

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO DELIVER A SPEECH IN PUBLIC

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Abstract: This article focuses on describing effective strategies and stress-free tips to deliver a speech in public. These tips will help us develop our speaking and communication skills, relieve stress, and teach us how to speak in public and make a well-organized speech.

Key words: public speaking, oratory, nervousness, organization, beginning and ending the speech.

Public speaking, also called oratory has traditionally meant speaking in person to a live audience. Today it includes speaking, formally or informally, to an audience through technology live, pre-recorded, or at a distance. Confucius, the philosopher and public speaking scholar, thought a good speech should impact individual lives, regardless of whether they were in the audience. He believed that someone of power could influence the world with words and action [5].

Public speaking has many purposes, but usually mixes teaching, persuasion, and entertaining. Each purpose calls on slightly different approaches and techniques. Public speaking was studied in Ancient Greece and Rome, where prominent thinkers analyzed it as a central part of rhetoric. Today, the art of public speaking has been transformed by technology, such as videoconferencing, multimedia presentations, and other non-traditional forms of presentation.

Public speaking offers you at least three possibilities for making a difference:

- by persuading people to do something you feel is right;
- by informing people about things they don't know;
- by entertaining people and making them feel happy and good about themselves.

These are the three major goals of public speaking-to persuade, to inform, and to entertain. They are also the three major goals of everyday conversation.

In this article we try to choose 4 effective and stress-free tips or strategies to deliver public speaking. These tips will help us develop our speaking and communication skills, relieve stress, and teach us how to speak in public and make a well-organized speech. They are:

- Nervousness is normal.
- Dealing with nervousness.
- Organization is important.
- Beginning and ending the speech.

Nervousness is normal. Actually, most people tend to be anxious before doing something important in public. Actors are nervous before a play, politicians are nervous before a campaign speech, athletes are nervous before a big game. The ones who succeed have learned to use their nervousness to their advantage. Surveys show that 76 percent of experienced speakers have stage fright before taking the floor [4,362]. But their nervousness is a healthy sign that they are getting 'psyched up' for a good effort. Novelist and lecturer I. A. R. Wylie explains, "Now after many years of practice I am, I suppose, really a 'practiced speaker'. But I rarely rise to my feet without a throat constricted with terror and a furiously thumping heart. When, for some reason, I am cool and self-assured, the speech is always a failure" [8].

In other words, it is perfectly normal, even desirable - to be nervous at the start of a speech. Your body is responding as it would to any stressful situation-by producing extra adrenaline. This sudden shot of adrenaline is what makes your heart race, your hands shake, your knees knock, and your skin perspire. Every public speaker experiences all these reactions to some extent.

Dealing with nervousness. Rather than trying to eliminate every trace of stage fright, you should aim at transforming it from a negative force into what one expert calls positive nervousness - "a zesty, enthusiastic, lively feeling with a

slight edge to it. It's still nervousness, but it feels different. You're no longer victimized by it; instead, you're vitalized by it. You're in control of it" [1,113].

Here are time-tested ways you can turn your nervousness from a negative force into a positive one. We always should think positively. Confidence is mostly the well-known power of positive thinking. If you think you can do it, you usually can. On the other hand, if you predict disaster and doom, that is almost always what you will get. This is especially true when it comes to public speaking. Speakers who think negatively about themselves and the speech experience are much more likely to be overcome by stage fright than are speakers who think positively.

Organization is important. Several years ago a college professor took a well-organized speech and scrambled it by randomly changing the order of its sentences. He then had a speaker deliver the original version to one group of listeners and the scrambled version to another group. After the speeches, he gave a test to see how well each group understood what they had heard. Not surprisingly, the group that heard the original, unscrambled speech scored much higher than the other group [2, 59-69].

A few years later, two professors repeated the same experiment at another school. But instead of testing how well the listeners comprehended each speech, they tested to see what effects the speeches had on the listeners' attitudes toward the speakers. They found that people who heard the well-organized speech believed the speaker to be much more competent and trustworthy than did those who heard the scrambled speech [3, 182-183].

These are just two of many studies that show the importance of organization in effective speechmaking. They confirm what most of us know from experience. How many times have you listened to someone who rambled aimlessly from one idea to another? You realize how difficult it is to the speaker, much less to understand the message. In fact, pay attention when students explain

what they hope to learn from their speech class, they almost always put "the ability to organize my ideas more effectively" near the top of the list.

This ability is especially vital for speechmaking. Listeners demand coherence. They have little patience with speakers who bounce wildly from idea to idea. Keep in mind that listeners-unlike readers-cannot flip back to a previous page if they have trouble grasping a speaker's ideas. In this respect a speech is much like a movie. Just as a director must be sure viewers can follow the plot of a film from beginning to end, so must a speaker be sure listeners can follow the progression of ideas in a speech from beginning to end. This requires that speeches be organized strategically. They should be put together in particular ways to achieve particular results with particular audiences.

Beginning and ending the speech. First impressions are important. A poor beginning may distract or alienate listeners that the speaker can never fully recover. Moreover, getting off on the right foot is vital to a speaker's self-confidence. What could be more encouraging than watching your listeners' faces begin to register interest, attention, and pleasure? The hardest part of any presentation is the beginning. If you get through the opening stages of your speech without blundering, the rest will go much more smoothly. A good introduction, you will find, is an excellent confidence booster.

In most speech situations, there are four objectives you need to accomplish at the outset:

- Get the attention and interest of your audience.
- Reveal the topic of your speech.
- Establish your credibility and goodwill.
- Preview the body of the speech.

According to Longfellow, "Great is the art of beginning, but greater the art is of ending" [7]. Longfellow was thinking of poetry, but his insight is equally applicable to public speaking. Many a speaker has marred an otherwise fine speech by a long-winded, silly, or antagonistic conclusion. Your closing remarks

are your last chance to drive home your ideas. Moreover, your final impression will probably linger in your listeners' minds. Thus you need to craft your conclusion with as much care as your introduction.

No matter what kind of speech you are giving, the conclusion has two major functions:

- To let the audience know you are ending the speech.
- To reinforce the audience's understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea.

To sum up, this article helps young teachers to develop their communication and speaking skills, reducing stress, improve their knowledge about public speaking. As speaking can be said to be a natural trait of human beings, it improves their speaking by motivating. It conducts them a public speaker needs to have self confidence and always to talk naturally. As we have mentioned, public speaking is all about sharing information, ideas, or opinions on a particular topic of significance, interest to the audience. A good public speaker has to know more than any different thing, his audience for his major undertaking in speech transport is either to inform, inspire, persuade or entertain his audience.

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