

DR. TIMOTHY DUKES

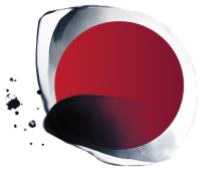
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Step In – Step Out



Strategies for Successful Meetings

Theory



Step — Into your “agency,”

Step Out — Carry your agency with you.

Agency = Authority = Authorship = Authentic = Authorized

Introduction

The Step-In procedure is a communication practice which moves individual team members into a context of full participation. It can be utilized when first establishing communication with another individual, team, or group. It allows others to know where you are standing and where you intend to go.

Stepping-in gives others a window into your thoughts and to what is affecting you in the very moment. This check-in aligns you with your own authority and clear intention before you connect with colleague or team.

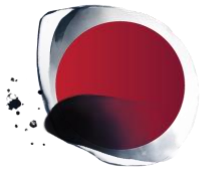
Rationale

This Step-in creates a relational context. It provides an opportunity to normalize the situation as the communicator becomes slightly more familiar to their colleagues. This form of check-in also provides the communicator an opportunity to “take the temperature” of the situation by observing how their teammates relate to the information shared. Do they show an interest? Have they also fully arrived in the room? Are they ready to go to work or participate with-in the agenda of the meeting? This method sets a platform for others to begin to open and become more available and to share information authentically. This induction is an effective way to begin to connect and establish a basis for rapport.

Preparation and Declaration

Assume that you are preparing for a race, a ball game, a theatrical performance, or board presentation. Every meeting at the executive level requires you to prepare yourself for 100% participation before you arrive and cross the threshold.

The Step-in, because it is brief and in consideration of organizational resources allocated to each meeting, is your opportunity to declare with full authority, authenticity, and transparency that you are prepared for this meeting.



Process: Open—Up the Enquiry

Take a moment to describe the status of your work to yourself — how will you participate psychologically, emotionally, and behaviorally, so that meeting is safe for me and others? This is my responsibility. This method sets a platform for others to begin to open and become more available and to share information authentically. This induction is an effective way to begin to connect and establish a basis for rapport.

To Step-in ensures:

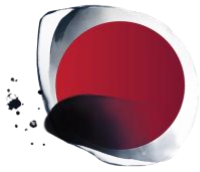
- Relationship first
- Procedure and process maintained and developed.
- Strategies clarified.
- Tactics determined.
- Action defined.
- Agreements made.
- Agreements kept.

Experiential: Ask Yourself

- What is working?
- What is challenging?
- What is emerging?
- What is new to my toolkit?
- What can others do for me?
- What do I have to do to get in the room?
- What am I here to accomplish?

The meeting is about to begin, what do you have to do to:

- Step-in fully.
- Engage
- Participate transparently.
- Serve the process of the meeting not your own agenda.
- Be present and engage.
- What is my intention for this meeting?
- What's important to me in this meeting?
- What impact do I hope to have on this meeting?



Claiming Authority

Claiming authority is a posture, presents itself as the true position to be assumed given a relational interaction. For a leader to do otherwise in a context of responsibility as a leader, is a “false” position. Fully engaged leadership means:

- Claim authority.
- Define and hold the context of a meeting.
- Take responsibility to manage the process successfully.
- Keep it safe.
- Get results.
- Define action items for moving forward.
- Close the meeting with a series of actionable agreements.

Timeline:

The rule of thumb is to limit your step-in or step-out to one minute. Stand up, deliver your message, and then sit down at your place at the table.

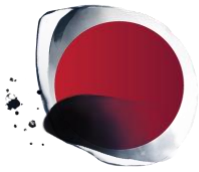
Shadow Material

When team members do not check-in or fully Step-In, there is a strong likelihood that unconscious and counterproductive feelings, attitudes, and behaviors will be displaced into the meeting. These feelings are in the room one way or another. Better to listen to them and claim authority right in the beginning.

- What is it that you don't want to see happening in this meeting?
- What do you want to let go of?
- What makes it less likely to take a risk?

Step-out

End your meetings with a succinct declaration of what you are taking with you, as a result of the meeting. Remember, it provides you and others closure.



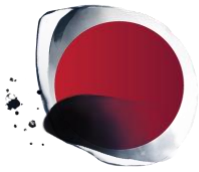
Present Company¹

“In any given day, there are hundreds of opportunities to use the power of induction. [The Step-In and Step-out process is an induction in which your chosen behavior brings about a desired outcome.] In fact, you probably do so without knowing. Think back to a time when you were highly aware of the transition between one moment to the next and consider what was revealed. Perhaps it was before an important meeting or presentation or maybe a highly anticipated show or a sports event. A date? Induction can be practiced in simple ways. For some, eating a meal is something we take for granted. Food is put in front of us, and we eat. You could take a moment to say thank you, say grace, or offer a toast of gratitude. These intentions prime us to be present for what is about to happen.

Typically, in Japan, when someone returns to a home or place of work, they will say *tadaima* as they cross the threshold. In response, the people who are present will call out *okaerinasai*. Simply put, *Tadaima* means “I have returned” and *Okaerinasai* means, “welcome back or welcome home.” These statements are deeply ingrained at all levels in Japanese society. They are some of the earliest words that children speak. They highlight the transitional moment and reinforce the concept of group harmony. In a subtle way, these simple words say, “I am with you.” They make individual comings and goings a communal act.

Take a moment to think about this. By authentically announcing that you are present, you can ignite and bring to life your family gathering, a team meeting, or a community get-together. As you reveal yourself into the moment, others reveal themselves to you and one another. This is pretty straightforward, yet a powerful use of your time, energy, and consideration.

¹ Dukes, Timothy and Landers, Michael (2020 to be released). *Present Company: Cultivating Cultures of High Performance in Teams and Organizations*. Round Table Press.



When team members enter a meeting without fully transitioning into the context of the moment, safety and participation is individually assessed and determined. Every man or woman for themselves. Each person is left to their respective capacity to join the meeting. One member could be distracted by an exchange that occurred before the meeting. Another could be focused on their personal agenda with a determination to force it into this meeting. Some may be feeling unresolved animosity with a coworker, while others may be grappling with turmoil at home. Team members may even be experiencing harassment or marginalization, due to their race or gender. Around the room, these individual experiences silently inform and impact the experience of the whole.

When you consciously enter a meeting, can you set aside your individual problems and focus on the greater good? Does a conscious entering allow you to be sympathetic to others who may be entering with challenges? Does consciously starting a meeting do something else entirely and open everyone up to unexpected possibility?"

Image Courtesy of: <https://unsplash.com/@wflwong>

The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.