

10 Tips For Successful Public Speaking

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

1. **Know the room.** Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
2. **Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
3. **Know your material.** If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
4. **Relax.** Ease tension by doing exercises.
5. **Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
6. **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.
7. **Don't apologize.** If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Keep silent.
8. **Concentrate on the message -- not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties, and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.
9. **Turn nervousness into positive energy.** Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
10. **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need.

<http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.asp>

Fundamentals of impromptu speaking:

1. State your viewpoint in the early stages and start strong.
2. Choose a specific illustration, experience or example.
3. Don't try to cover too much ground.
4. Absolutely never apologize.
5. Finish conclusively.

"It takes me three weeks to prepare an impromptu speech." --Mark Twain

<http://mauicc.hawaii.edu/staff/stjohn/publicspeakers/impromptus.html>

Table Topics Tips

First, **DO NOT FILTER**. Say the first thing that comes to your mind and proceed from there. You may perceive it to be silly or foolish but could be surprised by where you go with the subject. We have the most supportive group and nothing that anyone says will make anyone think less of you.

Secondly, if you don't have a thought, just start with a word or beginning of a word, other words will follow, trust yourself that you have something to say.

Thirdly, approach the question in past, present and future components.

For example, if the question is "What is your favorite way to spend free time?" My answer would be that when I was little I used to spend hours walking through the fields near our house. I was amazed by the shades of green, and the variety of flowers.

Presently, I find great joy in spending hours creating my own oasis in the city. I lose track of time planting and weeding my flowers and vegetables.

In the future, I would like to oversee several gardens in the Bay Area, so I can grow the best of the best in each area, and enjoy the fruits of my labor as a year round bounty.

Finally, when all else fails or if you don't want to answer the question at hand, change the subject. This is the least desirable option, but as long as it is not something you have previously rehearsed, and you deal with any subject in the moment, the spontaneous speaking objective has been met.

Above all, come to the meetings and practice, practice, practice. Skills are improved and enhanced only through constant use! Most importantly, don't forget to have fun in the process. Life is too short not to have FUN.

http://www.goldengatetoastmasters.org/newsletter/nl_07012000/03_07012000.html

Table Topics Preparation

- Make protocol an automatic response. Practice it to death. This is a great way to buy time to think!
- It is not necessary to address the question. It's perfectly OK to fabricate a story or change the subject. Use the question as a bridge to something you can confidently talk about.
- Remember, it's "One to two minutes," not "Oh my God, how am I going to talk for two whole minutes on something I know nothing about!?!?"
 - If you speak for exactly one minute, you've succeeded. Perhaps your succinctness will make your answer that much more memorable. The award is for "Best Table Topics Speaker," not "Most Long-Winded Table Topics Speaker."

Excerpts from discontinued website by Elliot Kim—Plantation Toastmasters – Tips for Table Topics

SIX STEPS TO IMPROMPTU SPEAKING SUCCESS

Dilip R. Abayasekara, Ph.D., A.S.

Here are the *mechanics*: six proven steps to follow to help you successfully compose and deliver an impromptu speech.

1. **Listen.** Listen to what's asked of you. Listen to the words and the tone of voice. Understand what is being asked of you before you even think of forming a response. Is the question clear? Is there a question behind the question? Make it a priority to understand the question.
2. **Focus.** Bring your full concentration on to the question at hand. For that moment, the most important challenge you face is choosing your response to the question. So cause the brilliance of your intellect and spirit to bear on the topic.
3. **Buy Time/Don't Rush to Respond.** Don't feel compelled to blurt out a response! People will wait when they sense that you are thinking about the question. You can also buy yourself some precious seconds by slowly standing up, or walking up to the lectern. The mind thinks extremely rapidly, at about 600-800 words per minute. So get out of the way, and let your mind think!
4. **Pick a Theme for Your Response...or if you can't think of a theme, begin to address the topic and *free associate* until you find a theme on which you'd like to expand.** Sometimes, a theme will come readily to your mind. Then, you would simply introduce the topic, your view of it, and proceed to build your speech. However, at other times, you may not have any idea how best to answer the question. In such a case, address the topic, and as the words flow, keep your mind focused on the thoughts and concepts that arise in the flow. You will "see" new relationships among ideas and concepts as you speak. This will allow you to find an aspect of the topic in to which you can free associate and build your talk around.
5. **Build the Body of Your Speech.** Like any other speech, an impromptu speech should have an opening, a body, and a conclusion. In step 4, you introduce your response. In step 5, you build the body of your speech. This is where you may give an example or two, tell a story, share facts and figures, and bolster your point of view.
6. **Conclude Confidently.** Wrap up your comments to solidify the clarity of your response. If you shared information, you may want to give a summary of your main points. If you were trying to persuade, you may want to appeal to the emotions in a powerful way, or conclude with a thought provoking question, or challenge the audience to take a specific action.

10 Tips On Giving A Great Speech Off-the-Cuff

Tip 1. *Trust Yourself.* Remember, you're the expert. You've been doing this for a long time. You don't need notes or practice. You just need you, your mind and your self-confidence to draw on the information you know so well, inside and out. Trust your instincts and natural abilities for starters.

Tip 2. *Think 1. 2. 3.* Take one subject and then focus on three specific points. For each subject, write down three action steps for accomplishing the goal. Organize these three thoughts on the back of one of your business cards and work them in as you speak.

Tip 3. *Speak With Personal Conviction.* Believe in what you have to say. Drive home the points you want to make with conviction and enthusiasm.. Your audience will be riveted.

Tip 4. *Use a Current Event or a Movie to Make Your Point.* Start out with something everyone can relate to. Connect your subject with something well-known and popular. Your audience will get excited if they can easily relate to something timely. This also makes you memorable by association.

Tip 5. *Use Emotion.* Relate a personal or emotional story to your subject, or a key point you would like to make. Personal stories are remembered long after statistics are forgotten.

Tip 6. *Memorize Unforgettable Quotes.* Use quotes of famous people for instant credibility and implied endorsement of your topic. Audiences are impressed with speakers who can quickly connect the words of respected experts to their speeches.

Tip 7. *Speak Intelligently.* You'll never be at a loss for words if you stay on top of the latest business and industry trends. Demonstrate your wealth of knowledge on current topics.

Tip 8. *Engage Your Audience.* Don't just talk. Learn to facilitate responses from your audience. Ask them questions and then ad lib from their replies. This shows that you can think on your feet and makes the experience interactive for audience members.

Tip 9. *Be Real. Be Honest.* Tell your audience you are winging it. Show your human side and you'll gain their undying support. Remember, audiences want you to be a hit! Be confident in the fact that you look and sound good. Don't doubt yourself.

Tip 10. *Pour Your Energy Into It.* Speak up. Give it your best shot. Get passionate about the issues and tell it like it is. Enthusiasm makes you a more compelling and desirable speaker.

Finally, in the words of speaker/author Ken Roberts — "No one ever really knows what you think they know!" Just relax. No one is ever going to know that you don't know everything they think you do when you're doing an impromptu speech or presentation. So, just plan to wing it when needed and use these tips to handle this special communication challenge. The goal is to sound and look polished without warning. It's easier than you think!