

# BLOG

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## UNNECESSARY CLOTHES ADJUSTMENT

**You are on your way to the front of the room and it is your turn to speak. Many of us think the show starts, literally, once we turn around to begin speaking. But it does not.**

People's attention is on you from the minute you stand and often that is when we fiddle.

Many people's hands go to the back of their pants and yank them up. Some people pull their shirt or jacket down, some adjust a bra strap and many pull their jacket closed. I call this 'unnecessary clothes adjustment'.

Unless you have raised this action to conscious awareness before today, I can guarantee you do something. Not only that, you will do exactly the same move every time. As someone who watches people for a living and analyses their every move, I can guarantee that your awareness of unnecessary clothes adjustment is a great start to self-improvement. There are many behaviours and skills you have not yet raised to conscious awareness and this is a simple and effective place to start.

The problem with continuing your unnecessary clothes adjustment is two-fold. Firstly, it sends strong messages of insecurity or alternatively, aggression, to the people watching you. For example, closing your jacket, which usually springs straight back open, sends a message of defence and yanking your pants up tends to draw attention to the groin.



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Secondly, these adjustments are not helpful for you psychologically. They are moves triggered by the unconscious primitive animal parts of the brain and indicate you are handing your control over to forces that are not going to help you professionally.

Sometimes it is easier and less confronting to start by observing others. Watch what other people do when they stand. Recognise the repetitive move that is unique to them. Next, try to be aware of your own unnecessary clothes adjustment. It will be an action that you repeat in the same manner every time. Be careful that you don't fall into the trap of thinking this was a one-off, therefore, watch over a week or so to spot the pattern.

Reconsider your pattern. Perhaps adjust your clothes before you stand. Make a conscious effort to do this. Next, try to do nothing with your hands when you stand and walk. This will require discipline. Because of the psychology embedded in that action, it is harder than it sounds. It is, however, one of the first and best steps to consciously raising your skills of professionalism.

Sooner than you think your lack of a need to adjust your clothing will be placed in your unconscious competence and you are then one step closer to a confident presence and influence.

**Dr Louise Mahler**

