

AUTHORITY: HOW DO YOU 'SHOW UP'?

How do others respond to your presence? How we 'show up' can affect the dynamics and emotions in a meeting, whether it is in person or virtual.

When we enter a room and engage in discussion do others:

- welcome our presence?
- have confidence that we will listen and engage constructively?
- trust our contributions?
- see us as forward looking and not stuck in the past?
- believe we will focus on solutions rather than admiring problems?

We observe that leaders who bring authoritative influence:

- are fully present and avoid being distracted
- see the presenting issue as part of a bigger picture
- are calm and measured in their contributions
- are dispassionate in ensuring a problem is assessed from various perspectives
- allow time and space for others to reflect and contribute
- don't rush at decisions, while being clear on the timescales that need to be met
- understand how to handle the emotional dynamics in the room
- give confidence that a solution can be found.

If you are not the most senior person in the room you can still carry authority:

- remember you are in your role for a reason and others want to hear from you
- prepare so that you have something useful to say or a question to ask
- position yourself where others can hear and see you
- observe how others carry authority in the room
- try speaking more slowly and deliberately than usual
- wear or carry something that reminds you of your most confident self.

How we convey authority depends on the way we show up physically, emotionally and mentally. You can energise a discussion, or stifle a productive engagement, by how you interact with others. Hierarchy can be less important than the value of your contribution and the way that you make it. Can you experiment with how you 'show up'?