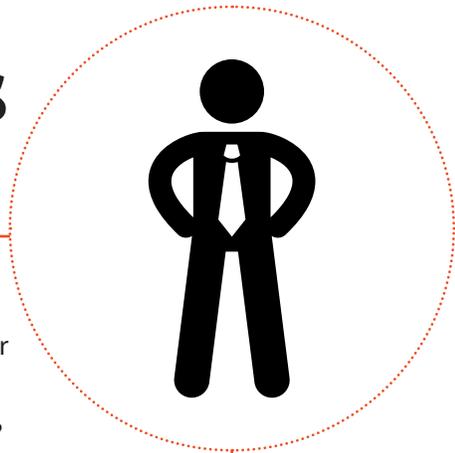


Power Poses



Intro

Sit up straight, stand tall, and show what it is to radiate confidence and power. Good posture and a few hand gestures can illustrate the charismatic properties that indicate a strong leader. Not only that, power poses can also reduce stress levels and build a degree of self-confidence in the power pose user, which can be

perceived by their audience. What's more, these small non-verbal gestures can generate increased social capital over time and improve performance in job interviews. The founder of the theory around power posing, Amy Cuddy, highlighted how something as simple as putting your hands together to form a

steeple and a few small adjustments to body language can signal to your colleagues that you are in control of the situation... But how true is any of this?

What's the evidence?

Some studies have noted that power poses reduce cortisol and increase testosterone, hormones responsible for feelings of stress and confidence respectively. Furthermore, other studies have highlighted the idea that power poses improve moods and induce an increased feeling of self-efficacy. However, this apparent evidence may be unreliable, with such promising findings

failing to be replicated. In fact, larger samples of research reject entirely the premise that poses affect stress levels, behaviour, and the feeling of confidence. In fact, Amy Cuddy herself has since retracted her belief in power poses. In a joint response from academics from Berkeley, Cuddy and her colleagues highlighted the shortcomings of research supporting power poses, and denounced the concept

and encouraged others to do so as well. So, why do some leaders hold onto a belief in power poses, even when the founder of such a theory has unlearned such a practice herself?

EVIDENCE BASE
Low

Why unlearn power poses?

Is there any harm in power poses even if they don't work? What are the risks of reinforcing an unsubstantiated practice? Power poses promote "fake it 'til you make it" behaviours which may run the risk of increasing the required emotional labour of work and reduce the sense of authenticity. At the same time, training and

development programs can be expensive and paying for a development program teaching unsubstantiated practices has little value, but significant opportunity cost. Instead of focusing on what confidence seems like, management may want to place more effort in cultivating what confidence is. Shifting the focus onto developing and

implementing alternative self-efficacy and confidence-building practices may be a more fruitful avenue to improve the performance of individuals, while at the same time unlearning power poses.

HARM LEVEL
Low

Want to know more?

<https://www.thecut.com/2016/09/read-amy-cuddys-response-to-power-posing-critiques.html>

ADAPTABILITY
Low