

# RHYTHMS of INFLUENCE

5 Steps to activate Presence,  
Connection, and Influence when  
speaking to groups

*Insights and tools for speakers, leaders, presenters, teachers —  
anyone who speaks to groups!*

Mary Tolena & Ju Linares

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**Mary Tolena**

San Diego, EUA

[www.rhythmliift.com](http://www.rhythmliift.com)  
[mary@rhythmliift.com](mailto:mary@rhythmliift.com)  
+1 (619) 307-1003



**Ju Linares**

São Paulo, SP, Brasil

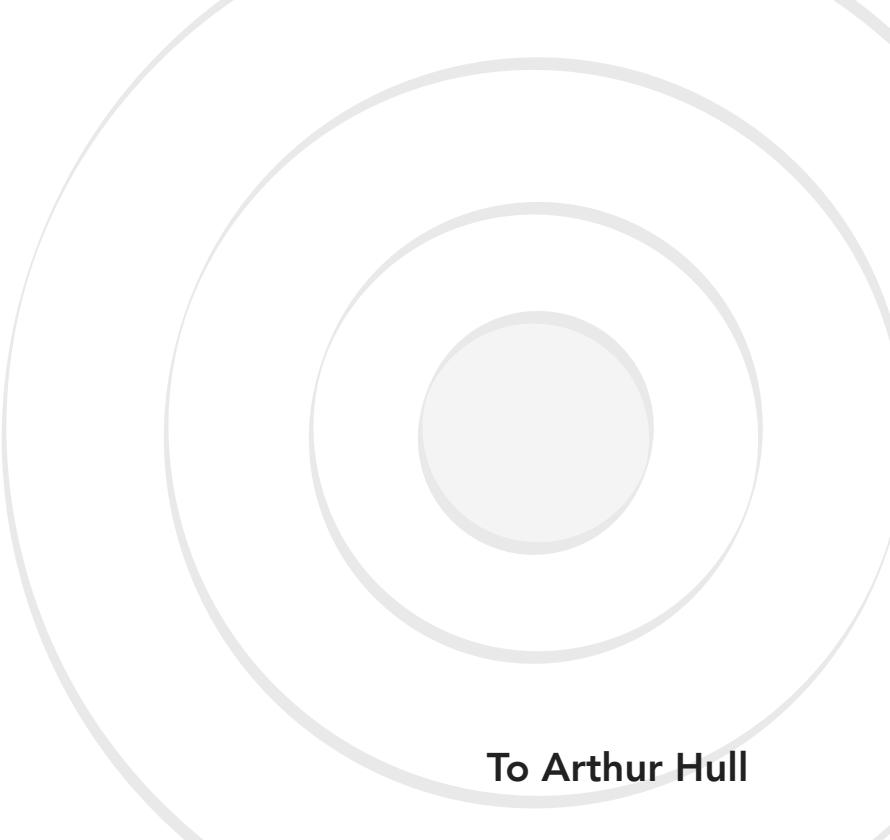
[www.ritmoexpansao.com.br](http://www.ritmoexpansao.com.br)  
[julinares@ritmoexpansao.com.br](mailto:julinares@ritmoexpansao.com.br)  
+55 (11) 98458-1793



*This* book is for people who present in front of groups as Speakers, Teachers, Facilitators, Team Leaders, or in any role **where genuine connection and engagement with others matters.**

*In **Rhythms of Influence**, we invite you to learn how principles of Rhythm can give you the confidence on the inside to create that special kind of rapport on the outside.*

— **Mary Tolena & Ju Linares**



## **To Arthur Hull**

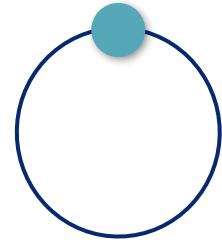
We dedicate this book to our teacher, mentor, and friend, Arthur Hull, whose rhythms and ripples of influence have led millions around the world to discover the benefits of group drumming.

Because of Arthur, we now have maps to “That Place,” that transcendent state of musical melding and human connection where the rhythms flow in, around, and through us.

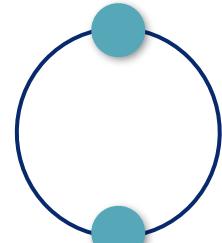
Arthur’s decades of tireless travel, teaching, and advocacy for group drumming has led to thousands of practitioners, a collaborative professional community, and a growing body of research that proves what we already know: Group drumming is good for the body, mind and soul.

***Thank you, Arthur, from the bottom of our hearts!***

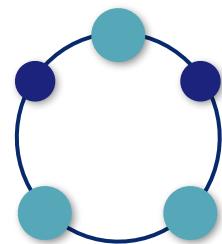
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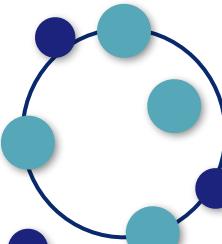
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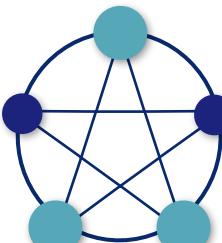
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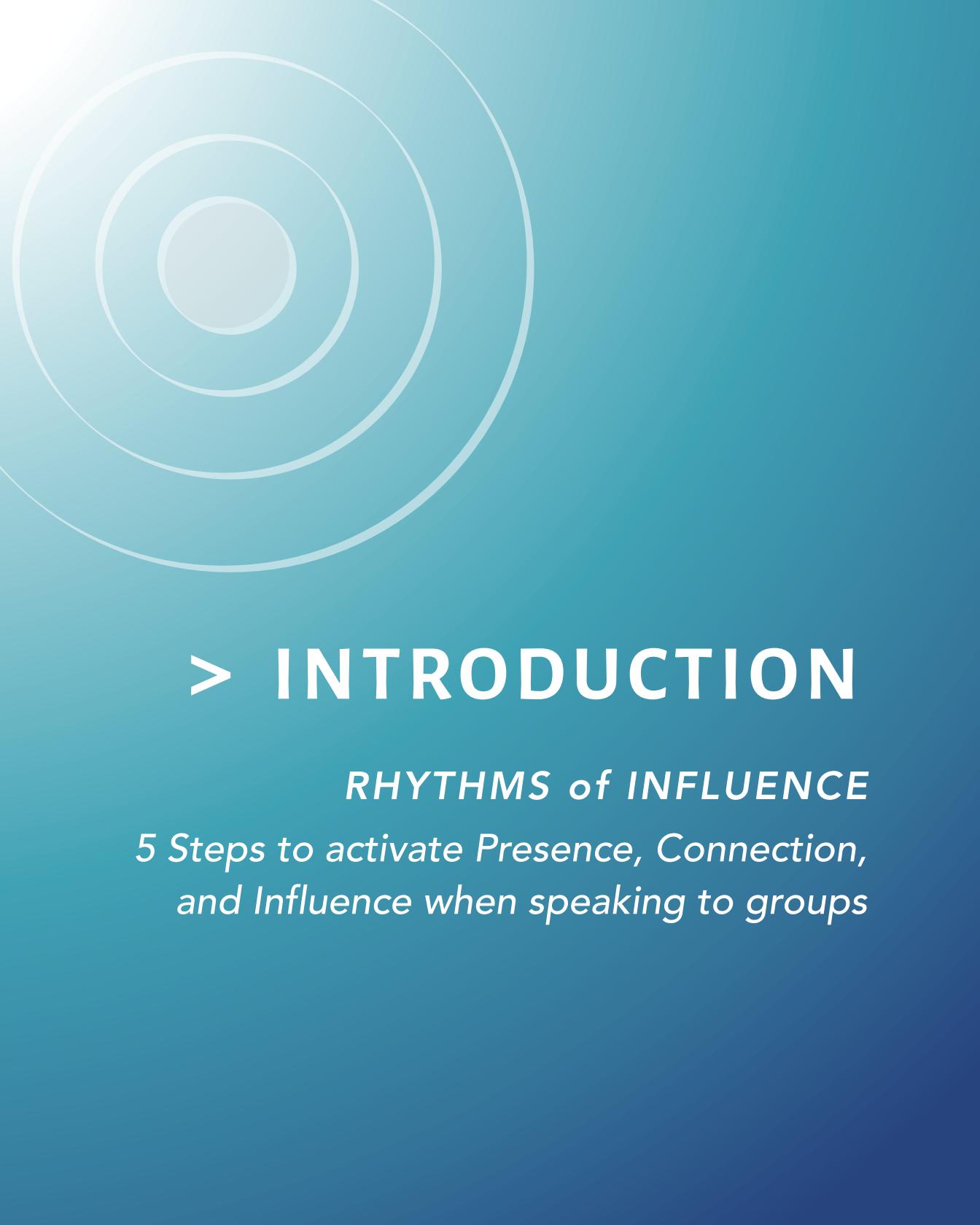


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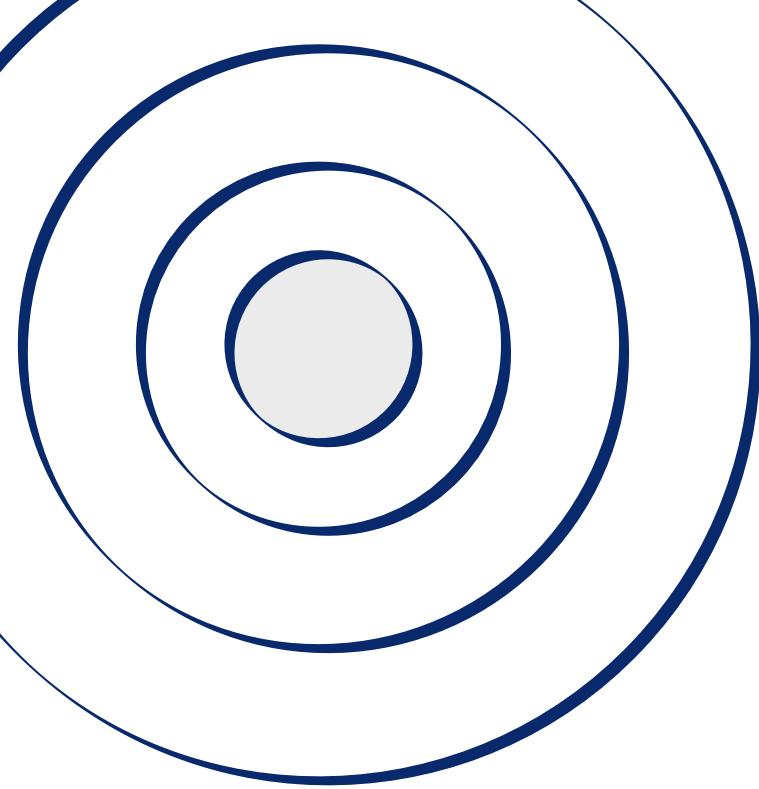
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# > INTRODUCTION

*RHYTHMS of INFLUENCE*

*5 Steps to activate Presence, Connection,  
and Influence when speaking to groups*



## POWER IN THE ZONE

When we think of the speakers, leaders, and mentors we most admire, it's probably not their words we remember most. What elevates them is usually something else—something magnetic about the way they are that draws us in.

We call that charisma, but it's also something broader, deeper, and more genuine. We use words for it like *authenticity* and *presence*.

## ***People with these qualities are:***

- Comfortable in their own skin
- Present and connected
- Able to hear, listen, and converse
- Open to new questions and ideas
- Aiming at the larger purpose or result

When these people get in front of groups, they seem to be “in the zone.” They appear at ease and their message seems to flow naturally, almost as if they’re just having a conversation with a friend. They communicate in ways that make it easy for people to hear, follow, and engage with them.

You’re probably reading this book because you want to come across like those people do when you’re in front of a group. You want three things to happen:

1. ***On the outside***, you come across as confident, comfortable, enthusiastic, and genuine.
2. ***On the inside***, you feel the electricity of being on your game, in the flow, effortlessly knowing what to say and do next.
3. ***Within the group***, curiosity is sparked, connections are made, and outcomes are created beyond what you could predict.

That “X Factor”—that “good vibe” we feel (and get from others) when we’re really in the flow—is an energetic state with physiological

underpinnings that can't be reached by simply marking items off a checklist. It comes from getting out of our own way and into an "open state" where we meet the moment with just the right thoughts, words, and actions. It feels great when we're there, doesn't it?

When we're able to make those kinds of internal and external connections, we don't just have a positive influence on others. We get positive feedback in return. This reinforcing cycle opens up pathways that allow progress to move smoothly and easily. Learning occurs. Ideas are sparked. Solutions emerge. Relationships strengthen.

You can make that happen more easily. With practice, you can develop those qualities, live from that way of being more of the time, and make your passion, message, and talent radiate with precision and power. Whether you're a presenter, facilitator, trainer, teacher, manager, entrepreneur, or change agent of any kind, these qualities help build:



- ***Clarity and confidence***
- ***Audience connection***
- ***Client rapport***
- ***Organizational impact***

As presenters and influencers, getting to That Place is too important to leave to chance. We can't just hope for moments when "everything comes together" to just magically appear. We all know the audience impact when we're "on" for a presentation, and we know how awkward things can be when we're "off." Finding our way to "on" is a key skill—and the good news is that it can be learned.

Reaching towards our inner sense of flow is something we can practice and develop, like any other skill or good habit. It's worth it, for our own satisfaction as well as for our effectiveness with others. Clearly, finding one's way to Presence and Flow is something worth working on.

## **That Weird Thing We Do: Rhythm & Drumming**

We (Mary Tolena and Jú Linares) work with groups in an unusual (some might even say peculiar) way. We take groups of adults (most of



whom have never even thought of drumming before), give them drums and small instruments, and guide them into becoming a percussion orchestra in as little as an hour. We then facilitate discussions that relate this musical experience to desired outcomes at work and in life. We weave key themes like collaboration, creativity, and unity into each program.

From a presenter/facilitator standpoint, this can be challenging. These events are real-time, dynamic “happenings” of music, movement, laughter, and learning, and everyone is part of the show. Each time it’s different, and we never know exactly how it will all play out. We go in with a plan, but we are always ready to shift on a dime to follow the creativity and insights that participants reveal.

What this means is that we must stay present, connected, and engaged with our participants—leading them into the next moment, and the next—all while staying focused on our overall program goals.

Luckily for us, our very medium—Rhythm—teaches us how to do that. In fact, rhythm lays out a pathway to that cherished sense of Flow that we all want to operate from. From there, Presence can really shine.

## The Transformative Power of Rhythm



We know the transformative power of rhythm because we’ve each experienced it in our own lives. Coming from very different backgrounds, we (Brazilian Jú Linares and American Mary Tolena) met on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii at a training camp for drum circle facilitators. Yes, there is such a thing. Discovering it changed both of our lives.

“Drum Circle & Rhythm Facilitation” is an actual professional field that is much broader than its name might imply. DCF practitioners achieve remarkable results in a wide spectrum of settings, including education, health care, elder care, social services, expressive arts, recreation, communities, organizations, and workplaces. A growing stream of clinical and social science studies are documenting the positive impacts of group drumming, including measurable shifts in our self-perception, social awareness, brain function, and even our cellular biology.

***With their ability to affect on so many levels,  
rhythmic experiences are clearly tapping into  
something deep and powerful.***

***Rhythm helps people heal, express, and flourish.***

## **Musical and Metaphorical Doorways**

Another aspect of Rhythm’s power is how it activates us on both physical/experiential and metaphorical/ cognitive levels at the same time. This makes facilitated rhythm programs powerful team-building and group learning experiences. The underlying principles and components of Rhythm provide a whole set of metaphors that help people understand what they’ve experienced and apply it to daily life. We’ve based *Rhythms of Influence* on five of those principles.

# RHYTHMS OF INFLUENCE:

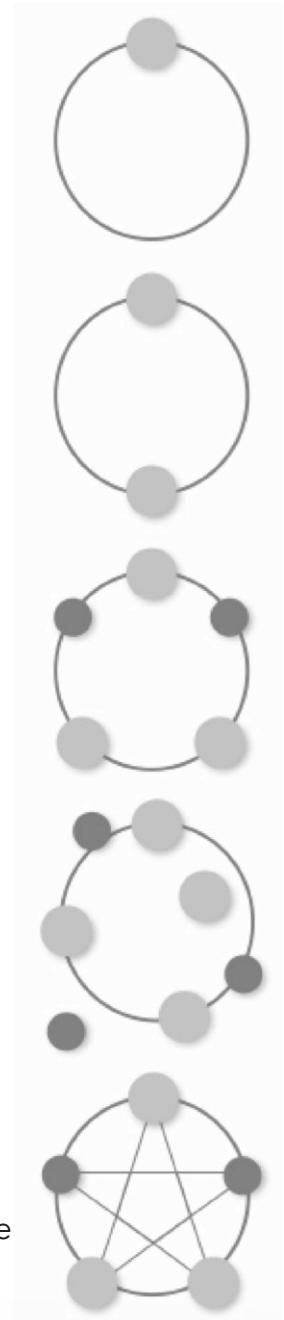
## *Five Developmental Phases*

Blending our experiences in the fields of leadership, organizational development, experiential education, and music facilitation, we've developed a five-phase framework for our rhythm programs. These five stages of musical development connect, align, and spark creative collaboration among participants.

### ***The phases are:***

- AWARENESS
- CONNECTION
- DIALOGUE
- EXPLORATION
- PERFORMANCE

As we guide participants through these phases, they evolve from uncertain individuals to playful explorers to coherent ensemble members. They learn new concepts, discover their creativity, and gain satisfaction from being part of something bigger. Creating music together is a special experience that's much more than the sum of the parts.



## These Phases Apply to Your Groups—and to You!

This sequence forms a strong design framework for just about any presentation, program, or meeting where you want people to listen, understand, and engage.

What's more, these same five rhythm principles can lay out a personal path for you, too—one that helps you develop and transmit that



elusive quality of Presence to your groups. They form the guideposts that help you stay grounded, aware, open, and responsive—in the flow of what's happening, serving the group's progress in real time. They help you “walk the walk.”

### *Get Ready to Flow*

While these five phases can guide us on both personal and group levels, the kind of genuine presence and connection we want to develop doesn't come from simply following the steps like a recipe.

As you'll see in the descriptions below, each phase of the five-part Rhythms of Influence framework operates for us personally, in business groups, and in our group drumming programs. It is a developmental sequence whose focus starts with the individual and expands to the group.

A wide range of situations might put you in the role of a presenter, teacher, speaker, leader, or facilitator whose goal is to lead or guide a



group experience toward a desired outcome. Whether you're speaking to your work team or community group, presenting at a training seminar, or occupying center stage at a TED conference, these five phases will help you create that sense of connection and flow, both within yourself and with your audience.

The five phases correspond to—and fulfill—a sequence of “developmental needs” that exist for both presenters and groups. Each phase relates to a principle of Rhythm that helps us to remember and access the step with ease. We'll see how this plays out—not only in our rhythm groups but in the kinds of groups you speak to as well.

### ***Once again, the five phases are:***

- AWARENESS
- CONNECTION
- DIALOGUE
- EXPLORATION
- PERFORMANCE

*Let's begin.*