

## STATUS

...not the same as hierarchy! How you use your body, breath, and voice in time and space

Less time + less space = lower Status

More time + more space = higher Status

- We intuitively move up and down the Status spectrum depending on who our audience is or our situation.
- When delivering messages, Optimal Status (in the middle of the spectrum – physically not ‘protecting’ or ‘pushing’) will enable our audience to feel ‘safe’ and to receive the content effectively. Too high or too low forces the audience to disengage quickly.
- We pick up Status signals all the time, not just when presenting, in a meeting, or having an important conversation. Increase awareness of how you are walking across the office, standing in a lift etc. to make sure that your Status level is working for you, and a conscious decision, rather than your habit.

## Optimal Alignment for Breath, Voice and Status:

### **Massage:**

Massage is one of the quickest ways to release physical tension, allowing the body to find its natural alignment and therefore optimal Status. This is also the same physicality for optimal breath use as well as optimal vocal use. 10 mins of massage once a week will be more effective than 90 mins every few months!

In lieu of being able to get a massage, self-massage is effective (digging fingers into the opposite side of the back, shoulder (in and around the socket), chest (under and above collar bone), whilst circling shoulder) to release tension, allowing the body to find optimal alignment. 30 secs either side a couple of times a day will make a big difference very quickly.

### **Arm swinging:**

Stand with feet hip width or wider apart, knees soft and slightly bent.

Swing the torso from side to side, look over each shoulder as you turn and allow the arms to swing freely in the shoulder girdle.

As you swing, the arms may thump freely against the back, sides. This is great for the breath and increasing blood flow.

Increase the speed for 10 seconds.

Stop and stand with feet under hips, feeling the energy and sensation in the body.

## Feet    Head    Shoulders    Breath

### Feet

- melting, spreading, releasing tension
- sinking down into sand
- growing roots
- knees soft
- weights attached to wrists
- weight of entire body sinking into feet (let the feet do their job!)

### Head

- full of helium like a balloon
- floating **lightly** up (no stretching or pushing)

### Shoulders

- floating away from each other (imagining the shoulder blades melting down to the centre lower back)
- hips floating away from each other

### Breath

- imagine the torso as an empty barrel-like space
- imagine the breath flowing into the lower part of the barrel/tummy, bypassing chest area entirely
- release an 'ffff' sound on the exhale (no pushing or controlling – it doesn't have to last long)
- at the end of the breath/ffff, let the lower belly release and the new breath will drop in

### Seated alignment

- the same as standing but allowing the buttocks/thighs to melt, spread, release along with the feet
- try to position yourself in the front 50% of the chair so that you are bearing your own weight and cannot slump into the frame (bringing your body forward on the chair may mean that you have to move the chair backwards, in order to ensure there is enough space between your body and the table/camera/computer)

## Seated alignment (crossed legs)

- the leg making contact with the ground should be in the centre of the body (like a tripod)
- the torso should not contract forwards

## Standing in heels

- Imagine the heel sinking into the ground a little further than the rest of the foot (think - stiletto on grass!)
- Make sure knees are soft, not locked

## Hosting – a technique to find Optimal Status

This is a **thought-change** technique resulting in physical status change.

No pretending or acting required (!) just think of a time when you have hosted and allow that feeling/memory to be present whilst talking/delivering your message.

### The feeling of hosting – making your audience/guests feel:

- that they are safe
- that they are welcome
- that you are comfortable taking responsibility for them and the situation
- that you are going to lead them through the process/information
- that their time is going to be well spent
- that you are going to have a great time!

Enjoy the feeling of raised status and authority, knowing that you are doing it for the audience's sake as opposed to self-promotion or 'showing off' in any way. It is an act of generosity.

Keep the focus off of 'self', and focus attention on the audience – what do they need from you?  
How can you make this experience as comfortable/valuable as possible?