



Presence at Work: A Useful Focus for the Start of the Year

At the start of the year, many people return to work with mixed energy. Some feel refreshed and ready; others are already distracted - thinking about their children, unfinished tasks at home, organisational change, or simple uncertainty about what lies ahead.

This makes being fully present at work harder than it sounds. It doesn't take long before we slip back into familiar habits: multitasking, half-listening, responding to notifications mid-conversation, or trying to solve several problems at once while thinking about the next meeting.

Recently, I read an article about five things that help people look and feel younger: *showing up with enthusiasm, listening more than talking, stepping outside familiar circles, tapping creativity, and keeping a sense of play*. What struck me was how closely these ideas align with what workplaces - and leaders - need right now.

Presence is not about having more energy - it's about how deliberately we use the energy and attention we already have

When leaders and teams are present, conversations improve, decisions are clearer, and people feel more engaged. Presence doesn't require big initiatives or extra time; it shows up in small, observable behaviours practised consistently.

A few habits make a noticeable difference:

Attention and focus

Doing one thing at a time remains one of the most effective productivity practices. Multitasking feels efficient, but it often slows thinking and reduces the quality of outcomes.

Listening more than talking

Active listening – without preparing a response or checking a device – builds trust quickly. People feel heard, and conversations tend to move forward rather than sideways.

Changing familiar patterns

Stepping outside usual comfort groups, varying how meetings are run, or inviting different perspectives can refresh thinking and lift energy without adding complexity.

Creativity and play

Allowing room for curiosity, experimentation and a sense of play keeps work human. It also supports better problem-solving and adaptability.

These behaviours are simple, but they are not accidental. They require conscious choice - especially when people are busy or under pressure. The leaders and teams who sustain them are often those who pause, notice what is happening, and reset their attention.

As the year gets underway, it may be useful to reflect less on new goals and more on everyday presence. Small shifts in how we show up – for ourselves and for others – often have a disproportionate impact on effectiveness, relationships and energy at work.

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