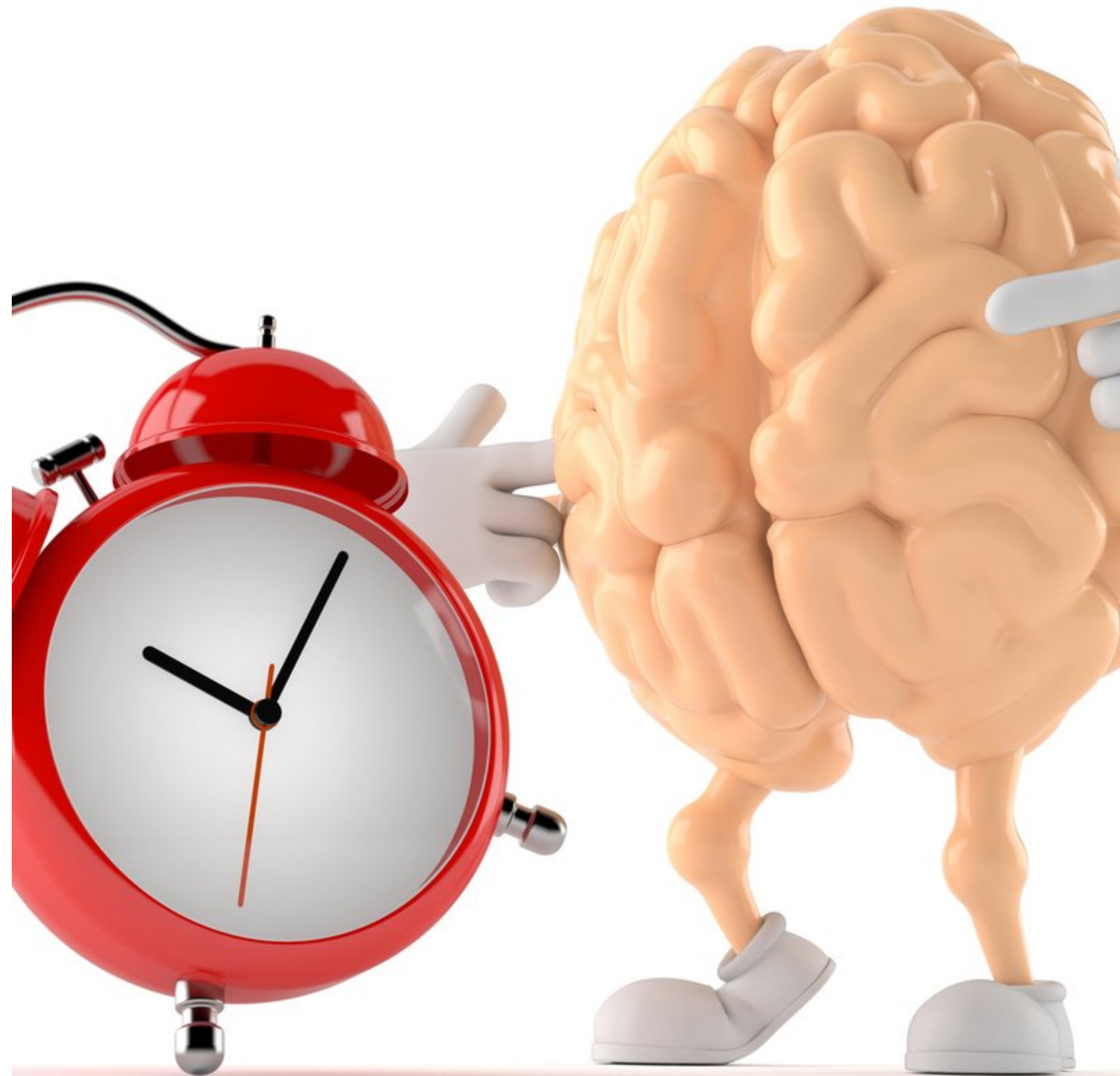
When you're nervous, the Amygdala takes charge. But with practice, you can help your Prefrontal Cortex get back in control and help you feel calm, brave, and focused.



Imagine your Amygdala as a tiny superhero, always on the lookout for trouble.

Sometimes, it sounds the alarm too much!

Your Prefrontal Cortex is like a wise coach, helping you figure out what's really happening and what to do next. The more you practice calming down, the stronger your coach gets!



Fast Reset Tools



Box Breathing

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4—repeat 4 times. This tells your brain you're safe!



Focus Trick

Look around and name 3 things you see, 2 things you hear, and 1 thing you feel. It helps your Prefrontal Cortex take charge!

Practice Makes Presence

Building your presence takes practice, just like learning a sport or instrument. Here are some fun daily challenges you can try:

- Greet three people in your class every morning.
- Stand with superhero posture in line or at recess.
- Practice looking people in the eye and smiling when you say hello.
- Try box breathing whenever you feel nervous.
- Share your thoughts in class, even if just once per day.

You can also draw or take pictures of yourself practicing these skills to track your progress. Each small step adds up. If you want, write down how you felt each day, and see how your confidence grows.



Your Presence Superpower Recap

You've learned what presence is, why it matters, and how you can use it every day.

Remember: Good posture, eye contact, greetings, listening, speaking up, and calming your nerves all help you shine. Train your brain buddies and use quick resets whenever you need.

Most importantly, give yourself credit for every brave step you take. The world needs your unique presence!



One Last Thing...

Before you close this e-book, I want you to remember something very important.

You don't have to be the fastest, the funniest, the smartest, or the loudest person in the room to make a difference.

You just have to be **you**.

Every time you smile at someone, listen carefully, stand a little taller, or choose courage instead of fear, you're growing. Those little moments may not seem like a big deal, but they are. They are helping you become someone others will trust, respect, and enjoy being around.

There will be days when you feel brave...and there will be days when you feel nervous. Guess what? That's true for everyone, even adults!

The important thing isn't being fearless. The important thing is choosing to keep trying.

Remember, your presence is a gift. The way you make people feel matters. Your kindness matters. Your ideas matter. And no one else in the whole world can be you.

So keep learning. Keep practicing. Keep believing in yourself.

The world is a better place because you're in it.

And whenever you need a little reminder, hear my voice saying:

You've got this!

Love,

Dr. Shirls