



Ei World

bates

Helping leaders influence the world.

BATES EXPI™ TOOLS

HEAD-HEART-HANDS



About Head-Heart-Hands

Head-Heart-Hands is a very useful mental model, particularly for leaders who have a strong action bias. What do we mean by that? Many leaders have been rewarded and even promoted because they are highly results oriented and have a tendency to push things forward expediently. That's a valuable quality, and it often will show up in higher ratings in facets such as Confidence and Appearance.

That said, there are times when a leader needs to be able to hit the “pause button” and slow down enough to ask questions, actively listen, and engage in dialogue or constructive debate. If we don't do so, we may be at risk of being perceived as lacking empathy, being too directive, or not being attuned to the needs and concerns of others.

Head-Heart-Hands offers a structured way to slow down and pay attention to what others are thinking, feeling, and doing. The key is to *position yourself to notice*. When we do that, it's a big step toward helping our leadership style “show up” as more attuned, careful, deliberate, and calm. It can be very effective in amplifying many facets, as we will discuss on the next page.



How Head-Heart-Hands Can Help with Executive Presence

When you use Head-Heart-Hands consistently, it will help you improve how several facets of executive presence are perceived by your stakeholders:

Resonance – Head-Heart-Hands requires that you consciously and deliberately “check in” on what others are thinking, feeling, and doing. It helps us avoid making assumptions about others’ agendas or to focus too much on driving our own agenda.

Restraint – With Head-Heart-Hands, you can make a practice of always asking questions when you meet with peers or direct reports instead of defaulting to stating your opinions and goals. This will enhance your ability to come across as more deliberate and calm rather reacting more impulsively.

Composure – In times of crisis or stress, Head-Heart-Hands is a valuable way to de-escalate emotions, stay objective, and come across as proactive and stable.

Inclusiveness – The Inclusiveness facet entails actively involving others, welcoming diverse points of view, and encouraging ownership. By asking your direct reports to weigh in how they’re thinking and feeling as well as what they plan to do, you are giving them an opportunity to share ideas while giving yourself an opportunity to determine if they’re on the right course or if they may need some constructive feedback.

Head-Heart-Hands also may lift perceptions with specific items in other facets:

Humility – “Open to ideas and other points of view.”

Concern – “Takes time to listen and leaves others feeling heard.”

Intentionality – “Gets us aligned without sacrificing a constructive back and forth along the way.”

Interactivity – “Really listens when others speak and notices what may be unspoken.”



The Head-Heart-Hands Model

Here's a simple overview of the model:



We start with the Head perspective. As you're listening to a stakeholder, ask yourself: "What's the quality of thinking that I'm hearing? Is he making the right assumptions? Is he framing the content in a good way?" If that isn't clear, you can ask a question or two to make sure you understand the person's thought process. This slows you down and gives you more clarity... and it also stimulates your conversational partner to share more, which can only help you.




The Heart piece goes to emotion and motivation. When listening to someone, ask yourself, "What is this person experiencing emotionally? What is their body language telling me about their emotional state? Do they seem excited? Frustrated? Hesitant?" When you pick up on an emotional state, think about making a process observation: You could say, "John, I'm noticing that you're not 'all in' on this plan right now... so tell me, how are you feeling about this?" Sometimes people will feel things before they really know or understand them, so being alert to these hints can be valuable for leaders.

The final part is the Hands piece. You can focus your attention on whether her stakeholders were acting as if they knew what should be done... or not. You can also ask what actions people have taken or what actions they plan to take: "So Jill, what do you see as the next steps we should take as we look at getting people to embrace this change?" Noticing what people do—as well as what they plan to do—will give you insight to support their actions or ask questions about them.



The Head-Heart-Hands Model in Stages

Another way to apply Head-Heart-Hands is to think of it as a way of noticing where people in adapting to a change. In the model below, we can see what *ideally* happens in each of the three stages of change adaptation. For each of the three stages, we can use Head-Heart-Hands to determine where we are in the process versus where we would like to be: Are their gaps? If so, where are they showing up?

<div style="text-align: right;">Dimensions</div> <div style="text-align: left;">Stages</div>	 Understanding	 Motivation	 Behavior
1) Coming to grips	Initial practical grasp of presenting situation, issues, goals, plans, rationale	Attitude open, energy high, feelings positive, appropriate indications of humility and urgency	Identify and acquire the tools, knowledge, and skills required to do the work
2) Working it through	Increasingly nuanced understanding, insight, and judgment based on experience	Growing confidence, readiness to take risk, and to admit ignorance and be accountable	Exhibits growing skill, fluency in technical problem solving, and keen desire for mastery
3) Sustaining momentum	Core mental models are established, adoption is widespread, and skilled execution is the norm	Confidence grounded in experience, reflects pride in success and support for others	Able to teach, consult, and to problem solve complex issues that require innovation

