

YOUR BEST SELF

HOW TO LOOK CONFIDENT

During some of our bravest moments, we're terrified inside – but still need to show we're in control. That's why looking brave can sometimes be even more important than feeling it.

Maybe it's at a job interview. Or maybe it's when you walk by that person who totally intimidates you, and you want to say hi like it's no big thing.

There's a famous unwritten rule of success: "Fake it till you make it." The idea is simple: if you don't feel brave inside, act like you do on the outside. Eventually, your insides will catch up with your outside. Here are some surefire strategies to help you get that brave look, even if you're not feeling it.

PRACTICE A "POWER POSE."

Sit in your chair the way a typical guy does. Now sit the way a typical girl sits. Notice the difference? The "guy" takes up more space with his body and looks more relaxed. The "girl" shrinks her body inward.

Girls and women often use weak body language: we cross our arms and legs, play with our hair, stand on one leg with a hip thrust out,



and stuff our hands in pockets. No matter how smart or well-spoken we are, our body language sends silent, powerful messages to others about our confidence – which can strongly influence other people's opinions of us.

Our body language also affects how we feel. Studies show that holding your body in certain "strong" positions can actually make you feel braver. For example, if you hold your body more like a guy – spreading out your arms and legs when you sit, or clasping your hands behind your head with your elbows out – your body will feel more confident: your level of cortisol, the "stress hormone," decreases. Testosterone, the "power hormone," shoots up. Try it right now for two minutes.

Now try smiling, for ten seconds. Did you feel that instant change in your mood? So the next time your brain is feeling scared, ask your body for help.

MAKE FIERCE LADY EYE CONTACT (FLEC).

Even if you're freaking on the inside, you can still rock a powerful gaze. Eye contact sends the message that you're connected and in control. It can feel scary, sure, but it's a skill you can practice over time. Skills are like muscles: the more you work them, the stronger they get. Spend a few moments practicing FLEC every day – with strangers you pass on the street, friends and family. Each time, hold your gaze a little longer (but do not engage in Creepy Lady



HOW YOU SPEAK IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU SAY

Eye Contact. That is weird.) Then try throwing in a smile and presto! You're a FLEC goddess.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE.

Think about the last class or meeting you attended. Have you ever noticed that girls and women apologize before they speak? "I'm not sure if this is right," many say. They might use "upspeak," making their statements sound like questions ("I agree with what she said?"), or let their voices trail off at the end of a comment. How you speak is as important as what you say. Drop the apologies and end your sentences with a firm period: you'll project major courage and confidence.