

Vital Speaking Principles

for public speaking and presentations

VITAL SPEAKING PRINCIPLES

1. **Speak out**, to be heard
2. Speak **slowly**, be understood
3. **Pause**. The power of silence
4. **Breathe!** It makes all easier
5. Speak with your **whole** self
6. Keep your message **simple**
7. Tell **real** stories, show **real** pix
8. Know your subject material
9. Speak **within** allotted time
10. Stay in **control** of your notes
11. Seek and **treasure** feedback!
12. Have **fun** with your speech!
13. **Sit** for a conversation,
Present when standing

1. SPEAK OUT!

Speak as if your audience is half deaf, half asleep and too far away to hear you! Only one person in the venue will think that you are speaking loudly enough .. YOU! But speakers never know! They only think they do. **Remember, its a presentation, not a conversation!** Here's a simple rule.

'You can NEVER speak too loudly!'

2. SPEAK SLOWLY

Take your time. You audience is from Mars and understand a word you're saying! If you speak slowly and loudly enough for them to hear clearly however .. even if speaking to Earthlings in Martian .. they will work it out!

'You can NEVER speak too slowly or too clearly!'

3. P-A-U-S-E BETWEEN IDEAS

Your audience is asleep! Always! The only way to wake them up is to stop talking! When you do they'll wake up to see why.

What this really means is that when you ply your audience with an endless stream of narrative they tend to zone out. When you drop an agonisingly long pause between ideas, they look up, refocus and re-engage. This powerful silence is louder than a shout! Use significant pauses as often as you can. The most attention-grabbing thing you can say to an audience is **nothing!**

'Silence is DEAFENING .. Better than shouting!'

4. B-R-E-A-T-H-E TO BRING YOUR PRESENTATION TO LIFE

You have a lot to think about when presenting .. speaking up, speaking slowly, using pauses, letting your hands do some of the talking, keeping it simple .. So remember this .. you can cover all those more easily if you **breath deeply into your diaphragm** & use the energizing power it provides. It refreshes your blood therefore your muscles, mind and energy levels. It gives you time, eases stress and nervousness.

Consciously breathing slowly and deeply gives you control plus time to think. You feel calmer .. You speak slower .. you think more clearly.

'DEEP BREATHS keep you & your delivery alive'

5. USE YOUR WHOLE 'SELF' TO SPEAK!

Appropriate body language 'sells' your message. An animated speaker keeps the audience from going to sleep or going home! As with most types of business group-communication, keep your delivery style natural regardless of the audience size.

'Natural', doesn't mean quiet, or casually conversational! It means, sincere, honest, authentic, relaxed, smiling, confident, authoritative, easily heard and seen, appropriately dressed, happy to be there. This is part of presenting your whole body; your whole being, your whole 'you' to speak.

Let your hands speak for themselves by bending them at the elbows, keeping your arms parallel to the floor. Then forget all about them! But avoid touching your fingers together, you may never get them apart again!

Active, meaningful, contextual, natural gestures help the brain to follow a logical progression of thought, to recall information prepared and to express yourself without hesitation. It uses a different part of the brain than you use to recall raw data .. it tends to assist your whole being to pull everything together and present in a more holistic form.

'VISUAL communication energises your audience!'

6. KEEP YOUR MESSAGE SIMPLE!

Your audience left their brains in the car! They're thinking about projects at work and problems at home, or wondering what's for lunch or dinner! Don't make them think. They don't like it. They can't remember details.

'You can NEVER make a message too simple!'

7. TELL REAL STORIES, SHOW REAL PICTURES (Yours are best)

Explanations and detailed descriptions can be really boring and utterly forgettable. Real stories about real people create vivid images in audiences' minds. That's how people remember. Use pictures to enable their ability to recall (Yours & theirs!) People will forget detailed descriptions .. **They will never forget how you made them feel!**

'Since we were kids, we've LOVED good stories!'

8. KNOW YOUR SUBJECT MATERIAL

Your audience will notice if you don't ... and you will see that that they have noticed! Many will resent you having wasted their time.

'An hour's research can avoid a LIFETIME of regret!'

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9. APPLY THE CONVERSATION / PRESENTATION 'ALTITUDE' RULE

When seated you are engaged in conversation. As you stand to speak change it to a presentation. Conversations and presentations should not be confused. When at standing altitude and all others are seated, you are the Presenter, the sole target of your audience. Conversing with an audience drains your vocal and body language energy. Style your delivery as a Presentation .. it's what they expect of you.

'Sit for a conversation .. Present when standing!'

10. SPEAK WITHIN THE TIME ALLOCATED!

It shows that you are properly prepared and that you respect your audience. If you are going to go just a little over time don't panic. Give the organiser an indication that you are nearly finished and wind up as quickly and as tidily as you can. Never rush. Your audience will stop listening!

'ALWAYS protect yourself with a timing device!'

11. USE NOTES AS YOUR SUPPORT, NOT AS YOUR REPLACEMENT!

If your audience wanted to be read a story they would have gone to the library's 'Story Time'! Your notes are there to **support** what you are saying ... not to **control** what you are saying..

'BE THE BOSS of your notes, NOT the slave!'

12. ASK SOMEONE YOU TRUST FOR FEEDBACK

Because most people are well-meaning they will only tell you what they think that you want to hear! You can learn nothing from insincere praise. Seek and treasure objective feedback. And there is no feedback so honest as a video of your presentation.

Video, the mirror with a memory! It never lies, pities, praises or forgets!

'Ask a trusted friend, or USE VIDEO for feedback.'

13. FINALLY .. ENJOY YOURSELF!

Speakers having a great time inspire audiences, be they at wedding receptions, business presentations, conferences or funerals, it makes no difference. Audiences love passionate, animated and energized speakers!

'If YOU enjoy yourself, so will your audience!'

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Peter Donoghue, Director, [speak•nz](http://www.speaknz.co.nz) 021 778-184 .. Call me to discuss your ideas

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