
Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Self-Paced Course

It's said that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. This public speaking course, designed primarily for women running for public office in the Arab world, will help you learn how to craft and deliver a message that is memorable the first time you speak. You will become a more confident, prepared, and in-demand speaker.

This text is from an online version of the course, and as such may contain references to links and other functions that are not accessible through this downloadable version.

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Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Course Overview

Course Description

In this course, you will learn how to create a presentation or speech that will garner the attention of those whom you are trying to influence, whether it is your local council, any government agency, or your relatives.

The fact is, you make presentations every day – over a cup of coffee, or in line at the store, or at your child's school. You speak, and hopefully people will listen. That is what this class is for: helping to learn or re-learn some of the rules of public speaking.

In this program, I will also give you some tips on what to do when you are being interviewed by the local paper or on television. I will talk about how to reach the different age groups in your audience, so your speech can be effective to all who hear you.

During the course, we will work together to prepare your talking points and practice for maximum effectiveness.

Learning the skills of public speaking can make a difference in your life – beyond politics, to how you are perceived by those in your party and even your friends.

Sometimes people say, “I know what I want to say but cannot seem to get it out.” This class will help you get it out so your voice will be heard in the marketplace.

It is one thing for women to speak, but it is more important for you to speak and be heard – that is the key to success.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will know how to:

- Write an amazing presentation
- Deliver your presentation- how to set up the physical space, how to control your nervousness
- Use your body language to enhance your communication.
- Craft personal stories that will engage your audience

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 1: Introduction

Welcome! We will begin the course with a live online meeting where we will have a chance to introduce each other and discuss your personal goals for this mentorship.

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In our first session, we will get to know each other better and discuss your personal activism goals, so that we can make sure to focus our time together on your needs. We will define a set of objectives for the mentorship that we will add them to the course files so that you can refer to them throughout the mentorship.

We will also go over the structure of the online course and how we will work together.

Objectives

- Review the course topics and tools
- Agree on a set of objectives for the mentorship.

Assignment

Before our next session, you have two assignments:

1. Read through the material for the next session in advance, and send me a message two days before the session with any questions or specific issues you would like us to focus on in our live meeting.
2. Review the mentorship objectives and let me know if you have any changes.

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 2: You Can Give an Amazing Speech

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

The fear of public speaking is listed as the number one fear in the world. Yet there is probably no business skill more important than the ability to speak to an audience regardless of size. Your success as a speaker is measured in your ability to speak in a way that moves your audience. As a leader, you must find the connection between you and your audience so your speech will move an audience to work for you or help push your agenda forward.

In these first few sessions we are going to discuss you, the speaker, and what the audience's expectations are of you when you stand to speak. In our other sessions we will focus on your delivery and planning your presentation, and finally, the writing of your speech – for any occasion.

Objectives

- What Makes a Great Speech/Presentation?
- First Impressions Count
- Your Credibility – How to Set Yourself Up for Success
- Setting the Stage for Success
- Your Introduction
- Visual / Physical Arrangements of the Room
- What Your Body Language Says About You

Reading: Give an Amazing Speech

What Makes a Great Speech?

Whenever you speak, your listeners are asking the following questions subconsciously. Even though we might not say it out loud, we are all wondering:

- So what?
- Who cares?

- Should I be listening?
- Why is this important to me?

As a speaker, you must be able to answer these questions within a few moments of your opening statement.

The reason you must answer the “*So What*” is because your audience will not listen to you if you do not give them a reason why they should.

The answer to “*Who Cares*” is simple – they should care. What you as a speaker are providing is new or updated information, and if they are going to benefit from your knowledge, they need to care, and you need to be compelling enough to make them care.

“*Should I be listening*” – the simple answer is “yes” – and the not so simple answer is why they should listen. As a speaker, it is up to you to be engaging, compelling, fact-based and informative.

Finally, the “*Why is this important to me*” is the key to any good speech. You as a speaker must find the answer to the why question. You need to have thoroughly researched your topic, so when your audience gives you a few minutes of their time, you’re able to educate, inform or instruct them to perform the issue at hand.

If you are a candidate, you must also answer the following questions:

- Why are you running?
- Why should I vote for you?
- What am I getting for my vote?

As with the other questions, you must tell your audience the answer to the “*Why are you running*” question. Be prepared to know the answer to the “*Why You – Why Now*” question. Only you know the answers to these questions – not someone else. People will want you to tell them why you, and not someone more famous or who has more money or who is from a more important family, want to run for office. Others will ask if politics is so important to you, why didn’t you run years ago? Or if you say you care about your community, why are you just now getting started? Preparing in advance will help you develop clear, concise answers to these tricky questions.

The “*Why should I vote for you*” question is more about your stand on issues and your understanding of the system and process. People will want to know why they should entrust you with their vote.

Finally, prepare an answer to “*What am I getting for my vote*”. Most everyone will want to know “What is in it for me?” Will I be better off with you in office versus someone else?” Again, think (and prepare) your answers in advance. Find a way to let them know that with you in office, they will be better off.

Now that we've discussed the basic questions your audience has about you and what you stand for, the next part of the discussion will cover how you are perceived by others around you: How you look – how you sound – what you say.

First Impression

Your presentation begins the moment your audience recognizes you as the speaker. Even though you haven't made a sound, the people who are waiting for you to speak are already watching you: they're watching your actions and reactions, they notice when you scratch your ear or when you cough. Once people identify you as the speaker, they begin to watch you – so be mindful.

Studies have shown that people form a first impression of someone new in just seven to 24 seconds. Once formed, those impressions are hard to change.

It is vitally important that you understand that you are judged in three ways when you're making a public appearance: your looks, your voice and the words you use to relay your message. Always remember that good speakers must be as careful with their appearance, their voices and their body language as they are with their words.

The Visual, the Vocal and the Content: The Building Blocks

Visual - How you look

The way you dress and the clothes you wear say a lot about you. Do you wear the latest styles, do you dress in your country's image, or do you wear Western-style clothes? Do your clothes fit you well or are your clothes too small? Have you gained or lost weight so your clothes don't fit?

Although it seems like a trivial matter, the way you dress broadcasts to the world who and what you think about yourself.

Do you carry yourself with pride? Do you stand tall and walk tall and straight? Do you smile or do you always frown, do you wear a piece of jewelry that has significance, or are you known for something, like always wearing a scarf or brooch?.

How you look tells people – right or wrong – a lot about who you think you are.

Vocal - How you sound

The next important point is how you sound. Have you ever tape-recorded your voice and listened to how you sound to others? Have you ever heard yourself on TV or on a video and thought, 'Wow, I sound like that?'

Your voice says a lot about you. If you are a small person in size and have a big, loud, powerful voice, people will pay attention. However, if you are a large person in size and have a small, quiet, weak voice, people will wonder about your ability to get the work done. You need a powerful voice – especially as a woman. Your voice needs to be strong and have a sense of urgency and purpose.

In a later chapter, we'll discuss ways you can train your voice to be more powerful. For example, if you stand up when you speak, the extra air and energy will come through in your voice. Take deep breaths so your voice can sustain a powerful sound until you are done with your module. Work to have a lower voice – a high-pitched voice does not convey authority. The lower your voice, the more powerful you sound. You can achieve this by stopping to breathe before you speak your next phrase. That deep breath will put you in your proper vocal range.

Content - What you say

The words you use when you speak will determine audience confidence in you, so you need to have real meaning to your message. In the beginning of this lesson, we talked about how important your look (being professional and polished) was to your success and how your sound (using a strong and powerful voice) was to your overall image of success. The third part of that message is the words you use to use to get your message across. We'll discuss how to write a powerful speech in another lesson. For now, we will focus on the importance of doing good research, and presenting your thoughts in an organized manner that will sway your audience.

Your Credibility

To engage your audience beyond those critical first few seconds, to truly be a great speaker, you must be a person whose character, knowledge, judgment and personality commands respect. **Character** should be the cornerstone of who you are and what you base your principles on.

It's been said that character is who you are when no one is looking.

Character still counts today – not the political chatter of saying one thing and doing another, making promises that can't be kept, or saying one thing to one group and something totally different to another, while hoping the two groups never cross. A good leader, and a person of character in today's environment, tells the truth, acts in an honest manner and keeps her word. As a child, my father always told me that if you were trustworthy, a simple handshake was all you needed to close the deal, because a handshake was as good as a promise. Are you honest, trustworthy and loyal? A person of character possesses all of these attributes and more.

Knowledge – do you really know your subject? Without a doubt, the greatest source of failure for most speakers is that they don't know their topic. This is where some of the greatest fear of speaking emanates from. It's hard to stand up and inform or persuade

people when your knowledge is limited. Most people become the most fearful when they have been asked to speak on a topic they know little to nothing about.

When you know your topic – really know and understand it – you can easily talk about it for hours. You’re able to talk about all the little details of how things work and what could be done to make it better. But when your knowledge is limited or even absent, you’ve done yourself and your cause a disservice. An honest person knows their topic.

Spend time thinking about all the avenues of success and failure for your issues. This could be described as “due diligence” – that you’ve thought through both the logical and ethical perspectives of your issues. The more work you put in on the front end, the more successful you’ll be.

Next, assess your **judgment**. Based on your life experiences, do you naturally make good choices? Can you assess someone’s motives? Are you attuned to their strengths and weaknesses? Judgment is not always meant to be negative, but to have a gut level understanding of who your friends and foes are in all situations.

Finally, what is your **personality**? There’s an old saying that people do business with people they like. In today’s political and public environment, you must create a good impression if you plan to be successful and have people listen to your message.

Are you someone who is confident, at ease with yourself and others, cooperative, likeable, warm and friendly? Are you genuinely interested in others, or is it all about you? Your audience has amazing radar and can tell if you’re sincere.

How to Set Yourself Up for Success

As you begin the process of what makes a great speech, keep the following in mind.

When you speak, it’s up to you to be interesting enough so your audience doesn’t retreat into their own busy world, daydreaming about what’s for dinner, who has car pool next week, and when is your mother-in-law’s birthday.

You know the type of presentation I am talking about – the one where the person stands up and talks for hours about nothing of importance. To keep your audience’s attention, you cannot be boring; you and your topic must appeal to your audience.

The purpose of a speech or presentation is to communicate ideas and feelings – and to get a desired response.

In my years of speech coaching, I’ve come to realize that not everyone is a very interesting speaker. However, I also know that if you love your topic and are excited about sharing your knowledge, you have a 99% chance of keeping your audience interested.

Some of the worst speeches I have heard are when the presenter is bored with the topic – and if the speaker is bored, everyone in the audience will be as well.

Most audiences will forgive poor delivery if you're excited about your topic. Even though you may have given the same speech 15 times, your next audience is new, and they'll be hearing it for the first time. Remember to inject energy, drive and excitement each time you give your speech.

Setting the Stage for Success

Before you speak (because you arrived early) or during the break before you speak, go through the following checklist to set the stage for your speaking success.

It's up to you to make your presentation look top-notch. If you have volunteers or staff to accompany you to your speeches, they can assist in your stage preparation.

You don't want anything extra to take the audience attention away from your message. You'll want to maintain as much control as possible over external distractions, so follow this suggestions to ensure that you've set the "stage" for your personal success.

- **Get rid of coffee cups and soda cans on the head table or lectern.** This is important for many reasons. People will let their mind wander, and if for some reason they're thirsty and you have a soda or water on the table and they don't, they'll immediately become thirstier and then become anxious to have something to drink. So to help keep the focus on **you**, move items such as these away from the table or lectern, out of eye sight of your audience.
- **Remove the notes of the previous speakers from the blackboard or easel.** This is simple – have you ever sat in a meeting and suddenly noticed (because you're bored) the writing on the wall from the last speaker? What happens is your audience starts to rethink the past session or they mentally argue with what they are seeing on the wall (if they were not in the session). To keep the focus on **you**, remove the notes from the previous speaker.
- **Cover up the hotel logo on the lectern with your own logo or poster** – if a picture is worth a thousand words, the image that will show up in the newspaper or on TV is you standing behind a lectern that is advertising something other than you or your program. This is a waste of visual space – you need to promote **yourself**, not the hotel ballroom where you're speaking.

Your Introduction

You have an opportunity to set yourself up for success with your introduction. Always have a brief introduction prepared in advance (and send it to the emcee or person introducing you before the speech if possible.) Your introduction tells a story about you, and emcees or hosts are much more comfortable reading a prepared text.

For your homework in this session, you'll be writing two types of introductions. The first is a standard introduction – it is functional. I don't subscribe to the theory that we always have to be serious. Most times our audience is making a judgment as to if they will even listen to us, let alone stay for our entire presentation. However, a good introduction will spark just enough interest to make your audience stay with you till the end.

The second introduction you'll be writing is more light-hearted (most audiences like this kind better). You may not be able to answer all the questions, but don't make it a litany of all your great educational degrees (no one cares – trust me); make it about you and your big ideas, your childhood success and your current achievements.

After you finish this course, you'll have the opportunity to work with me one-on-one in a mentorship. We'll discuss your introductions to make sure they're conveying the message you want to your audience.

Visual / Physical Arrangements of the Room

If you or your staff are able to help set up the room in advance, you can ensure that your message is heard in the best possible manner.

The arrangement of the sound system, the chairs, the lighting, and overall climate of the room can make a big difference in the way a presentation is received. Take control over these items.

Survey the venue well before you're on – does the backdrop clash with your clothes, is there a cord on the floor, are you walking up steps without a hand rail?

Make sure the room is not too cold or too hot. If you can control the room's temperature, you can keep your audience awake. Here's a checklist to follow to ensure your speaking success:

Microphones

Make sure you or your staff arrives early to make sure the microphone works. Ask for the sound person to join you in the room and do a microphone check together.

Nothing is more annoying than a speaker who cannot be heard or who is reverberating off the walls because the microphone is too loud or in the wrong place, so it screeches an awful high-pitched sound.

To avoid creating a sound barrier between you and the audience, remember these tips:

- The microphone should be level with your mouth, about six inches away. If you speak after someone who is taller or shorter than you, take a minute to adjust the

microphone. Nothing looks worse than someone who is out of balance with the microphone.

- Test the sound system before speaking (if you cannot, ask the host or staff to do this for you).
- Do not blow into a microphone to see if it is working; just speak in a normal voice.
- Speak in a normal voice range; let the sound system do the broadcasting.
- In a large group (or if your remarks are being recorded) always repeat the questions from the audience so everyone can hear.
- Finally, remember you always need a microphone. Even if you think you have a strong, big voice, it's always best to use a microphone to ensure that everyone can hear your message.

Seating

Seating is critical to a successful presentation. You must consider not only interaction but also safety and comfort.

- Semi-circular and straight theater-style seating enjoy one advantage: they have the audience sitting very close together.
- When audience members are seated on a curve, they can look to their left and right and see the faces of each person in the row. Laughter is contagious; many people will laugh just because they see others laughing.
- This seating style helps an audience join in the conversation. It also allows the audience to see the speaker without having to turn their head sharply. Do whatever it takes to keep the audience comfortable.
- Always try to stand as close as you can to the first row; this closeness will add familiarity to the audience.
- If you are in a place where the seating is fixed – you move. Be more animated and move around. This will cause the audience to move their heads to see you and connect with others around them.
- Avoid chairs next to the walls.
- Aisles should get bigger as they get nearer the exits to accommodate more people.
- Seat for least distraction; no one should have to crawl over more than six people to get out of the row.

- Encourage people to sit as close as possible to the front.

Lighting

To create an atmosphere conducive to laughter and interaction, ask that the room be well-lit.

Your effectiveness as a speaker is only realized when the audience can actually see you. They want to see your face, your expressions, and your body language. It is easier to establish a bond when the speaker and audience can see each other.

What Your Body Language Says About You

Successful speakers control their body language. The way you carry yourself – your posture, gestures and bodily response – says a lot about you.

Bodily action can be broken down into five areas:

- Your posture
- Your walk
- Your facial expressions
- Your gestures
- Your hands

Your Posture

Your mother was right – you need to stand up tall. Not only do you need to stand tall, you need to stand up straight. Your posture conveys purpose and meaning. Once you arrive at the lectern to begin your remarks, pull yourself up to create a strong presence.

When standing at the lectern, place one foot in front of the other (like a runner's stance), putting your weight on the back leg. If you are standing with legs apart, you'll have a tendency to rock side-to-side.

Your Walk

When you are introduced, how you walk to the lectern says a lot about who you are and creates anticipation for your speech.

When you stand to walk, smile and give a half wave to the audience so they know that you are there for them and that you are confident in yourself. Walk purposefully with direction. Pretend you're an Olympic star about to receive a gold medal.

Your Facial Expressions

The second the audience realizes that you are the guest speaker, they'll look away from the emcee and focus their attention on you – and you'll be graded immediately.

Your facial expression during your introduction creates an important first impression. A slight smile and interested look can go a long way to your success.

Be careful about looking down to the floor, out the window, or over the head of the audience.

Your expression is a mirror to your audience, reflecting your interest in them. Be glad to be there.

Your Gestures

Your gestures need to accomplish a purpose; you can divide, compare, contrast and enumerate through their use.

Gestures are useful only if they are effectively executed. They must be done with vitality.

Sharp, decisive, clear gestures tell the audience you're interested.

Weak, vague, half-hearted gestures tell the audience you lack confidence in yourself.

I would caution you about using some gestures because the meaning is different depending on where you are from.

Other thoughts:

- Forced gestures are unnatural.
- Planned gestures are mechanical.
- Natural gestures spring from inner impulse.
- You can gesture with one hand or both hands:
 - Palm up – suggest giving, receiving, appealing, friendliness or doubt.
 - Palm down – suggest calming, disapproval or rejection – or a benediction.
 - Vertical palm – can be used to suggest pushing away, cutting off, repelling, forbidding, eliminating, dividing or precision.
 - An index finger or pointing can be used to suggest scolding or warning, to point up a significant idea or indicate direction. Use this gesture judiciously – it can appear to be too harsh.
 - A clenched fist that is usually held up over your head can be used to suggest strength, power, force, opposition, anger, or defiance.

Your Hands

What do to with your hands when speaking can be one of your biggest challenges.

- Don't clasp or clutch your hands, or lace your fingers – you'll look nervous.
- Don't stand at attention in a stiff manner – you'll appear military-like. A military stance is not friendly or open
- Don't fold your arms – you'll look disinterested
- Don't play with your jewelry, pen or pencil – you'll look distracted.

Some things you can do:

- Fist in glove – place one hand inside the other hand.
- Fingertips – To spread out, adopt the steeple gesture. This forces your arms out a little and helps you to stand up tall.
- If you are sitting, keep your hands on your knees. Place one hand on top of the other and close your fingers.
- If you are at a table (forum) hands in a “V” works well. That is one hand on top of the other.

Other Suggestions

Avoid the “Bobbing Head Syndrome” – Be “Level-Headed”

Women have a tendency to nod up and down as we're listening to others talk. We give away our power by appearing to be so eager to please.

Imagine if I was trying to convince you to do something for me. In our conversation I asked you a series of questions and you gave me a non-verbal reply such as nodding up and down. If someone across the room saw you do this, they might wrongly assume you agree with everything I am saying, when in fact you were just listening.

An alternative to continuous head bobbing to show that you're listening is to instead try an occasional, slow, deep, purposeful nod. That is one time down and then back up – then STOP – no more movement.

Or you can do what is called a “verbal nod” – responding by saying, “Mm-hmm,” “Uh-huh,” or “Ah-ha.” It conveys that you're listening but doesn't give a definitive answer.

Do not tilt your head to the side when you talk. Keep your head straight towards the person you're addressing. If you tilt your head to one side, it again appears that you're giving your power away. Hold your head high and straight and you'll be in command of your audience.

Engage a friend to help you practice. It's often hard to correct on your own without feedback. Learn how to be “levelheaded.”

Making Eye Contact

Whether or not you can look people straight in the eye when speaking depends on your local customs.

If you can do this without offending local norms, I encourage you to learn to hold someone's gaze so you gain a sense of power and forge a stronger connection.

If you have a hard time looking directly into someone's eyes, look at their forehead, their nose or their upper lip. Keep looking in their eyes if you can, so you maintain a sense of strength and power.

How long should you look at someone to make good eye contact? Just long enough so she knows you see her and are able to make a personal connection.

Your Personal Energy

If you're tired, sick or exhausted, do not give your speech – ask someone to fill in for you. You only have a few seconds to make a good first impression, and if you're coughing or sneezing, your audience will be turned off. When you're sick, you just don't have the personal energy to give a powerful presentation.

Energy makes you more interesting, more passionate. You'll appear natural, professional, and confident. Don't take a chance on your audience feeling sorry for you because you're not well – the opposite is true. They'll wonder why you aren't smart enough to go to bed to get better.

Your “Likeability Factor”

Studies show we vote for the person we like best. We do business with the people we like best. We can win an audience over if we appear likeable. People follow leaders they like.

You must have a pleasing personality if you plan to be in the spotlight. If you have a quirky personality, work at becoming a person who's friendly and approachable, someone who is kind and caring.

Likeability can make up for a lot of mistakes – so have a friend help you assess your strengths and weaknesses so you can improve your “likeability factor.”

Assignment 1: Your Personal Introduction

Before your next session, create your personal introduction. It should cover all the key points below. When you've completed this assignment, put your name at the top of your work and submit it as a Word document file using the drop-box below.

Your Personal Introduction

- Who you are and what position you're running for, or what issue you are fighting for.
- Answer "Why You."
- What is your good opening line or fact (i.e. wake them up). i.e. Did You Know...
- What brought you to this point (2nd hit) i.e. I am running because... , or I am fighting for this issue because...
- Answer the "Why Now" (3rd hit).
- Interesting facts about you – Awards, Accomplishments, Activities...
- If something is out of the ordinary, pull it out and let it stand on its own...
- Wrap Up – name, position or issue, slogan or key message.

Assignment 2: Your Business Introduction

Before your next session, create your Business Introduction. This is the introduction that you prepare for others to give for you. It should cover all the key points below, in a way that works for your country. When you've completed this assignment, put your name at the top of your work and submit it as a Word document file using the drop-box below.

Business Introduction

- Our speaker today is like no other... (say with a smile)
- She is the leader of or she works at... and has served as Director or Mentor or Leader of – *list no more than 3 organization or committees*
- She was the first woman to...
- She has been compared to....
- She is known for...
- She has won, placed, created.... (1-3) *Interesting facts about you – Awards, Accomplishments, Activities...*
- *Take or Leave:* Give us something that is out of the ordinary – pull it out and let it stand on its own... OR You can do the standard lines about your...*Education, Course Work, Recognized Community Service, Boards and Commissions, Family & Hobbies.*
- Please welcome... [your name]

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 3: Your Delivery

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

How you deliver your message affects how it is viewed by others. In this lesson we'll focus on key elements that will enhance your message so your audience will want to listen to you and your message -- and then take the appropriate actions. We'll also talk about the reasons you may be nervous, and what you can do to control your nervousness while still maintaining a powerful presence. As you begin the process of developing your speaking style, it's important you recognize what works for you and how you can craft your message to suit your voice. Then we'll talk about your audience: how to make an emotional connection with them and guide them along the path that they should be following.

Objectives

In this session, we will discuss how to:

- Use Visual Aids to Enhance Your Message
- Control Your Nervousness
- Use Your Voice to Command and Control
- Develop Your Charisma
- Tell Your Personal Story
- Work within Time Constraints
- Control Your Emotions
- Engage Your Audience

Reading: Deliver Your Speech (Part I)

Using Visual Aids to Enhance Your Message

There are many items that come into play as you develop your spoken delivery style. In this class, we'll discuss your professional image, tips about how to use media to your advantage, and ideas to continue your personal development as a speaker.

How You Look to Your Audience

As a presenter, you're always on display, so always go the extra mile when choosing your clothing and spending time on personal grooming. The bottom line: as your mother may

have told you when you were a child before you went out in public – clean up and be presentable!

I've worked with many clients who are in the political realm. Some have been in office for years, and when an election rolls around, they have to campaign all over again. They have to buy new suits that fit, update hairstyles, buy new shoes or polish old ones. Think about how you dressed when you were being courted by your husband: you looked your best so you could win your partner over.

As a speaker, that's what we're doing today – trying to win your audience over to your side.

Recently, I worked with a client who is a national speaker for financial institutions. She is very pretty and wears her clothes just right. Unfortunately, when she gained a kilo, it threw off the whole public package. She looked like she wasn't in control because she was constantly pulling on her jacket to cover herself up.

It doesn't matter how pretty you are or how wealthy you are – if you're constantly adjusting your clothes, it will make you look like you aren't in control. If your jacket is too tight and you're always pulling at it to give you space, the audience will see that; if you pull at your tie or your collar is too tight, they'll notice that as well. Always remember that your audience is watching and grading you.

As we learned in Lesson One, you are judged on how you look, so please keep the following three rules in mind:

- Your clothes shouldn't be more interesting than you are.
- They should fit well and appear neat and clean.
- If you're hoping to rise through the ranks, choose clothes a level or two above what you normally buy, so you naturally fit in with the level you want to influence.

In other words, dress the part. Men are lucky – they can wear the same suit all week and only change their socks and tie and they're presentable again. Women, unfortunately, aren't so lucky.

Our clothes tell our colleagues what we're all about. Do you want others to think you're a plodder... creative... gregarious... secure... conservative... timid... self-conscious? Your wardrobe has the power to convey all these messages, so make it an asset, not a detriment.

Your clothes should boldly convey, "I am suited up, I am ready to play and I am wearing the appropriate uniform to achieve my goal." Depending on your country, always do what is acceptable to you and those who you're trying to influence.

Here's a list of suggestions I've compiled so you're always well-prepared – and well-dressed – for any occasion:

- Wear a well-made business suit, dress, pantsuit or your country's attire.
- If you wear a skirt or dress, make sure the length is appropriate.
- Be a little "larger than life" when choosing the clothes you'll wear – dress to make an impression.
- Make sure your audience can see you if they're seated at the back of the room.
- Wear dull finished jewelry – pearls, brushed gold/silver. You don't want your audience to be distracted by the amount of jewels you wear.
- The next time you buy eyeglasses, spend the extra money to have them fitted with non-reflective lenses.
- Don't wear your nametag when you speak; it's distracting for the audience. Take it off and put it somewhere you can easily retrieve it such as your pocket. When you're finished speaking, you can put it back on.
- Polish your shoes often, and check the heels for wear and tear.
- You'll often be photographed as the only woman in the group of men – dress to stand out. Rich bright colors and fabrics with texture will help you make a statement.
- Limit the amount of perfume you wear; you don't want to be remembered long after you leave the room.

Your Table Manners

Your audience is impressed by you based on the visual, vocal and content. Your manners will be noticed, so proper etiquette is a must.

- Try to hold still, sit still, and stand still.
- Sit up and look interested – even if you're not.
- Know what to do with your hands and legs.
- Do not chomp on gum or chew on ice.
- Do not clear your throat excessively or blow your nose.
- Make sure you always say "please" and "thank you".

PowerPoint

Be careful about using PowerPoint and other multimedia crutches. It seldom works right, which means you'll be trying to recover from the beginning. I like PowerPoint to show the fine details, but if you base your entire presentation on PowerPoint, you'll bore your audience.

They've come to hear you, not watch your PowerPoint. Here are my suggestions:

- When in doubt, do without.
- Coordinate what you say with what the audience is seeing.
- Remove or delete the visual when it is finished.
- Position your body to face the audience when you speak; do not speak to the screen behind you.
- Lights on bright... keep them awake.
- Use a title on every slide.
- One thought/image per slide.
- Practice using the PowerPoint program and pointer.

NOTE: Have your PowerPoint slides ready in a handout version in case the system goes down.

Your Lectern "Leanings"

As we've discussed, the audience's impression of you is based on the visual, vocal and content. If you lean on the lectern, it will be noticed. The lectern (or podium as it is often called) is the box at the front of the room that holds your notes. That's all it does.

Note to women: make sure you can be seen from the back of the room when you're standing behind the lectern. If not, you may need to carry a step to stand on so you can be seen over the lectern.

Here are my suggestions if you're using a lectern:

- Do not hug the lectern. Just leave your notes on it and begin to speak.
- Do not grip the sides of the lectern with your hands.
- Do not lean on the lectern; it does not look professional.

How to Control Your Nervousness

The key to overcoming nervousness is to know what you're talking about. You need to "own" your material. In Lesson One we discussed how if you don't know your topic, you'll be fearful because there's a good chance you'll be asked questions you can't answer. Always do your homework.

Even professional speakers get a little nervous. Remember: it's not about you; it's about your message. So focus on your message; that will help control your nervousness.

Your audience, most of the time, doesn't show up to hear you speak and fail. In fact, most people want you to be a good speaker because they have to sit and listen to you. So accept the fact that your audience, for the most part, is on your side. They just want to know the facts.

The most important thing you can do is to practice your speech out loud. You need to speak your speech out loud so your ear can hear the words and embed them in your mind. This will also help with your memory.

The bottom line: Practice your speech, practice your speech, and practice your speech.

Here are some other useful suggestions to alleviate your nervousness:

Isometrics – clasp your hands together tightly and hold for 15 seconds and release, then repeat. By creating tension with your hands, your fear will be removed for a few moments because your brain is focusing on your hands. Another alternative is to take your thumb and press it hard against each of your fingers one-by-one. Both of these activities will release tension and relieve your nervousness.

Face stretch – open your mouth wide and hold for 15 seconds and release. This technique will help stretch your mouth and face muscles so your words will flow easier.

Pace – take a minute and walk and breathe, walk and breathe. This will help calm you down and get your breathing into place. Remember to breathe from your diaphragm and not from your chest; you need deep breaths to get enough air into your lungs so you can speak with power.

Run cool water over your hands – visit the restroom before you give your speech. While you're there, run cool water over your hands or wash your hands. The water will have a calming effect on you.

Breathe deeply – as I mentioned earlier, breathing will help you. So take a deep breath, hold it, release, then repeat. Do this a few times and you'll be able to feel your shoulders loosen and your body relax.

Have water available – water served at room temperature works best. Don't drink anything with milk (it can cause mucus), and be careful about sugary drinks (they can dry your mouth.) Brushing your teeth right before you speak can also be drying, so brush in the morning and save your mint until you're finished speaking. You'll have fresh breath when people come up to you after your speech.

Using Your Voice to Command and Control

Your voice will make or break your audience's attention to your topic. How you sound to others determines whether your audience will listen to you. In this section, we'll look at the mechanisms of your voice. Each of us has a special sound; your voice is distinct and

people know you by your voice. As a speaker, you'll want your voice to be pleasing: strong enough to be heard and forceful enough to be listened to.

Let's take an inward look at your voice.

Breathing is the first step to vocal production. I've already talked about the importance of good breathing to help you sustain your voice and get your message across. In this section, we'll discuss the two types of breathing:

- **Clavicular breathing** – when the shoulders and collarbone are raised on inhalation. You'll notice this type of breathing if you run, as your body needs to get air into your lungs quickly. This is not the best type of breathing because it won't sustain for the duration.
- **Epigastric breathing** – when the diaphragm area is extended during inhalation. This is the best type of breathing because it gives the greatest control, requires less effort and results in less tension in the throat and upper chest. Professional singers develop this type of breathing to sustain their notes. This is the best type of breathing for a speaker.

Phonation is the second step in vocal production. Phonation is the sound production. It takes place in the vocal folds in the larynx and is vibrated by breath stream. Good sound production has to have a free, relaxed and open throat.

Resonation is the third step in vocal production. Resonation is the amplification or loudness of your voice. It takes place in the pharynx, mouth and nasal cavities.

Articulation is the fourth step in vocal production. Articulation is the process of forming meaningful oral symbols by the manipulation of the tongue, lip, lower jaw and velum (soft palate).

We'll next take an outward look at your voice.

To be a speaker who is heard and is enjoyable to listen to, you must gain control of your voice. Work for variety in force, pitch, quality and timing.

Force is the degree of loudness in your voice. Adequate loudness means being heard easily by your audience whatever the size of the room.

Pitch is the key of the voice on the musical scale and variations up and down the scale

- Habitual pitch is the pitch at which you most often speak.
- Optimum pitch is where your voice functions best.

Melody is the pattern of pitch variation in speech. Melody is the singsong quality in your voice.

Quality is what distinguishes one voice from another. Voice quality is the term we use to describe a pleasing, mellow, well-rounded, resonant, rich, full or melodious voice.

Time is the speed of utterance. Elements of time include:

Rate – is the number of words spoken per minute.

Duration – is the length of individual sounds.

Pause – is the period of silence.

- It gives the speaker a chance to breathe.
- It serves to control the general rate.
- It provides an opportunity to delineate and point out a thought.
- It gives the speaker a chance to grasp the next thought and emphasize word meaning.

Projection is the intensification of all the elements of delivery. This is the combination of all the elements put together for your vocal success.

Developing Your Charisma

Good speakers are charismatic. Charisma is defined as:

1. A rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm.
2. Personal magnetism or charm.

Developing charisma can take you to new heights. Here are some suggestions to help you learn how to become a charismatic or engaging leader:

You need to learn to take up space – Powerful people take up physical space. Appear to be larger than life. Use large gestures, and illustrate what the words are saying. Don't shrink up in the room or you'll be overlooked.

Lighten up – Keep a relaxed and pleasant face. When you enter a room and people are waiting for you to say something, they tend to be "listening" with their eyes. Smile, wave, gesture, and begin the process of making eye contact with a few friendly folks.

Say you're glad to be with them -- The first step to giving a good speech is to be glad to be there. How many speakers actually sound glad that they were invited to speak? Your enthusiasm is your "hook" to make those who are listening to you want to listen more.

Work on varying your voice – Work at sounding believable and conversational. If you're stiff or formal, people won't want to listen to you. If you have energy and enthusiasm in

your voice, they'll listen and respond to you. One way to do that is to hit the highs and lows with your voice. When you're telling a touching story, soften your voice and slow the pace. When telling a funny story, speak faster and louder; this will show you're being with them in the moment.

Learn to speak with power or a powerful voice – Make sure your voice conveys authority. Be careful about letting your voice rise at the end of the sentence; it sounds like you're asking a question. Your voice should be strong and powerful from the first word to the last that you use.

Maintain a calm and even delivery throughout your speech – Abrupt changes in your behavior can scare your audience. Act cool and in control, even if you're panicking inside. When the microphone goes dead or the lights go off, keep your head about you. Your actions and reactions will be remembered long after the mic and lights come back on.

The Value of Your Personal Story

Each of you have a story to tell, and you're the author and the main character in the story. You need to write your story down and then practice giving it. It shouldn't be long, it should be interesting, and it needs to make sense to the situation.

You have many stories to tell. But to tell them well, you need to craft them in such a way so you can tell them without tears or anger or frustration. You want to be able to tell your stories without losing your words.

Your audience has a lot on their minds, and listening to you is just one of many things they're doing when they sit in front of you. So you have got to grab the attention of your audience right from the start. It's your job to jolt them, or cajole them, into listening to you. A good story will do that.

From my years of speaking, I can tell you that nothing captivates an audience like a personal story or an issue that you have dealt with. Just make sure you have an outcome that is relevant to the audience.

Your homework for this session is to write out two or three personal stories. They can be about the organization you're working with or about how you developed your leadership as a young child. It could be a story about your family and what they mean to you. You need to think through anything you write to make sure it's something you can tell will make sense to all who hear it.

Here is one of my stories:

When I was young my brothers, as far as I could tell, never gave it much thought that I was a girl. I figured that out now that I am older. I was taught to play basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis, and volleyball, as well as horseback riding and all the other activities I was dragged kicking and screaming into because, as my brother told me a few years ago, "Deb, we never want you to be a boring date!"

That story works we all have stories of our brothers or sisters who did things to us for our “own good.” When I tell this story everyone laughs because when you’re from a large family, someone is always trying to get you to do something he or she thinks you should do. My four brothers always needed another “teammate”, so I was strongly encouraged to learn how to play all the sports so we could have a team of five. It really wasn’t for my good but for the good of the “team.”

As your homework at the end of this session, think about your stories and how you’re going to tell them. My story isn’t long, but it is right to the point about having to learn sports to be part of my brothers’ teams.

Working within Time Constraints

While we may have a lot to say, studies show that today’s audiences’ attention span is about 1,000 seconds, or 16 and one-half minutes. That means whatever you say, you must learn to say it in a short amount of time.

Some speakers believe that if they speak for a long period of time, people will think they’re smart – but the opposite is true. They only think you’re talking too much. Work on your speech so you can say all you need to say without all the filler words.

You’d rather be invited back to speak again than tell all you know and wear your audience out. The goal of any speaker is for someone to say, “I could have heard her speak all day long” versus “She spoke all day long and wore us out.”

You need to think about who is in your audience. What is their age and interest? Do they want to hear you speak or did someone make them come to hear you speak? We’ll work on this in a later session, but be aware of the reason people come to hear you speak.

I’ve been speaking long enough to know that people will excuse all kinds of awful speechmaking but nobody – nobody – forgives the pain of a long speech. Twenty-five to 30 minutes is a long speech, 15 to 20 minutes is a medium length speech, and seven to ten minutes is a nice short speech.

The key to success is to practice, practice – and practice some more. I encourage people to talk out their speech. Don’t practice in silence; you need to speak it out loud so your ear can hear what your heart is saying. You need to know your material so well that you “own” it – that giving it is as natural as having a conversation with friends.

Controlling Your Emotions

If you’re just trying to convey information, you could just hand out a report and never speak. But since this is a speech class, I want you to know the rules that will create an environment for your success.

A good speech has emotion. A good speech might have humor, anger, laughter, a promise

or commitment. There's a reason you're speaking. And there's a reason you're speaking to a particular group of people. You understand the need to make an emotional connection with them – and now we need to find a balance in that connection.

Most of us are in leadership because of an issue that we feel passionate about. Our passion has brought us to a place where we need to teach or inform others, but it can't come across in such an angry manner that it scares people.

Sometimes as a presenter you might need to show some of what I call “righteous indignation.” The word “righteous” says you're right and proper, and you're talking about things that matter to you. The word “indignation” means that you're upset by the situation and that you're advocating that change is needed.

Personally, there are many things that me angry and causes me to have righteous indignation. I hate it when children are hurt, it makes me angry when people cheat and lie. I'm unhappy when older people don't have money for medicine or are lonely. It makes me angry that people pollute the environment and water. These are just a few issues that upset me. And while I have righteous indignation about these issues, I am not “over-the-top crazy, foaming-at-the-mouth angry.” I'm upset but I'm working on a plan to make things right. I may be upset, but I'm still calm enough to get the job done.

So when you speak about these issues, you can show flashes of frustration, anger or exhaustion, but be careful – too much emotion and you'll lose your audience because they'll think you're unbalanced.

The bottom line: be forceful and concerned but keep a lid on over-the-top behavior.

Engaging Your Audience

Your audience will respond to you in a more committed manner if they're actively engaged and know they're part of a bigger plan. It's your responsibility to engage them with your issues, your stories, your hopes and your dreams. Motivate them so they want to join your team.

When speaking, don't speak “at” or “down” to your audience. You want to speak “with” them in a conversational and personal manner. If you speak “with” them, you can win them over because they know you care about them and are genuinely interested in them.

If you speak “at” your audience, they'll assume that you just like the sound of your voice and aren't trying to make an emotional connection with them. If you speak “down” to your audience, they'll dismiss what you're saying because you've set yourself up as superior to them. And if you aren't careful, some will feel like you're berating them and don't respect them.

When you've completed your presentation, open the floor to questions from the audience. Your ability as a presenter is double-checked by your skill to answer questions the audience has for you. When you know your topic, you'll shine and gain respect.

Just a final note: when you're finished speaking, many people will come up to you to tell you what a good job you did. The mark of a good speaker is to acknowledge with graciousness every member of the audience who approaches you after the speech. Look her in the eye and say "thank you", and make everyone feel special.

Assignment: Your Personal Story

Write one or two personal stories (on page). Then write a paragraph for each of the following questions:

- What are you passionate about?
- What do you know a lot about? On what topic are you an expert?
- And if you could change the world for one day, what would you do?

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 4: Your Delivery, Part II

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In this session, we will discuss some of the basic concepts for crafting and writing a presentation or speech. As we learned in the last session, your voice is distinctly your own, and the same is true for your writing style. Although I'll give you some suggestions about how to write a speech or presentation, you should use your own judgment on how the following rules should apply to the audience or group you're leading or speaking to.

We'll discuss the basics of crafting a message that will stick in the listeners' mind long after you've finished speaking. We'll focus on the basics of a good presentation that attracts the listener and will move her/him to action. Discussion will also focus on how to script a speech for any group or audience, as well as the purposeful use of words.

Objectives

We will cover the following topics:

- Write for the Ear and Not for the Eye
- Your Speech is an Essay
- Make Sure Your Script Fits the Situation
- Your Theme Must be Consistent
- Master the Power of Language
- The Most Important Rule in Speaking

Reading: Deliver Your Speech (Part II)

Write for the Ear and Not for the Eye

The title of this section may seem a little odd, but one of the basic rules of writing any presentation is to write for the ear and not for the eye.

Simply put, your speech is for you first and foremost, so you need to write it in a way that helps you deliver it with strength and power. You don't need to follow traditional rules of grammar. That means you can have half-sentences, asides, one-liners, or anything that will help you deliver a powerful message.

Besides yourself, your speech or talk is for your audience. If you can't capture them with

your words, they'll never hear your message.

Always remember your speech is written for your eyes only – you shouldn't give a copy of your speech to anyone, especially the media. Why? A speech outline may make sense to you, but it won't make sense to others. It's better to craft one speech for you and, if you want the media to have a copy, craft one for them that is grammatically correct.

Sometimes I have strong words for members of my audience, but I put those words on my speaker's copy and not on the media copy, and that's okay. If the media is too lazy to attend my presentation, then they get what they get. If the media refuses to come to my speech and listen to my words, they'll only get the copy of "my public speech" and not the one I give – albeit these speeches are almost exactly the same (and can be if you have nothing controversial to say).

The key is to protect yourself, first and foremost. Although it's okay to speak your mind, you might not want to put that into a printed document that the media or another group could use against you.

When you speak, choose words that are pleasing or familiar to your ear. This is the first rule for speechwriting and public speaking. You know from experience that when you talk to your friends, are at a meeting of people who like you, or are across the table from your family, you often speak differently than when you read the written word. Your talking is filled with words that you're comfortable saying – similar to the difference between high Arabic and low Arabic – you use one with one group of people and the other with your friends and family.

This leads directly to the second most basic secret of speechwriting: the ear is less interested in good grammar than it is in content and rhythm.

I'm not saying that you don't have to use good grammar - of course you do – but instead, you need to focus on finding a way to reach your audience.

The trick to any good speech is to entertain the ear, to speak conversationally. Write in a way that captures the usages, cadences, rhythms and intonations of people speaking to one another. When writing a speech, you can drop the use of perfect grammar, tense and construction, which makes the written word sound stilted when spoken. However, your public written words must be in perfect order (i.e. your media copy).

You need to use words that are comfortable for you to speak, and you must use words that your particular audience understands and will respond to. If you speak very differently than your audience, they won't follow you because you have set yourself up as being different – and different doesn't work when you're trying to lead a group.

Remember: Because your speech was written for the ear and not the eye, do not give your speaking copy to the media. The media should receive a grammatically correct speech.

Your Speech is an Essay

As with any paper you have had to write, you had an opening, middle and a conclusion. The same is true for public speaking. You must have an opening, as we discussed in the last chapter. Your opening could be as simple as a welcome or an “I am happy to be here” line. After you’ve opened your talk, you must then move to the points in the middle – the “meat” of the speech.

I encourage my students not to have more than three points in the middle of your presentation, because your audience really can’t remember more than that. Be especially careful that you don’t weigh them down with so much information that they can’t remember any of it.

Finally, your presentation needs a powerful ending. As you wind down your speech, be careful that you don’t have multiple messages or meanderings of thought. Throughout your speech, make sure you have a clear, consistent and concise message with an ending.

We’ll explore this concept more in the upcoming chapters. One of the primary reasons people struggle with speeches is that they have no frame of reference within which to put the activity. Your speech is essentially an essay: it has a clear beginning, middle and end, and organizes different points into a single, coherent package.

At the same time, an essay is meant to touch a chord, ring a bell, punch a button, sing a song, paint a picture – it is persuasive and deals with something that is meaningful to the reader, and, in this case, listener.

To understand the layout of your speech, go ahead and think about a presentation you may have given recently – how did you lay it out? Whether you thought about it or not, you probably outlined your main points, and then you added some facts and figures to bolster your position. Perhaps you added in a true story or a well-known saying or poem. Then, you probably wrapped it all up with a good line that reflected what the talk was about.

The same outline you use to tell a story can be used for your written speech.

The steps are simple: outline your speech/essay first, point-by-point, and then flesh it out with short, crisp sentences that make your case.

Make Sure Your Script Fits the Situation

I could tell you story after story about people who for some reason didn’t know who was in their audience, and then said things that were offensive or just plain silly and wrong.

Make sure you know who you are speaking to and what they expect of you.

Imagine if I was to speak to a cake decorating class and all the students came to learn how to make a great cake with rich chocolate icing and, instead of standing up to talk about cakes, I stood up and started to talk about how to care for your cat or dog. Now there’s

nothing wrong with speaking about caring for your pet, but that isn't what the audience came to hear. They came for cake decorating tips, and if I spoke about something else, they might not mind – but they would be disappointed because I was off message.

One way to make sure you're on message is to research in advance the organization, class or group of people you're planning to speak to. Knowing who they are, why they have come, and what they are expecting shows you took the time to make a personal connection.

Imagine if you knew the local women's club had helped prepare meals for those in need in your community. If, when you stood to speak, you complimented them on their good-will gesture, and you stated how important their simple act of kindness was in the neighborhood, how do you think they'd feel about you speaking to them? They would love you!

Even if your topic wasn't their favorite subject, they would still be appreciative that you took the time to know them, to thank them and to recognize their accomplishments.

Just that simple act shows that you care about your audience.

There's nothing more insulting to a group or club when the speaker doesn't know who they are and what they do.

There was a local politician in my town who spoke to a group of war veterans; he went on and on about their service, their valor, their love of country – and then he talked about a war that occurred a decade earlier, not the one in which they served. After that point, it didn't matter that the politician said all those nice things about their service, valor and love of country. All that mattered was the politician didn't know who they were and what war they had fought in to protect their country.

When you know what group you're talking to, plot out the points you want to make and then organize the speech in a logical format. Some points to ponder: if your audience is informed, you don't need to spend much time explaining major issues – they already know the issues at hand. If your audience is not well informed, you'll need to clarify and explain your points and topic.

The most important thing to keep in mind as the speaker is that you want to motivate them to want to learn more. You want them to trust you enough to hear your side of the issue and then weigh it out for them to make a final decision. When your script fits the situation and you talk about things they need to hear, wanted to hear, or were interested to learn, you'll have a successful speech.

Your Theme Must be Consistent

Identifying a consistent theme will help you organize your speech logically. As I mentioned earlier, if I were to do a talk on cake making and the audience showed up and I spoke about my pets, there would be no consistency and my audience would be confused.

Your theme needs to be able to relate to every story you use and the facts and figures you quote to add strength to your argument.

I like to repeat my theme throughout my talk as a reminder for my audience to stay with me as we learn something new.

If, as a speaker, you can develop one or two good quotes, stories and analogies – especially personal anecdotes – and insert them early in the speech and develop the central message from the opening, you’ll be able to keep your audience’s attention.

It is important as a speaker that you provide solid, valuable information that can help your audience. Most speaking events fail because the speaker didn’t understand that in addition to imparting information (which is important), a speech must move people. The goal is to make the listeners think, care, respond, and act.

Keep your theme consistent. You may wish to talk about a hundred different ideas, but it’s much more effective if you focus on one theme.

For example, in this lesson about your delivery, I could branch out into other topics, such as different types of speeches you might give, or how television has changed the way the audience will receive you. However, I’ll keep focused on the importance of the types of delivery and what the audience expects from the speaker. We’ll cover other topics in subsequent lessons.

Master the Power of Language

The secret of a great speech is to use clear, simple and expressive language whenever possible so your audience will understand the message you’re giving. Work to avoid slang or idiomatic expressions in your words.

You may have sayings and phrases that are native to you and your language, but if someone on the outside hears you speak, they might not understand the local stories or the meaning of your words. Your particular sayings and phrases will confuse them and make them wonder if you know what you’re talking about.

For example, if you read the newspaper, oftentimes reporters and columnists use words that you and I would never use in our daily conversation. We call these words “Newspeak” and these words shouldn’t find their way into your speech.

Words such as empowerment, rightsizing, reprioritize, facilitation, paradigm, futurism, benchmarking, new tomorrow, value-driven, feedback, visioning, stakeholders, win-win, quality time, team player, synergy, strategic, interdependence, networking, programmatic, new millennium, 21st century, impact, impacted, and impacting are examples of “Newspeak” and should be avoided.

Why? These words are considered “fluff” and have no real meaning. The words sound smart and big, but when all the air is taken out of them, they say little. Use words that work

– words that have meaning that everyone in your audience will understand.

Please don't misunderstand me; this is not the difference between high and low Arabic – that is something different, because those words have meaning. The words I'm talking about are the filler words that are current in your business speak but don't last years later.

Speaking clearly can make or break you as a speaker. In today's environment, we are fraught with political correctness. Some words have different meanings to different people.

I can invite you to my house (structure) or my home (dwelling); they're describing the same thing but have different nuances. Which would you rather visit? Probably my home – it is a warmer word. We sometimes say house is the outside, while home is the inside.

Always remember the 'Golden Rule': "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The same holds true for speaking: carefully choose your words so you don't hurt someone unintentionally.

Poor word choices can wreck a career in a matter of minutes. Have you ever said something you regret, but it is too late – you said it and now you've hurt someone? It's important that you choose your words carefully.

In my hometown, a TV anchor became angry with the cameraman. She thought they were on a commercial break and told him, "I wish you would die." What she didn't know was that the camera was still filming her, the station wasn't on a commercial break, and everyone who was watching the news that night saw and heard her ugly words. She was fired the next day and hasn't worked in television since.

Be careful that your words don't get you into trouble

Speakers should also pay attention to their vocabulary. If you're not using the best and most intelligent words you know, you're doing yourself a disservice. You need to learn new words and enrich your vocabulary every day.

Be mindful of using local slang. I'm from the southern part of America, and down here we have local sayings that mean nothing to people who aren't familiar with our way of life. If I use a local term and no one knows what it means, or if someone is offended because they think they know what it means but they really don't – the only person hurt is me. If I used slang words or sayings that don't translate well, I could accidentally hurt someone's feelings because they don't understand the meaning of the local saying. The bottom line: choose your words carefully.

Words are symbols that you use to express your ideas and feelings, and they're important.

Correct grammar is not offensive to anyone; incorrect grammar is offensive to everyone who knows better.

Because you're a leader in your community, you're held to a higher standard, so make sure

others know how educated you are by choosing your words carefully.

Let me add three more thoughts:

1. Always use language that is appropriate.
2. Cursing is never appropriate when speaking – I know when you hit your thumb with a hammer, only a few words work, but as a speaker, you need to be very careful of not offending your audience.
3. Find substitutes for trite words and phrases...those “Newspeak” words we discussed earlier in this lesson.

Good speakers use words that are concrete. Concrete words are linked with things we see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

As a speaker, if you use words that have color, action or are descriptive, you’ll keep your audience’s attention.

The Most Important Rule in Speaking

If it’s not funny, don’t use it!

Why? Because some people are just waiting to be offended.

Think about it – some folks just wait for you to offend them so they can have their feelings hurt and can blame you for every slight or injustice. Don’t do it; it will be too hard to recover and you’ll spend the rest of your time in leadership trying to make right when someone has an issue against you for something you said.

Unfortunately, many people have thin skin and they let everything hurt their feelings, so you must be careful.

Many times we use humor in a speech. Humor can break the ice with the audience and deflect a negative. But be aware that if you use humor in a speech, make certain the story, anecdote, or joke is funny to all listeners. Test it first with others you trust. It may be funny on Saturday night with your friends, but if it isn’t on Monday morning at the office, then don’t tell the joke.

If the joke or story is off-color, questionable, or is offensive to some religious, ethnic or racial group, leave it out.

I know you don’t mean to hurt anyone. But if you tell a joke or make a statement that is

hurtful, you'll most likely never recover from that slip up. So be careful about the words you use and how you use them.

Assignment: Speech Themes

- Write out the themes for your speech or presentation – what message do you want to deliver?
- Write out a joke or story that would be funny or light-hearted to all who hear it.
- Write a story about something you have won and something you have lost.

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 5: Rules for Effective Presentations

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In this lesson, we'll discuss some of the basic rules for effective presentations from two perspectives: the way the media can misinterpret your message and understanding how to capture your audience with your words. As a speaker, you're always communicating, even if you are just sitting at the front of the room or welcoming people to the meeting; your actions and reactions are all being judged. We'll also focus on what you can do to make a great impression, as we will build on the concepts you learned in the earlier lessons.

Objectives

We will cover the following topics:

- Heighten your ability to understand how you are perceived by others and what you can do to improve that perception.
- Learn how to choose the right words or phrases to help your audience make a personal connection with you.
- Learn how to make a good first impression – that as a speaker you need to be always “on” because someone is always watching and judging you.

Reading: Rules for Effective Presentations

Television and Your Audience

As speakers, you and I are judged at a much higher level today than in the past, thanks in part to the medium of television. Television has become such a part of our lives that, unfortunately, we are judged to a standard we many times cannot grasp or live up to.

If you've ever visited a TV studio, you'll see all the special lighting, staging and make-up for the news anchors in preparation for the broadcast. When the lights are just right, someone else is doing your make-up, and the TV station uses a camera lens that softens the edges, the reporters look perfect. Now comes our turn – a reporter shows up at our meeting and wants to interview us for the news. Most likely, we've been running around all day and are exhausted, our hair and makeup are a little worn, and the office is dark. Just imagine how different we look than the news reporter who has all the proper lighting and staging. Because of that, we need to be as aware as possible of how we come across to the audience.

Merrie Spaeth, author of *Marketplace Communications*, states that “Television is crucially important to today’s executives because it has shaped the expectations of how we communicate and present ourselves.”

The TV news teams have set a standard your audience has come to expect. If your style of communication is drastically different from these models, you **risk appearing unprepared, uninteresting and, worst of all, untrustworthy**. All because someone has set a false standard we must meet and many times exceed.

TV has rewritten the rules of public speaking. In the leadership world that you’re in, knowing this is vital. Whether you’re speaking in front of the local council or neighborhood education committee, your communication is really one-on-one, even though there might be 100 people in the room. You have to communicate in such a way that each person feels like you’re speaking to him or her, and not just speaking for the sake of speaking.

Most people are used to one-on-one communication from watching hours of television. Think about when you are at home and you turn on the TV to watch the news or a show. You have the feeling the person on the TV is speaking directly to you.

The reporters don’t shout, they don’t speak in a monotone voice and they never frown – they always have a nice expression on their pretty faces in their perfect clothes. When they look into the camera, they don’t look as if they’re reading from a text or TelePrompTer – it appears that they’re talking to us in a very conversational tone and manner.

The next time you see an interview, watch the difference between the TV personality and the person being interviewed. Which one appears to be more engaging and professional?

Capture Your Audience with Words

As a speaker you want to **engage your audience the way the media does**. Most people can watch TV five to six hours a day! Can you imagine a group of volunteers paying attention for more than an hour? The key is to find a way to connect with your audience. While it’s difficult at best to keep anyone on task for six hours, good speakers impart information that will encourage the audience to stay tuned and listen.

So as you consider the information you want to share, keep the following tips in mind:

Your Job is to Tell a Story

Whether you are presenting your budget for next year, pitching ideas to a new client, or just discussing the latest news, don’t approach communications as if your job is merely to transmit a list of facts. You’re the image they are seeing and listening to, so make sure your story, budget or client review has a clear point of view. Make sure it has a beginning and an end, interesting characters, a plot, good dialogue, humor and illustration. To tell a story well, you need to rehearse.

Your homework for the end of this session is to find a video camera (or tape recorder) and tell a story, recite a poem or your favorite quote. The key is to be interesting and to see how your facial expressions look on camera. Listen to hear if your voice is dynamic and alive or dull and monotone.

To capture your audience using words, follow these four rules:

1. **Be Accurate**

- You must be able to define your topic and issue in a simple way. Don't make your train of thought hard to follow; your audience is busy and has other things on their minds, so your information needs to be easy to digest and understand. After you know your audience has understood your basic information, you can then introduce more complicated material.
- You must be careful about interpretation and draw heavily on the facts. While most people have their own personal slants and bias, you still need to be able to back up your information with facts. There will always be someone who will challenge you, so make sure you have correct information.

2. **Be Clear**

- Effective speakers limit the number of points they make during their presentations. In our earlier session, I suggested that sticking to three main points is optimum, because that is the most your group can remember and act upon. If you talk about 35 points, no one will remember what you're talking about or trying to change. After they have grasped the information, you can increase the number of points or concepts.
- Use clear transitions with logical progressions when you're discussing issues. Do not make great leaps of mental energy; keep it simple so your audience can follow along.
- Use language that is direct and vivid, adding action verbs and strong words to your presentation. We have spoken about the use of words that are concrete – things you can hear, touch, taste and smell. People want to follow a leader who has strength and vision. You can set the course for success if you are clear and distinct in your words. This means you'll need to write out your presentation and then practice it out loud to see how the words form in your mouth and how you sound when you speak. Use big ideas to show your long-range plans and dreams.

3. **Be Impartial**

- Good speakers are not influenced by prejudices; they take and see things for how they really are. We all come to the table with our own notions about

how problems should be solved. Nonetheless, you want to be seen as just and fair, not one-sided.

- Try not to deal in generalities; you must use facts. There is an old saying: tell the truth, and the truth will set you free. If you deal in generalities, people won't know where you stand; stick to the facts and you'll earn respect.
- Don't force your opinions upon others. While we all have our own strong opinions on many issues, you're trying to build a coalition by finding common ground with your audience – with the ultimate goal of reaching an agreement or a compromise. Just know that sometimes saying nothing and letting the other person have a say (as long as it is not against anything you believe morally or religiously) can move the process forward.

4. **Be Interesting**

- Tell a story or an amazing fact or figure to keep your audience engaged. You, as the speaker, need to relate to the listener's needs and experiences.
- Arouse the listener's curiosity. You don't always have to tell the whole story up front, but you can give us hints to keep us guessing the outcome. By your words and actions, you can keep your audience interested until the end of your story.

PowerPoint

Be careful about using PowerPoint and other multimedia crutches. It seldom works right, which means you'll be trying to recover from the beginning. I like PowerPoint to show the fine details but if you base your entire presentation on PowerPoint you'll bore your audience.

They've come to hear you, not watch your PowerPoint. Here are my suggestions:

- When in doubt, do without.
- Coordinate what you say with what the audience is seeing.
- Remove or delete the visual when it is finished.
- Position your body to face the audience when you speak; do not speak to the screen behind you.
- Lights on bright... keep them awake.
- Use a title on every slide.
- One thought/image per slide.

- Practice using the PowerPoint program and pointer.

NOTE: Have your PowerPoint slides ready in a handout version in case the system goes down.

Eye Contact is Critical for TV

We've seen people whose eyes dart back and forth, up and down, towards and away from the camera, or to and from someone with whom they are speaking. Untrained people often have the same problem when they appear on TV. Good eye contact is deliberate and slow-paced, and conveys trustworthiness. Look at someone long enough for him or her to realize you're talking directly to him or her. No matter how large or small the audience, you need to create this one-on-one bond.

When being interviewed, especially on television, keep your eyes focused on the reporter asking you the questions. Do not let your eyes wander.

NOTE: Make sure you are following the customs and rules of your country when it comes to making eye contact – you need to do what is proper for where you are.

You are Always Communicating

Even when you're not talking, you're still communicating

Be careful how you look when you are waiting to be introduced or listening to others. Most of us have a facial expression that looks quite grim instead of animated and pleasant when we're listening. As the speaker, if you look mad or mean, the audience might get the impression you don't want to be there. Know how to animate your face to appear interested, pleasant, kind and trustworthy.

Use visual elements to make your presentations more interesting

Because most audiences have limited attention spans, you might want to consider using visuals during your presentation that easily represent what you're talking about. For example, if you're focusing on elder care, you'll want to collect statistics about those who are living below the poverty line, and how our elderly are not getting proper nutrition. You can talk about what types of food provide the best vitamins to the elderly. When using real examples, try not to embarrass the person, but instead show sympathy and demonstrate the difference some kind acts could make in her life.

Keep your contact personal

Whether you're addressing a group of 10 or 100, make your presentation seem intimate. If there are 100 people, move out from behind the lectern or away from the front of the room, and interact with the audience. Just like the reporters on TV, we want to make a personal connection with the audience.

Even when you're not talking, you're still communicating

We have discussed how your speech or presentation needs to be written for the ear and not just the eye. Your speech can have dashes, pauses, asides, half sentences and repetitions – just the way you speak. When you're practicing out loud, pay attention to your words and how they sound. If you have a hard time pronouncing a certain word, choose another you can say with ease. Remember, the key is for you to sound in control and in charge.

As a leader, you often give the same talk over and over again to many different audiences. No matter how many times you've given your speech, it needs to be as exciting as it was the first time. Every time you give your speech, remember that you have a new audience. These folks may have never heard of you or your program, so it's critical to show all the interest and excitement you did when it was brand new. It's up to you to add new material to keep your presentation fresh and current. You can keep the same opening and closing and change the middle as needed to reach your audience and address an issue they care about. But remember the speaker's rule: don't be bored and don't be boring.

Factors of Attention

Here are some other thoughts to help you maintain constant interest in your presentation. I like to call them Factors of Attention: verbal cues that help your audience understand what you're talking about.

Novelty

It's not big news if a dog bites a man; that is what dogs do. However, it would be quite a story if a man bites a dog. That is novelty – a seemingly normal story that ends with a twist. It would be an odd story to hear of a man biting a dog back after it bit him...and that's the twist. You can use novelty in your presentations; take what you know and twist it in such a way that your audience would laugh at the absurdity of it all.

Size

When you use numbers in a speech, no one can really grasp the true size of a number unless you anchor it to something real. If you say there were 20,000 people in a crowd, your audience will have a difficult time conceptualizing that large of a number. Instead, illustrate the number by saying "the number of people in a crowded soccer stadium." Now your audience can visualize and make sense of the true size.

Contrast

Imagine you were invited to a wedding and you showed up in blue jeans and sandals instead of formal wear. Since it's not what people generally wear to a wedding, it creates a vivid contrast to normally accepted practices.

Proximity

Do you know someone in the audience? You can say her name and it will wake her up, and others in your audience will perk up just in case you say their name. Be careful with this, though; you don't want to have to say everyone's name, but it is great if you can show that you know some people in the group.

Reality

Talk in terms of real things: people, events, and world news. As a speaker, you need to keep up with what is going on around you in the world. I wish there was no war, hunger or mudslides, but the reality is that bad things happen to good people. Therefore, you need to be aware of current events so that you can answer if ever called upon to express your opinion on such events. Read books and magazines, and stay current with issues that you are working on.

Familiarity

As a speaker, it is always good to tie back to something your audience knows or something they are familiar with. Did your town host a famous soccer match or a boat race? If you can talk about what is going on around you, it will help you be seen as someone who is knowledgeable.

Suspense

Some of my favorite stories as a child were ones where the truth was not discovered until the very end. I like suspense, and in speaking you can do the same thing – you can tell the story almost all the way, and then hold them until the end to finish the story. It is a great way to hold attention, and the fact is that not all stories have a happy ending. Real life is hard, so if you can incorporate that form of suspense into your presentation, you'll keep your audience on the edge of their seat until the end.

Humor

In an earlier lesson, I cautioned you about using humor that would get you in trouble, and I still hold to that, but sometimes you'll get a funny phone call, or a client will do something silly. You can use these stories that are funny instead of hurtful. You may need to change the person's name, but start to take note of calls, emails and newspaper headlines that could be funny and make your presentation shine.

Life-Relatedness

Probably the most underrated speaker's option is a life-related story – something personal about you or a family member or a “family member in your office” that would really help your audience understand the sacrifice or love or work that goes into helping others. Don't tell family secrets, but perhaps there is something you could tell that would allow others just a glimpse into your life. These stories must be true, must be about you or your family

and must make sense in relation to your presentation.

Effective presentations are the lifeblood of any program or leadership position. You need to really think about the message you want to deliver – and then stop and think about the best way to present that message. Your desired outcome? You want people to be drawn to you and commit to helping you and the programs you're working on.

Assignment: Practice Presentation

You have two assignments:

1. Read through the “Factors of Attention” in this session’s readings, and see how many stories you can come up with using these as a model.
2. Record a video in which you give me your favorite poem, story or sayings using the factors of attention as a guideline.
 - Listen to your voice – listen to how you sound.
 - Watch your body movements, especially your eyes.
 - How do you look? Are you happy, sad, irritated?
 - Do you smile?
 - Do you talk softly or loudly?

(Pay attention to the small details.)

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 6: Planning Your Presentation

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In this session, we will focus on who is in your audience and what they expect to learn from you. We'll discuss the many types of speeches you might have the opportunity to give, and how to measure their success. Finally, we'll talk about delivery styles and how you can use them to effectively communicate your message.

Objectives

- Know Who is in Your Audience
- Types of Speeches
- Desired Outcomes
- Types of Delivery

Reading: Planning Your Presentation

Know Your Audience

As you're preparing to speak, consider the following:

Determine the age group

Younger people tend to be more open to new ideas and less critical of the information they're hearing. However, to reach them, they need to hear energy in your voice and delivery. They need to feel that you believe in your cause or issue.

Most young people can log onto their computer and check your facts and figures – and then forward that information to their friends. So it's even more important to do your homework to reassure your audience that you're credible, honest and trustworthy.

Always double-check your facts and figures, and use the most accurate information you can find. If your facts or information are incorrect, the mistake will live on in perpetuity because of the Internet. Give yourself a fallback plan by telling your audience that “these are the latest numbers I pulled from the web ...” When you qualify your statistics, no one

faults you for being a little off, because you have admitted your limitations.

Be aware that when you speak to an older audience, they often want the concepts you're discussing in written format. They want you to give it to them in black-and-white so they can take it home and read and re-read it.

Once you determine the age group of your audience, you'll be in a better position to craft a message that will resonate and cause them to respond.

The bottom line: younger folks need to feel your energy; older folks need to hear your sincerity. Many times older people want to know that you appreciate their sacrifices, so be aware that you may have to do double duty to reach everyone in your audience.

The time of day

When you're invited to speak, keep in mind that the time of day can have an effect on your audience and how they listen to and comprehend your message.

- If you're speaking in the morning, you need to be awake and have high energy. A morning audience can listen and take in facts and hard figures; they're usually fresh and can listen with a clear mind.
- If you're speaking at lunch, you can tone it down just a bit yet still convey high energy, adding a story or two to your presentation to keep their attention level high.
- If you're speaking after dinner, you need to understand that by the end of the day, most folks are tired and want to be entertained, so don't overload them with facts and figures; they probably don't comprehend at full capacity.

Know why they're coming to hear you speak

Was the audience invited? Or did a supervisor in their office force them to come to the meeting?

The difference between these can make or break you as a speaker.

For example, if I wanted to come and hear you speak, I will most likely have an open mind. If I was forced to come and hear you speak, I may not be all that interested, unless you capture my attention immediately with your wit and wisdom.

Before you accept any speaking engagement, you need to understand what issues are on the hearts and minds of your listeners:

- Is your audience there to support you or fight you?
- Are they there to question you or get on board with your program?

Once you know where they stand, you'll know how to craft your message.

What are their occupations and level of education?

If your audience is well-educated, they'll want more technical information vs. an audience who is just coming to hear your positions for the first time.

Someone's occupation may also play a role in how he or she hears what you're saying. If I am a baker, I may not have an interest in the building of roads, unless the road will bring you to my shop. If I am a bridge builder, I may not care about a farmer and his needs – I may be only interested in the plans I have to build my bridge.

It's not always easy to figure out why people choose the issues they care about. But as a speaker, it's your job to do the best you can to find out what issues interest them and what questions they have. So understand that when you're invited to speak about your programs, or issues or causes that you're championing, you may need to address specific questions that the audience may have.

What does your audience expect to learn from your session?

Sometimes we speak for fun, and nothing more than good wishes are taken away. Sometimes we speak to educate about an issue. And sometimes we speak to cause a debate of the issues so we can find a solution. Think about what your audience expects when you sit down to write your speech.

What is your audience's attitude towards the subject or their position on the issue?

If your audience is for a certain issue and you're against it, you better have your facts in place to help you debate the issue.

Are you expected to be a teacher, a cheerleader, an information guru or an entertainer?

If you're to be a teacher, you'll need to structure your talk as to be educational. If you're a cheerleader for your cause, you'll need to be big, bold, loud and energetic – you want to excite your team. If you're there as an information guru, you need to know all of the relevant facts and figures about your issue. If you're there as an entertainer, you need to have your best material ready to go.

All of these issues are important for you to focus on as you think about who is in your audience and what is expected of you as the speaker.

One last point: ask the person who invited you to speak to provide as much briefing material as possible in advance. You'll then know and understand their expectations and be able to meet their goals and objectives for the event.

Types of Speeches

In this section we'll discuss the major types of speeches.

Speaking to Inform

An informative speech is defined as a clear, impartial treatment of a topic by the speaker so that the listener may gain a full understanding of that topic.

The general objective of the informative speech may be achieved by the speaker's accuracy, clarity, impartiality, and ability to hold the interest of the audience. The speaker must be accurate; we discussed these differences in an earlier lesson, but here is a re-cap:

- A fact is a distinct item that can be externally verified.
- An opinion is a person's judgment.

The listener gains understanding when the speaker is clear

- Limit the number of main points – Remember, try to have only three main points so your audience will remember your message.
- Show logic – You must always be able to weave a thread of logic when you speak; your speech must make sense.
- Use language that is clear, direct and vivid. Capture your audience's attention by using words that are concrete – things we can see, hear, feel, taste, and touch.

The listener gains understanding when the speaker is impartial.

- Don't be influenced by prejudices.
- Don't deal in generalities; stick to the facts.

The listener gains understanding when the speaker is interesting.

- Relate your ideas to the listeners' basic needs and experiences.
- Satisfy the listener's curiosity. Above all, be interesting.

Your informative speech should be tailored to the audience and the occasion.

- Lectures – instructors in a classroom setting.
- Reports – the most commonly used form of informative speaking.
- Fact-finding report – explores possibilities and compares ideas.
- Research report – gives background information.
- Historical exposition – gives background and develops a theory.
- Narrative report – gives details in chronological order.

Speaking to Persuade

Persuasive speaking is the most complex and demanding of all the types of public speaking.

Persuasive speaking makes demands on all the speakers' resources.

- You must have a complete knowledge of the subject.
- You must understand why people believe as they do.
- You must be careful about interpretation and draw heavily on the facts. While most people have their own personal slants and bias, you must root your opinions in objective facts.
- You must be able to motivate, to interest, and to awaken them to your point of view.

Persuasive speaking can be divided into two categories:

1. Speaking to Inspire

- Examples include commemorative speeches and tributes, especially those that are patriotic.
- You're generally dealing with people who are in agreement with your position.
- Overall objective is to deepen appreciation, to encourage or to strengthen belief.

2. Speaking to Convince

- These speeches generally tackle controversial issues.
- You advocate a position based on ethics or moral principles.
- Audience is varied: they may be friendly, undecided, apathetic or directly opposed to the position.

Key Elements of Persuasive Speeches

- Grab the attention of the audience, and hold it at a high level.
- Motivate and convince the audience to accept your recommendations.
- Use suggestions rather than direct reasoning (emotion).

Persuade Using Three Basic Appeals

- Personal appeal – using your force of character and your personality.

- Emotional appeal – relate to the audience’s interests and desires.
- Logical appeal – use fact-based arguments.

Some speakers can’t win over their audience using a personal, emotional or logical appeal. When that is the case, you’ll notice that they may resort to name-calling and glittering generalities, which are NOT effective.

- Name calling – a speaker will use derogatory terms for people, groups, policies and beliefs in an attempt to discredit them so that people will form judgments without examining the evidence.
- Glittering generalities – a speaker may try to gain acceptance or approval by linking virtue words (freedom, social justice, and human rights) so that people will form judgments without examining the evidence.

Other vehicles of persuasion (good and not-so-good)

Testimonials – statements used to endorse a product, cause, or an idea.

- Well-known celebrities talk about how much they like my cakes.
- The “man on the street” or the average person talks about how much he likes my cakes.

Plain folks – device used by the speaker to identify with the common man. Political candidates use this one trying to convince the audience “I am just like you...I have to get up every morning and put my clothes on and go to work just like you...”

Bandwagon – used to get people to act without thinking because other people are doing it too. This is usually an emotional appeal that starts with a few people and grows into a full crowd where thousands of people just start showing up in the streets. What might have been a peaceful march may turn into a mob because of its sheer size.

Card Stacking – deliberate use of deception to win approval:

- Speaker presents a complete falsehood as a truth
- Speaker deals in half-truths
- Speaker uses slanted language

Now that we’ve examined different types of speeches that you might give (or have heard others give), let’s look at speeches for special situations. It’s important for you to know about these types of speeches, because once people realize what a wonderful speaker you are, they’ll ask you to speak for events such as these.

Speeches for Special Situations

Tributes: a speech that is given at a gathering to offer thanks for praise to someone for his/her good work or deeds.

Presentation: a public presentation of a gift or an award in formal recognition of some accomplishment. This could be someone giving a key to the city or reading a proclamation.

Eulogy: a speech of praise paying tribute to a person's accomplishments (in memoriam or at retirement).

Nomination Speech: a speech extolling the qualifications or inspirational deeds of a worthy person. This is often used when someone is running for office and is given by those who support the candidate. The speaker will publicly state the candidate's qualifications and explain why this person is worthy of public office.

Dedication Speech: a speech that usually has some symbolic significance, such as the dedication of a new library, hospital, school building or sports field.

Farewell Speech: a speech given by someone leaving an organization. The speaker thanks those who helped him/her along the way.

After-dinner speech: an entertaining or inspirational speech usually given following a banquet. Remember, any time you speak after dinner, you need to keep it lighthearted – otherwise, your audience may fall asleep.

Courtesy speech: a speech given as part of a regular program.

- Introduction – when you introduce someone to the group.
- Welcome – when you welcome those who have come.
- Response – when a speaker gives a challenge and those in the audience respond.
- Acceptance – when someone is given a gift and takes a few minutes to thank everyone.
- Announcement – when someone makes an announcement about an upcoming event or a program that is ongoing.

Now that you know about the types of speeches you can give, let's discuss measuring the outcomes.

Desired Outcomes

The primary purpose of a speech is the communication of ideas and feelings to get a desired response.

What is the purpose?

Before you ever sit down and write your speech, ask yourself, “Why am I making this speech?”

- What is your objective?
- What response do I want from the listener?
- What action should they take?

What are you trying to achieve?

- If the desired response is achieved, then communication has been effective.
- If the desired response isn’t achieved, then somewhere in the process you lost the audience, and you’ll need to find the missing piece to connect (or reconnect) with them.
- Interference can keep communication from being effective, i.e. lighting, room temperature, speaker quirks. It’s up to you to make sure your audience is comfortable.
- Distortion occurs when the speaker’s language is not clear. Always think about to whom you’re talking and what they grasp or understand.
- Distortion may also occur when external or internal noise confuses the listener. It’s up to you to make the location of your presentation conducive to hearing and listening.

The big question is...

How will you know you’re successful? And how do you measure success?

There are many measurements that can be used to evaluate speakers; however, in this lesson, we will focus on the “results theory.” Using the results theory, a speaker is judged by the outcome of his/her speech.

- If you convince the audience to do what you want them to do, you’re successful and the results speak for themselves.
- If your audience does nothing when you’ve finished speaking, you didn’t achieve your desired results. At this point, you’ll need to go back and figure out what will win them over.

Methods of Delivery

There are four methods of delivery:

Manuscript – when you speak from a prepared script.

Advantages

- Useful when time limits are rigid because you have all of your notes right in front of you, making it more difficult to wander.
- Useful when exact wording is of the utmost importance; a manuscript provides documentation.

Disadvantages

- You become less spontaneous because you're more focused on the words.
- You make less eye contact and have fewer gestures because you are following a script.
- You can become boring due to lack of energy.

Memorized – speaking takes place when the manuscript has been committed to memory.

Advantages

- Time limitation and exact wording can be met as in manuscript speaking.
- You're not bound by a written text, so your words can flow freely.

Disadvantages

- Doesn't always allow for flexibility in content.
- Doesn't allow you to respond to audience feedback.
- You may forget when you're going to say.

Impromptu – speech is composed in the spur of the moment with no specific preparation

Advantages

- It's useful when you're called upon to give a personal statement or to state one's ideas on a topic under discussion.
- Can facilitate discussion if you're well-versed on the topic at hand.

Disadvantages

- A speaker could get caught up in the moment and regret remarks made without well-thought-out word choices in place.

Extemporaneous – is not memorized but has been thoroughly practiced in advance.

Advantages

- Allows you to be direct.
- Allows you to be flexible in content.

- Allows you to respond to audience feedback.

As you prepare and practice your speeches, you'll find which styles work best for you.

Assignment: Analyze Your Audience

Write a description of the audience you'll most likely be addressing:

- Who are they?
- Where do they work?
- Why would they come to hear you speak?
- What type of speech do you plan to work on and why?

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 7: Write a Speech that Gets Results

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In this final lesson, we'll build upon what you've already learned about what makes a good presentation. We'll also cover few more rules that will help you as you develop your public speaking. We'll also focus on choosing a topic that is right for you, finding the best and most up-to-date information and, finally, putting it all together. I will end this class with a "speaker protection program" to finalize the writing process for your next presentation and help you learn the skills you will need to protect yourself from a hostile audience (with thoughts about how to win them over to your side).

Objectives

- Choosing a Topic
- Finding Materials
- Organization of Materials
- Content Preparation
- Basic Speech Outline
- How to Handle Your Audience
- Questions and Answers for Your Success
- Soft Landings and Transitions

Reading: Write a Speech that Gets Results

Choosing a Topic

Choose a topic that is significant and appropriate to the audience you'll be speaking to. One of the best ways to figure out what you want to talk about is to consider what is really important to you. What issue or issues really draw you in and makes you want to work for change? Or more simply, what do you love and why should we know about it?

Your ability to speak effectively is best when it's drawn from your personal interests and

experience. When you love what you do, it shows. When you love what you do, you can speak for hours about it and not get weary. When you talk about what you love, your depth of knowledge will sustain you.

Simply put, when you speak about what you love and what moves you, it shows.

Probe your personal experience for good speaking topics

- Consider your interests and hobbies.
- Consider your outside activities.
- Consider your past experiences.

Take note of other's ideas

- Read, read, and read some more. Have you ever thought about an issue when all of a sudden you read something about it and realized that other people feel the same way you do? If that is the case, that means others think like you and you can make a personal connection. Listen to other speakers and glean from their knowledge base.

Choose a topic that is appropriate for the expected speech situation

- Make sure your speech is worthy of the listeners' time.
- Make sure your speech is suitable for the purpose of the occasion.
- Make sure your speech is suitable for your knowledge and experience.
- Make sure your speech is suitable for the audience to whom it is given.

Determine the specific purpose

- State it clearly and as concisely as possible in the beginning of your presentation – this way you are laying the groundwork of what is to come next.
- Relate the central idea to the general speech objective. We talked about this in other lessons – you must keep your core topic or idea front and center.

In a speech to inform – the speaker wants the audience to know the precise statement of purpose.

In a speech to entertain – the speaker proposes to amuse or inspire the listener.

In a speech to persuade – the speaker wants the audience to accept, believe or perform an action.

Though this is a re-cap from our last lesson, it is important to note that the key issues stay the same and you must adhere to the rules – they never change – to be a good speaker.

Finding materials

How do you find materials for the topics you might want to speak about? One way is to read and to know what is going on around you, and another way is to do in-depth research on a particular topic. The key is to investigate and read all you can.

Use **reference books, encyclopedias, collections of short stories and biographies** to enhance your database with good study and reference materials. When I read a good short story or hear a good witty line, I'll write it down and store it in my computer just in case I need add punch to my speeches.

Start now building a quote file, a poem file, a file for your hobbies and areas of concern. Right now I'm working to build a water file. I keep up with all the forms of water purification and the newest technology to clean water and make it drinkable. Water issues are my hobby, and I read, study and learn all I can so I can become an expert on water.

In addition to my water articles, I keep a collection of individual books/articles published on all the topics I have an interest in: women in business, women in politics, world news, inspirational stories, and assorted odd facts and news.

One good way to keep current is to refer to newspapers and columns that report on your industry. As a water commissioner, I keep up with all the latest news through my water magazines, but I also search the web for new and groundbreaking information.

Something else you can do is to talk with the leaders in your area of expertise. If you can attend a conference or go online to a seminar, I encourage you to do so – so you'll meet other people just like you who have a similar interest in the things you do.

Keep a log of the most common problems and solutions available to remedy the situation. Not everyone will have access to the latest news that you're learning, so keep a file on the things you've heard or seen. Your audience probably won't have the latest information because they're only slightly interested. Since you're immersed in the topic, you'll be considered an expert.

Check company websites for new and late breaking news – if you can, attend conferences that will deal with the latest knowledge in your industry or area of expertise

In Short – Keep Up. A great speaker keeps informed.

Four Questions to Get You Started

When you get ready to sit and write, what usually happens? For most of us, our minds go blank, or all of a sudden we think of a thousand other things we should be doing instead of writing our speech. To keep on track, follow these simple guidelines:

1. What is it you want your audience to remember after you leave?
2. Do you know or can you tell what your audience already knows about this issue or topic?
3. What action do you want your audience to do?
4. To make it as real as possible, does your speech or presentation include personal examples? Something your audience can relate to?

Once you answer these four questions that should help you focus on your task at hand and help you write out your presentation.

Organizing the Material

So now you're ready to begin writing – how do you start? One good suggestion is to make a list by writing down all relevant ideas and thoughts on a clean sheet of paper. No thought or idea is silly or wrong; you just need to write all you can think about on that subject on that piece of paper. Write down every idea, every thought, every feeling, everything.

You may never use all that is written, but at least you've written it down to look at and review. By writing it all down, you'll be able to sort through the relevant information and keep the good ideas. Remember, they're good ideas but perhaps we don't need all of them in this presentation.

After you make your list look at what you've written and find the big ideas – what points really stand out to you? As you look at that sheet, what are the key points and what could be the sub-points?

Take those key points and make a tentative outline. Don't write in paragraph form yet. Then identify your next ideas and make those your sub-points. Follow the list below to arrange your points in a logical manner that would suit your speaking style.

Arrange Your Materials in Order, Either Using a "Time Pattern" or in "Chronological Order."

Point of time: Tell your story in these ways

Forward or backward	Top to bottom
Space pattern	Physical placement
East to West	North to South

Categorical: Lay out your idea in one of these ways

Simple to complex	Familiar to unfamiliar
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State each point as a single idea: This will give you the BIG idea from which to work

Support the Central Idea

Use stories	Specific instances
Testimonials	Quotations
Statistic Definitions	Visual Aids

The key to any great speech?

1. **Prepare Your Conclusion First** – know how you want to end. Summarize your points and allude to something from your opening statement. By tying back to the opening, the audience will “feel” the wrap-up.
2. **Prepare your Introduction Second** – after you’ve laid out your closing statement, come back and work on your opening. Prepare something to make your audience stop what they’re thinking about and look up and listen to you by making a bold statement or giving a startling fact or figure.

I know it sounds backwards to write the ending first, but it really does make sense. If you know where you’re going, it’s so much easier to get there.

Content Preparation*Draw Upon Your Experiences*

Nothing pulls an audience in like a personal story or an issue that you or your office has solved. Just make sure you have an outcome that’s relevant to the audience.

Choose information that is significant and appropriate for the situation.

- Know what you’re trying to say and state it clearly.
- If new information is available, share it with the audience. Don’t lie or hide the truth; it will come out in the end.
- If processes have changed, explain the change and why it happened.

Maintain Your Core Points in an Organized Manner

Try to keep to three main points and tell them (and retell them) as you’re speaking.

Remember a good speech, like a good essay, has an:

- Opening – your welcome and what your topic is about.
- Middle – the points you want to make.
- Close – wrap up your thoughts and stories and leave them with action items.

* Don't forget to transition between points. Sometimes we get so caught up in making our three points, we forget to connect them together. A transition is a sentence that lets you finish one thought or point and enables you to move effortlessly to the next.

Remember: Try not to have more than three main points – that is probably all your listening audience can handle.

Basic Speech Outline

Your audience remembers best what they hear first and last. So that means your opening line must be strong and memorable: a story, thought, saying or statistic that startles the listener into wanting to listen to you. Your closing must be so powerful that when they leave they're still thinking and talking about what you said.

Opening – Be glad to be there!

I encourage you to have a “glad to be here” line; we discussed this in an earlier lesson, but let me explain my reasoning once again.

When you're invited to speak, it's proper that somewhere in your presentation you thank those who have invited you. You don't have to do it first thing – although that's a nice gesture – but you must within the time allotted in your speech say “thank you” and tell them that you're glad to be there. This tells the audience you appreciate the opportunity to speak. Also, if anyone in your audience isn't happy with you, this “glad to be here” line may help diffuse his or her anger – who can be mad when you're glad to be there?

Startling Statement – What is it that brings you here today?

Tell your audience what you're going to tell them in your talk. This is a good place to let them know where your speech is going.

Example: “I have a lot of issues to discuss with you today – issues like crime, education and taxes – but in our time together I want to focus on education.” Now, what did I do? I told the audience I was knowledgeable. I know three issues but I am only going to talk about one, so don't worry, I won't keep you here all day....

Who you are

Some in your audience will want to know the answer to “Why you?” Of all the people in the world, why are you here talking to me? What makes you the expert? This is a good place to lay out your credentials in a nice way. Make me proud to know you.

Example: “I know a great deal about education because I am a teacher and I have been teaching for the past 20 years. I have seen the changes in education and the process of how we teach our children and I must say....”

What you plan to accomplish by this talk

Some in your audience simply want to know at the end of the evening what will have been accomplished. Telling them in advance what you're speaking about will let them know that you have a plan.

Example: "In our time together, let me give you my three-point plan to fix our education problem here in our school district."

Middle

Tell the three or four points about your issue

Now is the time to present the "meat" of your presentation. Lay out your plans, hopes and dreams, and current challenges – and show how you'll solve them. This is where your audience learns about your issues.

Closing

Recap of your points

Tell them what you've already told them – summarize and recap your three to four major points. Here's your opportunity to reinforce your main points in the minds of your listeners.

NOTE: If in timing your presentation, you consistently run short of time, you may not have adequately developed your talk. If you go over your time allocation, you may have covered too broad of a topic for a single presentation concept. Rethink and revise your presentation to fit the time constraints.

How to Handle Your Audience

I wish I could tell you that all audiences were nice – but I wouldn't be telling the truth. You need to realize this fact so you can protect yourself. If your audience is not favorable to your point of view, don't punish yourself.

Frankly, not all audiences are bad and rude. Often you'll speak before a very nice audience that really likes you. But for the few that are awful, let me give you some words of advice

Basic Speech Outline for an Unfriendly Audience

- Express appreciation for being invited to come and speak.
- Commend the audience for something good which you both know to be true.
- Use the "yes-response" technique
 - **If you can get your audience to say "yes" to a series of questions, then they may automatically say "yes" to you...**
It's a beautiful day – "yes"
The building you are meeting in is very nice – "yes"

The program you put on for the children was great – “yes”
*You like me – “yes”, “maybe”, “no”

*Be aware it doesn't actually play out like this; I'm just trying to show you that if you can get your audience to say “yes” to a number of things it then becomes easier for them to start thinking positively towards you. This series of positive responses can break the ice and make all feel at ease.

- Begin with a point of agreement.
- Establish good will through personal appeal.
- State clearly your point or points of disagreement.
- Support your view with factual evidence.
- Appeal to basic desires to motivate the listener.
- Quit while you're ahead – your job in this situation is to spur their thinking outside the box. If the situation is getting out-of-hand and your audience is mean and hateful, you don't have to sit there and take it. Just politely excuse yourself. Find a reason; say you have to leave to go to your kids' soccer game, and then if you have to, find a kid and a soccer game, but get out of there.
- You are valuable – you don't need to take a hit because people are crazy. You must always protect yourself.

Basic Speech Outline for a Neutral Audience

While it may sound odd, I'd rather have a hostile audience rather than a neutral audience because I least I know where I stand. An audience whose attitude is neutral needs to be awakened and needs to find some reason to care.

If you find yourself in front of a neutral audience, follow the steps below:

- Spend time in establishing rapport.
- Use attention and motivational appeals that will arouse their interest.
- Use your experience to appeal to the listener.
- Relate your topic to the well-being of your audience.
- Present old ideas in a novel way.
- Thank them and leave.

Questions and Answers for Your Success

The next section discusses ways to neutralize negative audience members. I'll also give you advice to help prevent you from stumbling during the question-and-answer period.

The first list is called “Questions and Answers for Success”. These are ways to neutralize a negative audience and prevent you from stumbling during the question-and-answer phase of the presentation. The key in this section is to follow the How to Handle side of the page.

QUESTION & ANSWER RULES FOR SUCCESS

What Happens	How to Handle
Interruptions	Be politely assertive - raise your voice slightly
Put words in your mouth	Correct the mistake – restate your position
State an untruth or distort a fact	Correct the mistake – restate your position
Shoot rapid-fire questions	Pick one question to answer – keep your cool
Demand an answer to a question that can't be answered.	Be politely assertive and offer to get the answer if you can
Attempt to confirm an answer while misinterpreting it or misquoting you	Correct the mistake – restate your position
Ask you to respond to a controversial or critical statement	Admit bad news and bridge to message
Ask you for a personal opinion	Don't give personal opinions on controversial policies
Ask your opinion of an adversary's	Restate your or your organization's point of view

Let's go through it line-by-line:

Interruptions

What happens when you're talking and someone interrupts you? What do you do? Most times, women tend to stop talking and allow the interloper to take over the conversation. Don't do that – three things you can do (and these are not easy):

1. Be politely assertive – raise your voice a slight bit, to let your audience know you aren't finished talking. Just a little lift in your voice says, “Hold on.”
2. You can hold up a finger – that says, “Hold on.”
3. You can say out loud, “Hold your thought while I finish mine.” Now, the first time you do that she'll be shocked, the second time you do it she'll be stunned, and the third time you do it she'll shut up and let you speak and/or finish your sentence.

Put words in your mouth

What happens when someone puts words in your mouth, meaning he says something he thinks you said but you didn't? You must correct the mistake and restate your position; otherwise the last thing that is heard is the wrong statement. You must correct and restate.

State an untruth or distort a fact

Follow the same course as above; you must correct the mistake and restate your position.

Shoot rapid-fire questions

When someone shoots rapid-fire questions, meaning he asks about four or five questions at one time, you only have to answer one – and you get to choose which one you want to answer. Then you offer to get the other answers to him after the meeting. Don't let one person monopolize the conversation.

Demands an answer to a question that can't be answered

Be politely assertive and offer to get the answer if you can. Sometimes you don't have all the answers, but that's okay as long as you make an effort to get the answer after the meeting is over. In a case like this, ask for her business card and state out loud that you'll get back to her. That way everyone who is listening will know you aren't afraid of that person and you'll get back to her when you find out the answer.

Attempt to confirm an answer while misinterpreting it or misquoting you

Again, correct the mistake and restate your position. Otherwise, the last thing that is heard is the wrong statement.

Ask you to respond to a controversial or critical statement

Sometimes you need to admit bad news but always bridge back to your message. We all make mistakes, and we have to admit it and go on. That's okay, as long as you can bridge or cross over to the good news.

Ask you for a personal opinion

My experience shows that you never give your personal opinion when you represent an organization. Keep your personal thoughts to yourself and restate the company line.

Ask your opinion of an adversary's point of view

You'll never win this argument, so just restate your organization's position and save yourself.

NOTE: If you know you'll face a hostile audience, write out the worst or hardest questions you think you'll be asked, and answer them beforehand. When you think about all the difficult (and bizarre) questions you'll be asked, you can craft an answer that stops the questioner in his tracks. If you anticipate the question in advance, you'll be ready!

Soft Landings and Transitions

In the next two sections, we'll lay out a plan so you'll always protect yourself. Soft Landings and Transitions go hand-in-hand, so please print the two pages and lay them side-by-side so you can see how they'll work.

Soft Landings

When people disagree with your position, consider using these soft landings to redirect the question or comment.

Good examples:

- I agree with you
- You make an interesting point
- I appreciate your position
- I understand your point of view
- I can see where you are coming from
- Many people I have spoken to feel as you do
- Yes, we need to look into that more carefully
- Your point is well taken
- I can see why you would think that way

NOTE: Don't use the words "but" or "however" if you use a Soft Landing – those words negate your answer and will cause the questioner to fight to prove a point.

Example: I can see where you are coming from, *but* you're wrong, or *however*, anyone who knew anything at all....

Instead, you can say:

Example: I can see where you're coming from. or You should also know that....

See how nice that sounds? It seems you're agreeing, but you really aren't. Instead you're adding extra information that you need to move her to where you want her to go. You can use any soft landing with any transition as long as you never say "but" or "however."

Transitions

During questions and answers, don't lose control of the conversation. If you're thrown an "outside question" (something you're not prepared to answer), use the following

transitions to keep the question on track so your message is not lost or diluted:

Good examples:

- First, let me say
- I don't have that information, but I can tell you
- You should also know that
- Let me explain
- I'm also frequently asked
- Let me add
- A common concern is
- For example
- Equally importantly
- One point I believe the audience would be interested in
- You can go one step further...

Assignment: Your Speech

- Write your speech outline.
- Practice the *soft landings* and *transitions* when you're on the phone; no one will know what you're doing, but you'll get to try out your new tools.

Polish Your Public Speaking Skills

Lesson 8: Wrap Up

Lesson Overview and Objectives

Overview

In this final session, we will review your final speech and identify some areas for you to develop on your own. We will also review how well the mentorship met your goals, and what we can improve for future courses.

Objectives

By the end of this class, you will:

- Know how you can improve your speech
- Identify specific steps you can take to continue to polish your public speaking skills
- Assess how well the mentorship met your personal needs