



Presenting with Confidence

Your Story Matters



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You Can Do It!

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld had this to say about our oft-mentioned fear of public speaking:

"A recent survey stated that the average person's greatest fear is having to give a speech in public. Somehow, this ranked even higher than death, which was third on the list. So, you're telling me that at a funeral, most people would rather be the guy in the coffin than have to stand up and give a eulogy."

Many surveys have talked about our fear of public speaking. This idea perhaps first originated in David Wallechinsky, Irving Wallace, and Amy Wallace's book *'The Book of Lists'*. They referenced a 1973 Bruskin survey, which mentions that out of the 3,000 American respondents surveyed, 41% listed "speaking before a group" as their greatest fear, more than heights, financial problems, or even death.

Whether that statistic is still completely accurate or not, it is a known fact that people do not enjoy public speaking. However, it is a key skill to master in order to succeed in any kind of business. This is true for high stakes presentations, and in the way you present yourself to your audience.

The Challenges We Face with Public Speaking

Many people experience intense anxiety when called upon to present in front of groups. There may be physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, shaking, dry mouth, shivers, or going blank. For some people this anxiety occurs not only in front of large groups but also in front of small, informal groups. In fact, it could be worse in smaller groups that are more intimate. This fear can cause some people to avoid giving presentations at all.

As you can imagine, for small business owners and entrepreneurs, this type of fear can be very problematic. It can limit the types of opportunities you have to



build your credibility and to pitch your product or service. Luckily, anyone can overcome their fear of public speaking by learning some effective calming tips and by practicing proven presentation techniques. Keep in mind that the symptoms we experience from nervousness, (fear) or excitement are the same.

Even if you do not suffer from this public speaking anxiety, you may be undermining the effectiveness of your presentations by using outdated or ineffective presentation techniques or approaches.

Why Public Speaking is So Important

Your story matters and the world needs to hear it. Public speaking is vital to any type of business because communication is the foundation of business success. Good communication allows business owners to form meaningful connections with others and influence decision-making. It is at the heart of everything we do.

Improving your communication skills will have a positive impact on how you communicate with clients, customers, colleagues, team members, business partners, and even friends and family members.

Learning presentation skills will allow you to appear more confident in front of your audience. It will reduce your anxiety and could make it disappear entirely. At the very least, you will be able to control and channel your anxiety. Even some very good public speakers admit to being nervous when speaking in front of groups, but they know how to keep it from controlling them.

Indirectly, better public speaking skills will improve your sales, your reputation, how your competitors and peers see you, and your standing in the marketplace. The more proficient you are at public speaking, the more others will invite you to speak, which will turn you into a thought leader in your field.

Learning Activity: Brainstorming

Think of some **great** presentations you have seen (Shark Tank pitches, TED Talks, etc.). What are some methods those presenters used that really impressed you?

Presentation	Methods	Notes

Presentation & Storytelling Tips

We all love a great story. For thousands of years people have been moved by stories. We use them to entertain, teach, comfort and inspire. They help us connect to our imagination and explore different solutions.

We can learn the structure of really influential stories, and we can learn to craft stories with a particular end in mind to support both our own and our listeners' goals.

Good stories are likely to be a combination of more than one, however, using even one can greatly improve the impact of our communication.

Combatting Nerves

- Always remember to breathe.
- Focus on your peripheral.
- Put yourself in a positive state by remembering a time when you were successful.
- Imagine the spotlight as the most comfortable, warm and cozy place you can be.

Always Focus on the “How” Your Speech Will Inspire, and not in “What” You are Going to Say.

Many presenters or teachers in public speaking focus more on the content they wish to convey, rather than how a person takes in information. Focus on how you want your audience to feel, in addition to what they will think. Connecting feeling to the learning is extremely important to make a lasting impact and to gain credibility and influence.

It's important to be conscious as to what you want the audience to feel. A good emotional state to start with is “curiosity.” It engages the person from the get go to learn more. See the examples below, in combination with your tonality, the volume of your voice, your body language, facial expression.

2 Minute Stories

A great way to start a speech is with a story around 1) a personal story, 2) an article you have read, 3) a statistic, 4) a quote.

Using Sensory Based Words

Make your stories and presentations sensory based in a way that the listener sees, hears, feels or even smell and taste the story. Associate them inside the story, as if it is happening to them. We call this association. It helps them to imagine and feel what you're describing more clearly.

Dissociated is if they were experiencing it , and it makes the difference in public speaking in a huge way.

Use words that evoke a sensory based experience, based on that sense. For example:

- **Auditory:** hear, listen, melody, harmony, rings a bell, sounds like.
- **Visual:** look, see, colorful, focus, bright, clear.
- **Kinesthetic:** feel, rough, soft, smooth.
- **Olfactory/Gustatory** (smell and taste:) stinks, sweet, aroma, spicy

Stage Anchoring

Anchoring is creating a stimulus-response reaction. This is what the psychologist Pavlov did. He would feed the dogs food and ring a bell at the same time. At some point the dogs were conditioned, he would ring a bell and the dogs would salivate.

Similarly, you can anchor the stage, by telling all the negative points on one part of the stage, and the positive on another.

Once you ask for agreement from the audience, you make sure you stand on the positive side. You can also do this for the story telling part of the stage, versus the important points. Or the place where people are allowed to ask questions.

Gesturing Positive and Negatives

When on camera, such as Tedx talks or storytelling events TV, don't walk around too much, use a specific body posture instead. For example, when you talk about something negative point away from yourself and the audience, when you talk about something positive point to yourself or the audience.

When you are talking, act out what you are saying with your hands. This works on a deep unconscious level and engages the audience.

Make your Presentation Participatory for all Learning Styles

There are visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Make sure you present your presentation not just through speech. But show pictures or objects. And allow people to touch or do an activity.

Simple State Change

Tell a story where the starting state of the characters matches that of your audience. Then describe an event or interaction that results in your characters moving to a more positive state. If your audience has built rapport with your characters, they too will move into that more positive state.

Teaching Tale

Use a story to explain the details of a successful and/or unsuccessful strategy. It's sometimes much easier to tell a story about someone exhibiting a series of useful/destructive behaviours than demanding actions from people.

Classic Case Study (SOARA)

In more formal or corporate settings, you may need to present your story or findings in the form of a case study. Here's a simple sequence you can follow:

Situation: the situation and problem (and possibly the implication of the problem).

Objective: What you wanted to achieve.

Action: What you actually did.

Result: What happened (intentional or not).

Aftermath: The implication of the result over time.

6. Marketing Story

Seth Godin's is one of the grandfathers (although not that old) of today's marketing strategies and content development. His influence can be seen in today's sales and marketing approaches. Here's his formula:

- **What I used to believe**
- **What I now believe**
- **What this has meant**

The Hero's Journey

This is a classic story structure that can be seen in a number of the Story Academy story archetypes.

Some refer to Joseph Campbell's work on the topic, but overall, it's a universal, long standing story that can be seen in all cultures throughout history. It has always been an effective structure for stories.

Just because it uses the word Hero don't assume that it has to be chained to a mythical, fantasy setting with a warrior fighting dragons. It could just as easily apply to a day life, offering strategies for how we grow and develop. It involved 3 stages:

1. **Departure** – A call to adventure, accepting the call, or entering unknown territory.
2. **Initiation** – the challenge, the road of trials, or meeting someone new.
3. **Return** – Survival, escape, rest, lessons learned, or freedom.

Nested Loops

Stories within stories are particularly effective for therapeutic change, and especially for delivering embedded commands – although any character in a story can deliver embedded commands.

1. Open story one
2. Open story two
3. Open story three
4. **Add commands**
5. Close story three
6. Close story two
7. Close story one

The idea is that when a story is opened and left open without closure and another story is started, a part of our consciousness is waiting for the first story to be closed. If our conscious mind is holding three open stories, we have very little consciousness free to evaluate any statements made.

When the stories are closed we're likely to remember the stories consciously, but the commands will be in our unconscious waiting, like seeds, to grow.

Practice

To sound as natural as possible, practice many times over and over again, so that the story doesn't sound contrived.