

ICF CONVERGE

OCTOBER 23-25, 2025 • SAN DIEGO



Mastering Presence: The Stanislavski Method for Coaches

Great leaders don't perform — they *prepare* for reality

This lab explores how Stanislavski's principles help coaches and leaders:

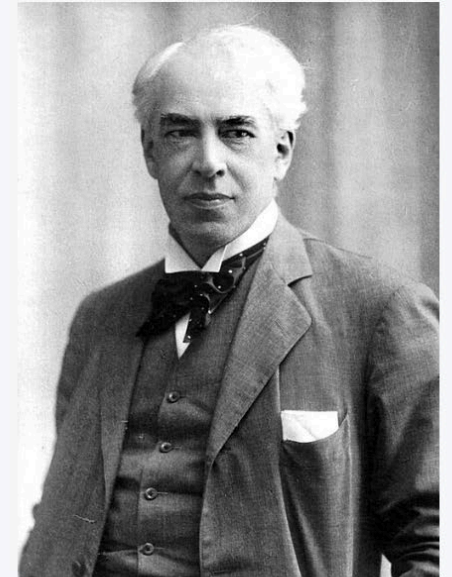
Access authenticity under pressure

Use imagination and awareness to influence intentionally

Turn self-observation into impact

“Awareness turns reaction into choice — and choice changes everything.”

Konstantin Stanislavski
Константин Станиславский



Born	Konstantin Sergeyevich Alekseyev 17 January [O.S. 5 January] 1863 ^[a] Moscow, Russian Empire
Died	7 August 1938 (aged 75) Moscow, Russian SFSR, Soviet Union
Resting place	Novodevichy Cemetery, Moscow
Occupation	Actor · theatre director · theatre theorist
Literary movement	Naturalism , symbolism , psychological realism , socialist realism
Notable works	<i>An Actor's Work</i> <i>An Actor's Work on a Role</i> <i>My Life in Art</i>
Spouse	Maria Lilina (m. 1889)
Known for	Founder of the MAT Stanislavski's system

The Foundation: From Stage to Leadership

Stanislavski trained actors to act truthfully under imaginary circumstances

We coach leaders to act truthfully under real ones

Presence isn't about confidence — it's about connection.

In both worlds, performance begins with:

- Awareness of self
- Awareness of others
- A clear objective and an honest action

“When do your clients feel most ‘on stage’?”

The Method in Coaching Practice

Stanislavski's approach becomes practical through three tools:

1. The Magic If

What would I do if I were truly in this situation?

Reframes fear into empathy and choice

2. Objective & Action

Don't play emotion — act intention

Every conversation has a goal and a behavior that supports it

3. Subtext & Presence

What's unsaid drives what's felt

Coaching helps leaders notice the energy beneath the words

Experiential Practice

We'll explore three short, practical exercises:

Exercise 1 — “Yes, and...”

Builds awareness, flexibility, and connection

Application: communication in change or conflict

Exercise 2 — “The Shift”

Replay a real leadership moment twice — reactive, then intentional

Application: executive presence, emotional control

Exercise 3 — “The Silent Rehearsal”

Explore presence through silence and listening

Application: holding authority, composure, and trust

“What changes when we move from reaction to design?”

Bringing It Home

Stanislavski's work was never about acting — it was about being fully human

As coaches, we help leaders practice awareness until it becomes presence

Authenticity, empathy, and composure aren't traits — they're muscles

And when practiced intentionally, they change everything

Closing Reflection:

What moment of truth in your coaching could you now “rehearse”?

What would it look like to help your clients do the same?

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