Course Title: Advanced Communication & Interpersonal Skills Masterclass

- **Duration:** 5 Days (approximately 35-40 instructional hours)
- **Course Goal:** To elevate the communication and interpersonal effectiveness of experienced professionals and leaders by providing them with advanced frameworks, psychological insights, and intensive practice in nuanced communication, enabling them to build deep rapport, influence key stakeholders, navigate high-stakes conversations, and lead with exceptional presence and impact.
- **Core Focus:** Moving beyond basic techniques to master the strategic and psychological dimensions of communication, including influence, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this masterclass, participants will be able to:

- **Apply** advanced active listening techniques to understand underlying interests, emotions, and unspoken needs.
- **Master** a range of influential questioning techniques to guide thinking, challenge assumptions, and foster insight in others.
- **Navigate** the spectrum of communication styles (from assertive to collaborative) and adapt their own style with intention.
- **Utilize** principles of neuroscience and psychology to build deep rapport and trust with diverse stakeholders.
- **Deconstruct** and effectively manage complex group dynamics in high-stakes meetings.
- **Lead** difficult conversations and mediate conflicts with poise, confidence, and a focus on constructive outcomes.
- **Craft** and deliver compelling messages and stories that persuade and inspire action in senior audiences.
- **Develop** a strong sense of executive presence through advanced body language and vocal control.
- **Create** a personalized action plan for becoming a master communicator and influencer.

Target Audience:

- Experienced managers, team leaders, and senior professionals.
- Project and program managers leading complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives.
- Sales, business development, and client relationship leaders.
- HR Business Partners, consultants, and coaches.
- Anyone whose role requires a high degree of influence, negotiation, and sophisticated interpersonal skill.

Prerequisites:

- Solid professional experience and a foundational understanding of basic communication skills.
- Willingness to engage in deep self-reflection and intensive, feedback-rich role-playing.

Teaching Methodology:

This is a highly experiential and intensive "dojo-style" workshop where skills are built through practice and feedback. The methodology includes:

- **Interactive Lectures:** Introducing advanced frameworks from psychology, neuroscience, and communication theory.
- **Self-Assessments:** Tools for understanding communication styles, conflict modes, and influencing preferences.
- **Case Study Deconstruction:** Analyzing complex, real-world communication scenarios (e.g., from business, politics, history).
- **Intensive Role-Playing & Simulations:** The core of the masterclass. Participants will engage in challenging, multi-stage role-plays with detailed, structured feedback from peers and the instructor.
- **Video Recording & Playback (highly recommended):** For powerful self-analysis of communication patterns.
- **Peer Coaching & Feedback:** A critical component for developing self-awareness.
- **Personalized Action Planning:** Creating a detailed plan for continued skill development.

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Materials Provided:

- Comprehensive digital or printed workbook with advanced frameworks, psychological models, and preparation checklists.
- An "Influencer's Toolkit" with question banks, reframing techniques, and a conflict mediation guide.
- Detailed, multi-layered case study and role-playing briefs.
- A personal communication mastery action plan template.
- Certificate of Completion.

Detailed Day-by-Day Curriculum

Day 1: The Psychology of Connection & Deep Listening

- **Module 1: The Master Communicator Mindset (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - Welcome, introductions, and establishing a high-trust, confidential learning environment.
    - Moving beyond transactional communication to transformational influence.
    - The core principle: Seek first to understand, then to be understood (Covey).
    - The neuroscience of trust and psychological safety.
    - **Activity:** "Communication Goals" – Participants define a high-stakes communication challenge they want to work on during the week.
- **Module 2: The Art of Generative Listening (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - The four levels of listening, with a focus on **Level 4: Generative Listening** (listening for what wants to emerge).
    - Techniques for listening for underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs.
    - The "Ladder of Inference": How we jump to conclusions and how to climb back down.
    - **Intensive Practice Lab:** Triad exercises focusing on listening for the unspoken and reflecting back deeper meaning.
- **Module 3: The Science of Building Deep Rapport & Trust (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - Advanced rapport techniques beyond simple mirroring.
    - Pacing and leading a conversation.
    - Understanding and appealing to different primary representational systems (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic - NLP basics).
    - The power of vulnerability in building authentic connections.
    - **End of Day 1 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 2: Influential Questioning & Assertive Presence

- **Module 4: Mastering Socratic & Transformational Questioning (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - The manager/leader as a coach: Using questions to guide, not direct.
    - **Socratic Questioning:** A technique for exploring complex ideas and uncovering assumptions.
    - **Transformational Questioning:** Using questions to shift perspective and open up possibilities.
    - **Workshop:** "Question Crafting" – Participants develop a series of powerful questions for a specific coaching or influencing scenario.
- **Module 5: The Spectrum of Assertiveness & The DESC Script (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - A nuanced look at the assertive communication style.
    - The **DESC Script** for structuring difficult assertive messages:
        - **D**escribe the situation factually.
        - **E**xpress your feelings/perspective using "I" statements.
        - **S**pecify the change you want.
        - **C**onsequences (positive) of the change.

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    - **Role-Play:** Practicing the DESC script for various scenarios (e.g., pushing back on a deadline, addressing a broken commitment).

- **Module 6: Executive Presence: Non-Verbal Dominance & Poise (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - Mastering body language for gravitas and confidence in high-stakes situations.
    - The use of space, posture, and purposeful gestures.
    - Vocal mastery: Using pace, pitch, and pauses for authority and impact.
    - Maintaining composure under pressure.
    - **Practice Lab:** Participants practice delivering a short, impactful message with a focus on non-verbal and vocal presence. (Video feedback is ideal here).
    - **End of Day 2 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 3: Navigating High-Stakes Conversations & Conflict

- **Module 7: A Framework for High-Stakes Conversations (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
    - Deconstructing high-stakes conversations (e.g., from "Crucial Conversations").
    - **Step 1: Start with Heart.** Clarifying your intent and what you really want.
    - **Step 2: Make it Safe.** Recognizing when safety is at risk and re-establishing mutual purpose and respect.
    - **Step 3: Master Your Stories.** Separating facts from the stories we tell ourselves.
    - **Intensive Workshop:** Participants take a personal high-stakes conversation and work through the preparation steps.
- **Module 8: The Art of Reframing & Finding Common Ground (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - Techniques for reframing arguments and defusing defensive language.
    - Moving from positions to underlying interests.
    - The skill of finding and building upon points of agreement, no matter how small.
- **Module 9: Introduction to Mediation for Leaders (Approx. 1.5 hours)**
    - A simple, five-step model for mediating conflict between two team members.
    - The leader's role as a neutral facilitator, not a judge.
    - **Role-Play:** A short, simulated mediation session.
    - **End of Day 3 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 4: Group Dynamics, Facilitation & Storytelling

- **Module 10: Reading & Influencing Group Dynamics (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - How to "read the room" in a high-stakes meeting.
    - Identifying hidden agendas, alliances, and sources of resistance.
    - Techniques for managing group dynamics:
        - Bringing in quiet voices.
        - Managing dominant talkers.
        - Navigating groupthink.
        - Building consensus.
- **Module 11: Advanced Facilitation for High-Stakes Meetings (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - Designing agendas that drive to a decision.
    - Using visual facilitation techniques (on whiteboards or virtual tools) to clarify complex ideas.
    - Facilitating strategic conversations and brainstorming sessions.
    - **Simulation:** Participants take turns facilitating a contentious segment of a strategic meeting.
- **Module 12: Strategic Storytelling for Influence (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - The neuroscience of why stories are more persuasive than data alone.

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- The key components of a compelling leadership or business story.
- Crafting stories to communicate vision, illustrate values, or make a case for change.
- **Workshop:** Participants craft and share a short "leadership story" based on a personal experience.
- **End of Day 4 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 5: Integration, Capstone & Your Mastery Plan

- **Module 13: Capstone Simulation: The High-Stakes Stakeholder Meeting (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
  - **Final Simulation:** Participants are assigned roles in a complex, multi-stakeholder meeting with conflicting objectives (e.g., a project steering committee, a budget negotiation).
  - They must use all the skills from the week (listening, questioning, asserting, influencing, managing dynamics) to navigate the meeting and achieve their objectives.
  - A detailed, facilitated debrief follows, analyzing the communication strategies and outcomes.
- **Module 14: Giving & Receiving Feedback with Mastery (Approx. 1.5 hours)**
  - A final, advanced look at feedback as a tool for influence and relationship building.
  - The art of giving feedback that is both direct and compassionate.
- **Module 15: Your Personal Communication Mastery Action Plan (Approx. 2 hours)**
  - **Action Planning Workshop:** A deep, reflective exercise where participants synthesize feedback and learnings from the week.
  - They create a detailed personal development plan focusing on:
    1. One core listening or questioning habit to build.
    2. One assertive communication scenario to prepare for.
    3. A strategy for a specific, upcoming high-stakes conversation.
- **Module 16: Course Review & Commitment to Conscious Communication (Approx. 1 hour)**
  - Review of the key frameworks for advanced communication and influence.
  - Open forum for final questions and sharing key commitments.
  - Course evaluation and closing.

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