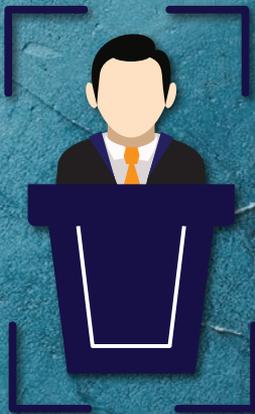


NO NONSENSE ADVICE

6

PUBLIC SPEAKING FOR BEGINNERS



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PROLOGUE:

Being able to speak in public is a necessity - not a luxury

The ability to speak - and speak well - specially in front of key stakeholders is no longer something that is a 'luxury'. It is, for all intents and purposes, a CRITICAL part of the arsenal of skills you are expected to have - IF you are serious about advancing in your career...

That all important board meeting presentation, that decisive 5-minute speech in front of your factory staff, the motivational make or break in front of disgruntled Union members: these are what careers are made of. No, you DON'T have to be a Senior to be asked to represent your organisation - you may well happen to be 'there' at that moment in time - and may well be requested to take the stage at a moment's notice. So, it is wise to be prepared...

Speaking is not only a way to exchange ideas, views, experiences and knowledge, it is also one of the most powerful ways to move people to action. A speech before a battle can, at times, make all the difference in the outcome of the battle. Being able to rouse emotions, make people truly believe and make generally 'normal' human beings do seemingly impossible things at times, are all about the way you are able to connect with people through the speeches you make.

Often, it is the one skill that is overlooked until it is too late: and our attempt through this book is to offer some time honed skills and techniques to get you started. As with all skills, and all books, this is not all there is to it - and in true 'No Nonsense' style, we have only attempted to give you the essentials - and leave you to figure the rest out as you go along.

So, get your ass out of your chair - and go make that first speech!

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Chapter 1

Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking

If you want to speak in front of any audience, then being confident is a prerequisite. Most of the time the biggest impediment to public speaking is the fear of it - nothing more. Fear cripples you: and it's all downhill from that point onwards. So, before you do anything else, be able to overcome your fears: and be confident in front of an audience.

Understand why you are afraid

Understand why you are afraid - though fear is fear, the REASONS for the fear differs from person to person. Don't forget, you are not alone: and it is said that 75% of all people have some form of anxiety when it comes to speaking in public ! So, clearly, you are not the only one - and in fact, you are part of most of us who are not 'born' public speakers.

The good news is that if you know WHY you are afraid, you really can do something about it:

- If you are worried you will make an idiot of yourself: preparation and knowing your subject can help!
- If you are worried you will get stuck in the middle of it: memorizing will help - and also cue cards!
- If you are worried that it will not be interesting - you can always curate a few well-placed jokes, videos or even stories into the speech or presentation!
- If you are worried that people will ask a lot of questions - here too preparation and curating questions and answers can help

So, as you can see, almost ANY reason for being 'afraid' can be worked on - and with a little practice and help, overcome.

Start with audiences you know

Don't ever make the mistake of starting out your public speaking with an overwhelming audience. Start with audiences you are comfortable enough to make mistakes with. Start small. Start with family and friends: or colleagues. Take subjects that you know intimately well. Prepare carefully and give your speech - and request honest feedback.

¹Hamilton, C. (2008) [2005]. Communicating for Results, a Guide for Business and the Professions (eighth edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth

Ask for what worked, and what didn't. And here is the critical part: rewrite your speech based on the feedback received and then make the presentation again - to the same audience - and see if you have improved. Work on it diligently a few times over before taking on a 'proper' audience. The critical part is this - you must get comfortable in front of an audience and not suffer anxiety in front of one. So, use an audience you 'know' to do just that - and once you build a little confidence - venture to the 'unknown' audiences.

5 Tips on how to gain confidence

1. Read up and Research: the more you know about the subject, you are about to speak on, the better it is. Being well researched and prepped gives a huge amount of confidence
2. Look over the heads of people - rather than into their eyes or faces: this will help avoid direct eye contact which can often rattle you when you are starting out - especially if you are the sort who wants 'approval' from others to have confidence
3. Carry Cue Cards - even if you don't need it (and have perfectly memorized your speech): having a small 'back up' helps calm nerves of most. Make sure your Cue Cards are large enough to read - but small enough to carry. Have each paragraph in a Cue Card - so that you can instantly know what you have forgotten in case you do
4. Memorize a joke or two - or a funny line or two - to spill out in case you really get 'stuck' - because getting the audience to laugh with you (rather than at you) helps tremendously when you are in a 'tight spot'
5. Practice like hell - genuinely practicing always helps gain confidence. If you have done the presentation or speech a few times over - it will come a lot more naturally than doing it for the first time

Here are 2 videos that will hopefully help too :

- The surprising secret to speaking with confidence -
Caroline Goyder - TEDxBrixton :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2MR5XbJtXU>
- 3 Mental Tricks To Reduce Your Fear of Public Speaking :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENJ8vOVlKfs>

Chapter 2

Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking

Preparation is possibly the MOST IMPORTANT part of a speech or presentation. Most public speakers who are renowned as impactful orators have all prepared and practiced far more than is commonly known. Hitler and Churchill both rehearsed and practiced their speeches - as well as rewrote their speeches many times over till it was 'just right.' The more you 'prep up', the higher the possibility of your speech being delivered just right.

Understand the reason why you were invited

Before anything else, find out why YOU were invited to speak.

There are generally 5 reasons to be invited:

1. You are the EXPERT in the subject: If you are invited because of your technical expertise, understand that they want CONTENT and INSIGHTS more than anything else. So, ensure your preparation focuses primarily on this. This is NOT to say bore the hell out of them and overuse jargon - but DO understand that you need to have SUBSTANCE
2. You are the MOST SENIOR: This is a rather dangerous reason to be invited: because they might actually want someone else - but invited you because they did not want to offend you. Please DO ask if there is someone else, they rather have speak - and if so, graciously offer it to the person they had in mind. If they INSIST - or if the occasion demands your seniority: then, ensure you can keep it short, to the point, and possibly ONE key message you want to deliver. Remember: here you are merely making a representation: so, your role is to play YOUR ROLE. Your primary objective is NOT to impress the hell out of them as a speaker
3. You were RECOMMENDED by someone important: if you ARE recommended, then that means you really must be held in high esteem - and here is your opportunity to go all guns blazing and WOW an audience: not only for your sake - but also for the sake of the one who recommended you
4. They want to TEST YOU OUT: This is also a dangerous predicament to be in. If this IS the intent, then chances are there might be a few key decision makers in the audience - and they are possibly considering you not just as a one off 'cameo' appearance. So, this is one of those speaking engagements you REALLY must prep for: and also, really really get the key objectives met. Also, be ok to be a little 'conservative' here - and don't go over the top with jokes and familiarity that you may otherwise resort to

5. They had NO ONE ELSE: This may well be the case when you start out as a speaker. GRAB EVERY OPPORTUNITY like this that comes your way. NEVER be offended by this. Remember: these are your opportunities to practice and gain invaluable experience by. Prep very very well for these - you have the advantage of being the 'under dog' and not having expectations too high - so, make the most of it and impress the hell out of them!

Understanding the audience

One of the BIGGEST mistakes most speakers make is not making it RELEVANT to the audience at hand. Even the most diligently researched and practiced speech/presentation can go horribly wrong if it wasn't directed at the right audience. What 'usually works' may go horribly wrong with specific audiences: so, ensure you always find out what your audience is like: and NEVER go in blind.

There are several 'types' of audiences:

- Homogenous audiences: are audiences who have one (or a few) commonalities. For example, they may all belong to the same school, or the same religion, or maybe having the same vocation etc. Humor that is SPECIFIC to that commonality can be a double-edged sword here - so, use it ONLY if you know the audience well - or if you are yourself an authority in that particular audience. A doctor cracking a joke at doctors is a far cry from a typical manager cracking a joke at doctors: and if the commonality is ethnicity shy away from ethnic jokes - unless you belong to the same ethnicity
- Mixed audiences: are audiences where there are no discernible commonalities. When speaking to audiences like this, make sure you use a wide array of examples - so that everyone can relate to what you say. Having only one TYPE of example or set of SPECIFIC examples can be disastrous as it can alienate parts of the audience

- All female or all male audiences : if you are presenting at a same sex audience then you are allowed to be a little bit more 'liberal' in the types of comments you make - but be warned that being sexist or 'vulgar' in any audience is not generally in good spirit. However, in an audience of the opposite sex, be extra cautious in how you 'come across' - and as much as possible keep away from any form of sexist remarks
- Technical Expert audiences: For Technical Expert audiences, ensure you establish credibility first, and your credentials here may matter a hell of a lot more than normal audiences - so ensure you are introduced with your credentials rather than having to 'blow your own horn'
- Multiethnic and Multicultural audiences: If you are speaking to multiethnic or multicultural/religious audiences be extremely careful about ethnic/cultural/religious quips or remarks - even in passing. Try and also be respectful of the differences - and do not site examples from any one particular section/faction - always offer multiple examples covering the diversity in the room
- Multinational audiences: When speaking at multinational audiences, speak slower than normal, and use as simple language as possible - as you will have many who will struggle with your accent to begin with. So, make a conscious effort to ensure you are understood by everyone - and keep a constant vigil to see if their body language affirms their understanding

Here are 4 tips to help you:

A. Find out the reason for the gathering - and the objectives: Finding out the core objective of your speech/presentation is fundamental to everything else. So, ensure you understand the objectives well - and in no uncertain terms. If you are to be the 'filler' between two really important forums, the expectation from you is quite different to making the keynote at your schools prize giving! So, be absolutely clear about the objectives

B. Find the common ground - and play on it: As much as possible find common ground and capitalize on it during a speech/presentation.

Being able to be 'relatable' is possibly the most important. For example, if the audience is packed with young adults, being able to crack a few jokes on 'our generation' rather than ranting on 'their generation' makes a huge difference - so that they RELATE to you as a person who has gone through the 'growing up process' and viewed YOUR 'seniors' the same way they view YOU NOW. It immediately makes you one of 'them' - and this becomes critical to making an impact in any speech/presentation

C. Find out sensitivities and norms to watch out for: Be wary of 'ruffling feathers' (unless that IS the objective of the speech/presentation). Each audience will have certain sensitivities - and it important to acknowledge these. Keep away from 'controversy' as much as possible during a speech or presentation - there is ENOUGH to talk about without flirting with the controversial

D. Find out language preferences: One of the other critical considerations is to ensure you understand the language proficiency and preferences of an audience. Remember, most audiences will have a mix of those who can and cannot speak well in the language you are speaking in - EVEN if it is a common language/first language. So, find this out - and flower it up or dumb it down based on the audience

Understanding the venue and logistical arrangements

WHERE you talk/present and what TIME you talk/present and such considerations are as IMPORTANT as WHAT you present and HOW you present: and in fact, will impact both the WHAT and the HOW of what you speak on/present. NEVER underestimate the importance of the venue and related aspects in ensuring your speech/presentation is both well received and impactful.

- **KNOW** your venue. If you can't go there in person, ensure you get some photographs sent across so that you can have a proper understanding of the venue
 - **NEVER** use a venue with a tin roof - should it rain it becomes impossible to hear you
 - **NEVER** use an outdoor venue if you must rely on a multimedia presentation. Having a screen and enough lux levels to see during a hot sunny day can be really challenging
- Make sure that the seating arrangements are such that everyone can see you and the screen (especially if there are large columns in the hall)
 - Find out where the light switches are - and have someone there to switch off the lights if it is required
 - Find out about ventilation, AC and related aspects - nothing is more intolerable than a room that is either too hot or too cold - your speech will be the last thing they focus on if the temperature is not right
 - Find out where the entry and exit doors are. If the entry door is right near your stage, recommend closing it, and ensure there is a person outside the door to inform any 'latecomers' that they cannot come in until the speech/presentation is over. Having a steady stream of latecomers entering in at all odd times kills the impact of a speech/presentation. This may not always be possible - we know - but try and get it done - as it is in your best interest
 - Find out what other functions are being held at the venue - and its impact to your speech/presentation: Having a wedding or a 'party' at the next door hall is a sure way to 'kill it' for a speaker. Trying to speak over dance music is a near impossibility. If there ARE functions next to your venue - find out the 'high octane' times - and schedule your speech/presentation after the hubbub is done
- Get to know what audio visual equipment can be arranged: Make sure you know what is, and is not available. If you are to carry your own laptop, ensure you check for compatibility between your laptop and their projector. If they are giving you a laptop, ensure you send the presentation and all additions in **ADVANCE** and tell them to play it and be absolutely certain it all works

- Get to know the seating arrangements: Seating arrangements can sometimes restrict what you are trying to do in a presentation/speech. For example, if there is a large hall with theater styled seating it may not be able to group people and ask them to have a quick discussion on something and get back to you the way you would if the seating was 'cabaret styled.' So, before you build your content and plan out your speech/presentation, make sure you know how they will be seated
- Get to know what time of the day your speech or presentation is: Needless to say, try and avoid speeches straight after lunch unless you are a pro (in which case this book is not meant for you in the first place!) The best times for a speech or presentation when you are starting out is straight after the tea break in the morning

Writing and Perfecting Your Speech

People always believe that this is the tough part, but did you know if you have it all structured out it isn't as bad as you think it is. But what is this structure? It is how you gain the attention of your audience above through the order in which you introduce the points in your speech. Here's how we figure out the flow in which we deliver our points to any audience in any situation.

There are many ways you can do this - but here is our favourite:

The Basic Speech Organisation Method

This model is used by numerous organisations such as Toastmasters and TED. Here's how it works:

FIRSTLY: Tell what you're going to tell them - Use the first two minutes of your speech to gain your audience's attention. They must be hooked on to what you are saying and wish to hear more. It also allows your audience to feel that you are the authority on the subject and allow you to help them feel like you care through an example or an intriguing idea.

SECONDLY: Tell them - Once you have gained their interest, you must always focus on the central purpose of your speech/presentation. Use your main point or idea with each point backed up by supporting material such as statistics, quotations, or other researched information. Use simple language to explain your point clearly and with conviction.

THIRDLY: Tell them what you've told them - Use the final moments of your allotted time to sum up what you have just said and by addressing how your PURPOSE could affect your audience if they were to accept it.

Whatever structure you decide on, remember: Your structure should be INVISIBLE to the audience. In other words, don't talk about how you're going to talk about your topic – just talk about it!

Once the outline is done: fill in the blanks...

For many people, the toughest part of a project is the beginning. Try starting from the middle (aka the body of the speech) instead. Creating a compelling opening may leave you a little drained even before you began. You can instead start with the body of your speech and identify your core points instead before you consider your opening or conclusion.

BODY

Do's



To effectively organize a speech:

- Think of what your speeches through line is. Identify your 3 key points of your speech that will bring out the point you wish to put across. Follow this with writing down statements that support the points you have identified.
 - Make a list of all the data:
 - o Think about the data your audience already know and what you need to convince them of
 - o Think of what the person needs to know and list your points according to the order in which they need to know them. Your structure needs to be logical and in sequence to reflect the speech's through line
 - o Consider the time of your speech and reduce everything you feel may not be necessary without losing the integrity of your argument. It may sometimes be something that you feel is important
 - o Get feedback from a trusted friend, ideally one who isn't an expert in your field/topic of your speech. If they understand your point, then you are in good hands
 - Use examples and anecdotes involving people or events. Convert statistics and ideas to familiar terms
 - Spend more time on new information:
 - o If your speech has information that is old or commonly available, try and keep you points to a few lines
 - o Use empirical evidence, and limit anecdotal evidence
 - (Respectfully) address any controversies in your claims, including legitimate counter- arguments, reasons you might be wrong, or doubts your audience might have about your idea
 - Slides : There may be a time when you are flooding your speech with figures. It may be easier to just have it on a slide. Plan for all of it in your script

Don'ts



- Don't focus too much on yourself. It puts people off and people automatically assume that this is just your pre- stunt. Your content should drive people to ask questions about who you are over just merely feeling like you are bragging about yourself
- Don't open with a string of stats. Too much data will kill the mood and will leave the audience with too much to fathom
 - Don't use too much jargon, or explain new terminology
- Don't let citations interrupt the flow: mention it once you have made your point, or place them in either the right or left bottom corner of your slides in 7pt font

Once the Body is done THEN move to the INTRODUCTION

My favourite example of this is the Cream Soda advert from our childhood. He rises to the pulpit and starts greeting members of the audience in a monotone voice. If your first few moments of your speech are dull, lifeless or just plain boring you lose your audience right there. Your beginning of a speech is critical and the more dynamic, interesting and captivating you are - you gain your audience's attention. If you ever met a Toastmaster, they would tell you the first 11 seconds of your speech can make or break your speech. So, make a lasting impression.

Do's



Successful speech openings meet four criteria:

- A. Get the attention of the audience. Your audience needs to be focussed on you and not be distracted by everything around them. Get their attention from the first few sentences of your speech
- B. Introduce the topic. Make sure your audience understands what you are talking about within the first few minutes or they will feel you are running on a tangent and have no idea where you are going with it. On this understanding - they tend to listen to you more earnestly
- C. Establish rapport. Use simple ways to gain the audience such as smiling, showing enthusiasm and making eye contact to enable you to connect with them. You could also get the host/comper of the event/meeting read aspects of your profile in your introduction to get them to understand you come from a place of knowing
- D. Make sure you only use 5-10% of your total presentation time to ensure you use most of the time focussing on your body of the speech

Here's a few tips on how you can make your opening memorable:

1. Why is this important? Tell your audience

Example: In a speech concerning Coronavirus, the speaker may begin by saying, "Washing your hand may seem like a simple enough task, but if not done right will increase your possibilities of contracting Coronavirus so make sure you next time you do - you follow these simple steps."

2. The easiest method is to use a quote. Either, from literature, famous speeches, local leaders or celebrities that suit your purpose.

Example: A speech on leadership could begin, Dumbledore from the Harry Potter series quite aptly told Harry "It is a curious thing, Harry, but perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those who, like you, have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well."

3. Spin your story so that it keeps your audience wondering till it reaches the plot twist. It usually helps when you wish to bring humour too.

Example: A speaker could begin a speech by saying (using a child tone of voice and body gestures), "I enjoy lying around the house all day and as long as my food is available, I don't really need you around. I like to play games and stalk imaginary creatures. As you may have already guessed, I am a child sneaking to a computer just before exam season. Remember don't tell my mother"

4. Everyone loves listening to stories especially when it is personal. You can use any kind that suits your purpose from dramatic, funny, surprising to just one with a solid life lesson

Example: When I was a child, my brother had a million nicknames that ranged from weirdo to lunatic, little did I know that in the future his constant bullying would give me the patience to deal with anyone's negativity. Although as a child I did want to murder him a few times but that's between us

5. Tell them something they had no idea about or something shocking to gain their attention

Example: "Sugar is highly addictive. It takes a life every 6 seconds in Sri Lanka just like an addiction to tobacco does"

6. Ask your audience a question or even more. It should get your audience to question themselves before you give them the answer to the proverbial question

Example: In a speech about thinking on the spot, a speaker could begin by asking, "Do you know what to do if your dog ate your homework?"

7. There may be times when you are speaking at a formal function. In those times you will have to start with the reason why they are gathered at this occasion.

Example: A speech given at the opening of a new hospital: "Ladies and gentlemen, five years ago we were told by our Health Ministry that we had no money to build a new wing for our maternity patients. We were told that our wives and sisters had to continue traveling for an hour to gain this basic service from our hometown. Today, we stand before our brand-new maternity wing – a place where the children of this growing community will begin their lives. We are proud that the members of this community worked together to accomplish what some said could not be done."

You can also try these options if it better suits your speech purpose:

- Humour
- Audience participation
- A demonstration
- A reference to a historical event

Remember whatever you do - it needs to be relevant to the topic, to the audience, and to the occasion. Once you've figured out which technique to use - practice it in front of a mirror as many times as you can so you know exactly how you wish to emphasize it.

Don'ts



Let's look at a few ways you could possibly distract the audience so you can avoid in the future:

1. The audience does not need to know how much you prepared. Just avoid it all together cause the less the audience knows about it, the less they will judge you. Remember as long as you are confident, and you have a solid structure they will not know how much time you took to put it all together. Example: "Thank you all for coming. I was given this opportunity at such short notice."

2. Don't just mention the topic and make it dull or boring for the audience. If the audience feels like they know what your whole speech is about in the first few lines they will just zone out on you and their yawns will put you off. Example: "Today, my speech topic is the new processes in place at the factory."

3. Don't keep the audience guessing on what the point of your speech is for too long. If you do they will feel like you have no idea what you are talking about and lose focus. Example: "You have all come to this conference in anticipation of delving deeper into the theme of education. The title of my speech is [pause]. Well, we'll get to that in a few moments."

The Conclusion

A conclusion is important as it is what your audience will remember above everything else in your speech. Every speech has a general purpose - To persuade, inform, be humorous or inspire. However, the conclusion is where your specific purpose of your speech comes out to play. Craig Valentine, 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking, says you should be able to summarize your speech on the back of a business card. Basically, your speech should have a clear purpose on what the audience should feel, do, or think after listening to your speech. All too often, an otherwise excellent speech, loses its effectiveness because of a poor closing.

Do's



Successful speech closings meet three criteria:

1. Achieve a sense of closure: Your speech should allow the audience to feel like they have gained some ending to your thought and so must keep your attention
2. Make an impact: People always remember what they heard last the longest. Hence, why your specific purpose usually only comes out in the conclusion. The audience may have forgotten most of your speech, after a period of time. However, they will remember the last words you said to them and how they felt after hearing those words, if you deliver the ending in a manner that leaves them with something to believe in
3. Again here, just like your opening use only 5-10% of your speech time

Don'ts



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BONUS: Watch Chris Anderson's succinct guide to public speaking and putting your speech together here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_anderson_ted_s_secret_to_great_public_speaking?language=en

How To Practice A Speech?

Here are some tips to get you going:

1. Practice by yourself in an empty room or ideally in the space you will be speaking at - Remember, you don't have to worry about anyone else when there is no one else in the room with you. Ideally, use a video projector and show slides, while you practice. Think of how you can keep eye contact with the audience in the room. Divide the audience into segments and identify how you will shift yourself to be able to look at each segment and engage with them. If you get a chance to practice in the room where the actual presentation takes place, you can also understand how to use the space to suit your requirements
2. Stand up Straight - Always practice upright as when you are sitting down you don't get used to hiding your nervously trembling body parts from the audience. In addition, you will be able to practice what you can do with your hands. You also start to understand that this is not just reading out your speech from a piece of paper. Also, will enable you to think of how you would manage the situation if you are behind a podium or lectern or at the centre of the stage.

Get used to your allocated stage area and move around the room - Leave a more confident impression on your audience by shifting locations within the space in a calm demeanour rather than rapid frequent movements. If you're planning to show slides, ideally request for a screen so you can view your slides from in front of you or identify a spot where your laptop is visible. You can also invest in a clicker for yourself, so you have it for all your usage. Also remember don't walk too much while talking as you will tend to distract the audience as they will be following your movement over listening to you speak

3. Explain the content in your slides when you practice - Practice using slides at home and focus on what you'll be talking about. If you are reading your slides with no emotional connection - stop! Change it up till you are more confident on what you are presenting.

We all know the famous term 'Death by PowerPoint presentation'. Always know you are the main speaker, not the slides. Remember slides or any other visual aid are not mandatory, you may decide to forego them at any point so question yourself as to if it serves a purpose. When practicing, just talk as you have planned and not based on the order of slides. Remember your slides are but an aid and see how it goes. The first few times you will continuously try to check the slides, but as you go on you will know when you need to change the slides as per your content so you can focus on the audience.

4. Make using notes smoother - While we usually do not advise using cue cards, if used effectively notes can be your tools, so that nobody cares if you have them or not. Your notes should be clear enough that it doesn't mess you up instead of helping you. Here's a few mistakes we usually come across:

- a. Notes are too general or say nothing. You won't be able to understand the notes you made, and you will be lost
- b. Too much-written text. This creates a situation in which it's difficult to search in the long text, which means long pauses or voiced sounds, e.g. "erm...", "hm...", etc.
- c. Don't start pulling at your notes. If you show the audience, you are not sure and you keep waving it around or fumble with them in your hands - your audience would feel like you didn't plan your speech
- d. Speaking to your notes and not looking at the audience is always a big no! no!
- e. Don't apologize or talk nonsense during pauses. Using notes is not something weird. Remember that first. It's also fine to lose track of what you were going to say next. Never apologise for these two things. Why? Once you apologise - the audience will wonder what happened for him to do so.

5. Watch your body language - Everyone's biggest issue is not knowing what to do with their hands. They continuously do fidgety movements like spinning their wedding ring, hands in pockets or just arm flailing. Remember as a beginner - being nervous is normal, it's affected the best of us. If you haven't shown a sign of nervousness such as putting your hands in your pocket or twisting your wedding ring - you are one of the few out there. BUT what you should actually do – gesticulate

Check out more on this in Part 3

6. Turn on a video camera and record your presentation - Record yourself and identify the movements you make without your realisation.

The bigger the screen the better so you can spot it easily. How to practice a speech while using a video camera?

- a. Watch the first recorded version without sound and watch your face, body position, and hand movements. Watching yourself, you'll see what needs improvement
- b. Let a friend or family member watch with you and give you feedback
- c. When you're done, repeat everything from the beginning. I can promise you that watching yourself on camera for the first time can be quite painful, but the more you do it, the more likely you're to look at the screen at some point and think "Not at all bad"

Refer section on videoing yourself and critiquing yourself in PART 7.

7. Use a stopwatch when practicing - If you finish your speech a little earlier - you won. However, if you exceed your time, you'll be doomed. If you're making a short speech, use the stopwatch to identify how long it takes for each segment of your speech - Opening, 3 main points of your body and your conclusion. This way you know where you are overspending your time. Also, pay attention to the total time of your presentation. If you have exceeded the time, you'll have to make your presentation shorter

8. Present to a friend - Or to a family member. Anyway, it must be a person you trust. Let them watch from beginning to the end and take notes without interruption so that they can give feedback. If something wasn't good, you will be able to correct it immediately.

BONUS - If it is a major presentation - try it with different groups of people who may not be in the same field as you and identify if they understand what you are saying. Do this as many times as you can and watch how their feedback helps you evolve.

REMEMBER though that you don't have to take every single feedback you get from them - your speech still needs to be true to who you are or else you will not feel connected to it and may forget the lines. Take what you feel will improve the experience but always listen to feedback with an open mind

9. Who? What? When? Where? - If there is a time allocation given for questions - when practicing, think about what your listeners could ask you and think about the answers to them. Once you have presented it to family or friends you trust, ask them to ask you questions based on your overview. You'll probably be asked a lot of questions to think about.

If you are doing a series of presentations, maybe you could answer them in the next part so that during the course you may answer them. However, if it is just one, consider the top 3 questions and try and include the answers within the main course of your presentation.

Refer section on answering questions in PART 4.

10. Repeat. Repeat Again. And Then Again - At TEDx, we are taught that each minute of presentation time = 1 hour of practice time minimum. Therefore, don't limit to practicing just once – practice as much as possible. So much that you get slightly tired of it. It will lead to be more like “I've done it like a dozen times, and I know what I'm talking about.”

The less preparation you make - it will clearly show. You tend to fumble more; you will not be able to identify audience cues and your presentation content will not be clear. This, therefore, is one of the most essential elements of any speech.

Chapter 3

Delivery

With dressing for a speaking engagement, a choice that I am constantly faced with is crafting a balance between wearing an outfit that reflects my identity, an outfit that's appropriate to the event and an outfit that matches the audience. Here are a couple of points to consider when deciding what to wear.

Don't underestimate the power of what you're wearing, it speaks to audience about who you are even before you start to use words.

Ask yourself who you're representing, if they have hired you to carry out a talk on a topic from your perspective then it gives you a little more space to pull off an outfit that reflects your identity.

However, if you're being hired to represent a brand or as a host for an event, in that case the weight shifts back to the type of event and audience. Whatever the case may be always consider those points and never hesitate to ask organizers what the dress code is.

Hair combed, facial hair shaved or groomed (even if you're a man or woman), fingernails clipped, teeth brushed, and appropriate amounts of deodorant or fragrance used. All of these go without saying. Unless you're a radio show host and no one's going to see you speak anyway. (But still use deodorant).

As a speaker remember the message is the most critical part of the session, the speaker is a vessel for the message. In that sense anything that is going to distract from the message right from a flashy outfit to bracelets that may jangle around when you move your arms would be taking bits of attention away from the message.

How you speak

After all the preparation and practice, you finally come down to it, the actual delivery of the content. Usually delivery is our main worry: we worry about stuttering, freezing, forgetting or even falling off the stage.

However, delivery is a skill, not a gift and as with any skill you will be able to improve and with time perfect your own delivery style with consistent practice. A lot of people think delivery is the actual presence on stage, when in fact it is only a part; how you choose to say what you have to say while manipulating and controlling your vocal range will help add a world of colour to how you sound to the audience.

Your Voice

Volume - While it might be a no brainer it might come as a surprise to those of us who step up to speak for the first time, that the volume we expect to be generated with our voice takes more effort than we would imagine. Our vocal cords and muscles inside our mouth are perhaps not used to being pushed to the limit required to generate the volume necessary to be audible. In situations where a microphone is available the impact of volume is minimized, however as a public speaker you need to practice being loud enough for a group of at least 30 people within a room of about 20x20 feet. Beyond this space ideally a microphone will be available to you, if you're unsure, make sure you talk to the organizers and make one available to you.

Speed - Conversational speaking speed and presentation speaking speed are two different paces. Ideally you need to be able to speak slower than a regular conversation in order to ensure that different people in the audience with varying degrees of language competence will be able to keep up with you. However, make sure you don't slow down so much that you become a dull drone in the background.

Projection - Consider projection to be your ability to throw your voice to the farthest point of your audience. This is different to volume. To get a little bit technical; you get to be louder through volume, which would put extra strain on your vocal cords and make it seem like you're shouting. Alternatively, you could be more audible to everyone in the room by having more air come out of your mouth while you speak. It might sound a bit complicated but all it takes is a little bit of diaphragm breathing (Belly Breathing) practice and consciously engaging your core while you speak.

The following video should be of help to you:

Tone - You might think that only some people possess the ability to make tone variations, and even if you were able to make the tone variation, we tend to doubt our ability to judge when and where said tone variations should be put in. If you've ever read a story to a child or even tried talking to a baby, I guarantee you are capable of tone variations. In my experience it's best to not look at changing your tone as per a formula but instead ensure that there is a constantly changing wave, rather than a flat line. An excellent way of learning to variate your tone is by listening to a really good radio host. They only have their voices to engage audiences, note the ways in which they chose to speak some words in a very calm and grounded way, while speaking out the occasional words in a fiery jarring style; then slipping into a lite tone when talking about light hearted things and then constantly moving in and out of these variations.

Take a look at this video that might help you.

Pause - Pauses are heavily underutilized tool in a world where speakers are just looking to rush to the end of their presentation and get it over and done with. Apart from generating a bit of effect to your speech, pauses also give you an opportunity to think mid-sentence. A technique I use for my pauses is that I make sure they're never flat pauses, I try and make sure each pause is a Pregnant Pause; in a sense I am loading the sentence leading up to it and pausing right before the sentence peaks. This keeps my audience in bit of anticipation and adds in a bit of color and effect.

Your Words

Pronunciation - Ask yourself these questions whenever you have the slightest doubt:

- Am I saying the word right?
- Am I saying the person's name right?
- Am I saying the road, village, city name right?

Far too often do we have a slight doubt on how something is pronounced, only to ignore the doubt and go ahead and say it the way we THINK is right. Instead as a public speaker you have the responsibility to make sure you're saying it absolutely correctly because you're not using these words in a private conversation anymore and there might be non-native speakers who learn the word by hearing you say it! The research is especially important for words you yourself learned by reading rather than listening.

Enunciation - Knowing how to say a word right and saying it clearly enough for others to hear are two completely different things. As illustrated on the points of volume and projection above, the muscles in your mouth needs to get used to being pushed to the limits required to say certain words. And just like any other muscle in our body before a workout, they need to be warmed up. Before any speaking engagement, I always find about 3 minutes to go through my series of vocal exercises that will help me to get my tongue, cheeks and vocal cords all loose and limber in order to be able to be more flexible.

I find an exercise I was taught at elocution classes almost 30 years ago to be extremely effective. Say the following words, normally at first and keep repeating them about 5 or 6 times increasing the volume and dramatization as you say it:

PAAP POPE POOP PAUP PAPE PEEP
TAAT TOTE TOOT TAUT TATE TEET
ZAAZ ZOZE ZOOZ ZAUZ ZAZE ZEEZ
KAAK KOKE KOOK KAUK KAKE KEEK
LAAL LOLE LOOL LAUL LALE LEEL
JAAJ JOJE JOOJ JAUJ JAJE JEEJ

Colloquialisms - Colloquialisms are a great way to use your words to connect with an audience. People feel a sense of 'Oh, he speaks just like we do' that familiarity helps them to like you. Although fair warning, you need to use your judgement and a fair bit of common sense on which audience to use what word with, or if you are using any at all for that specific audience. It's not only audience that needs to be considered but the situation and context as well.

Localization - You will be able to increase the power of your words and the impact it has on the audience if you are able to localize select words you use in a manner that is relevant to them. This localization isn't always limited to the local language but also to specific words that are important within a demographic or corporate situation. Whichever localized word or phrase you choose to use, make sure you're certain about whatever you're saying.

Punch Words - The honest truth is that no one is going to remember the entirety of your speech and that's absolutely fine, however make sure that you have one or two punch words that capture the essence of an idea you're trying to talk about or a point you're trying to make. Punch words are great to have the audience repeat back to you or for even for you to call back to, to remind the audience of what you talked about.

Your Body

Your Posture - When you start your speech, stand straight, shoulders back, equally balanced on each foot. Although these might be details furthest from our mind, it's important to ensure that you don't slouch or begin by looking down, don't begin with your arms crossed, hands in your pocket or with your entire body tilted to one side. Instead stand with balance and begin your talk with open welcoming arms so that everyone in the room feels like you want them to be a part of the experience you are trying to create.

Presence - Your presence on stage/in front of the crowd doesn't only begin when you speak. It begins the moment they see you; they start creating little ideas in their head, thinking about what you're like. Your presence is your statement, regardless of whatever is going on inside your head, connect with the audience, acknowledge them with a nod and create a space for yourself, imagine yourself as truly worthy of being there.

Eye Contact - Regardless of the size of the audience you need to actually make eye contact or appear to make eye contact with them. When making eye contact with a smaller group you don't have to stare dead into someone's eyes, instead visualize a triangle forming a border outside their eyes and nose. I find it to be comfortable to look to the center of this triangle which is roughly just on the bridge of the nose. Once you become comfortable with this point look at eye contact as an investment for attention during speaking, flitting over the audience, spend time investing 3 seconds with each person in the room, this will guarantee about 10 seconds of attention back from them, until you need to repeat the process.

Facial Expression - Perhaps a lot of us have lost the childhood abandon with which we narrated stories and situations with the greatest of expressions. With time and desensitization, we tend to think of speaking as a 'serious' or 'formal' exercise. This unfortunately results in our words being spoken out without any support from the rest of our body to give it some extra life to ensure impact.

Consider 6 points on your face you can move and manipulate for effect; your 2 eyebrows, your 2 cheeks and your 2 lips. Move them moderately always during a speech and extravagantly occasionally. If you can wiggle your ears that's an added benefit, and you might consider joining a circus!

Movements and Gestures - Map your movements to the scale of your stage and the tone of your talk. The same goes for your gestures and by that I primarily mean your hands and arms. Large halls with large groups of people call for exaggerated arm movements to match the scale, while boardrooms and smaller meetings would mean the same intention illustrated with a muted hand movement.

Either way, standing still is not something you should do at any cost unless the style of event specifically dictates it. If possible, feel free to go amongst your audience members, pan the range of the speaking floor and connect with them whenever possible. But whenever you're making an important point, always ensure you freeze in your tracks and highlight the moment.

Your Audience

Respect - If you flip the fact that you're speaking to a group of people, it means that a group of people took in the effort to come and listen to you. And for the duration of your speech they will be giving you their time and attention, and this is something you need to respect and be thankful for. I usually start my talks by thanking people for being there, doesn't matter who paid for it, doesn't matter if it's a learning or fun engagement, all that matters is that you respect and appreciate your audience from the outset.

Connect - People like people who are similar to them. Especially if you're going to be talking about a learning topic or even a life interest topic it's important that they feel like you can see things from their perspective. So, sharing a story that would encourage responses from the audience when you ask them questions related to a common problem is a great way to build that connection. The connection can also come from credibility, in the sense of why you're the best person to be talking about the said topic. In a sense your speech addresses a need or gap that currently exists and you're the best person to be talking about it.

Involve - Involving the audience, breaks monotony, affects attention and encourages vested interest. Here are a few questions you can ask in order to ensure audience involvement:

- Raise your hands if...
- How many people agree/disagree...
- Give that person a round of applause for...
- Take a look at what's on the screen and tell me

Chapter 4

Taking Questions

For quite a few speakers, audience questions are far more stressful than the actual speech itself. But we ask you to view questions as a sign of encouragement, people cared enough to pay enough attention to either agree, disagree or explore your topic further through a question.

Remember:

- Think about the questions that might be asked - and prepare for them
- Always, always, be respectful when receiving a question: 'Thank you for the question' or 'An interesting question - thank you' or 'I was hoping someone asks that - Thank You' are good places to start
 - NEVER evade a question - never not answer one either
- NEVER take a question personally and retaliate: nor get 'emotional' over one
 - Don't try and elaborate or over explain an answer
- Don't take all the questions from one person - always rotate the mic and offer the opportunity to as many people as possible to ask questions

Answering straightforward questions

No brainer here, thank them for asking the question and go right ahead and answer it, after you're done answering ask them – I hope that made sense/Did I answer your concern?. If the question is straight forward enough - give a straightforward answer. Most simple, straight forward questions DO have straightforward answers - so, don't complicate it.

Answering irrelevant questions

Thank them for the question and then make them understand that the question is irrelevant to the topic or irrelevant to this context. Things you can say are; interesting, but can we park that question for the moment? Or Let's revisit that after we get through this.

Answering challenging questions or questions you don't know the answer for

With challenging questions, you have several options. One common technique is to acknowledge that it is an interesting question and throw the question back to the audience and ask them what they think before you answer. This gives you time to think and also gives you space to gather some perspectives to rally your thoughts around the question. If by chance it is a question you don't know the answer for, don't feel ashamed to tell them that, but ensure that you will find out and tell them. People appreciate honesty over making things up.

(Unless you're a Sri Lankan Voter)

Chapter 5

Tips on using PPT and other visual aids

PPT and Visual aids are great inclusions in speeches and presentation, helping audiences grasp information coherently, and understanding the crux of your message, while adding variety color and necessary pause points to heighten interest and as a whole add to the whole outcome. The points which follow will add some perspective!

Don't over rely on IT

We are at a day and age where our lives have been simplified by technology and it has become our crutch, and it's hard to imagine a time before presentations, screens and visual aids. The trouble with technology, is that it does tend, ever so often to malfunction - when you least expect it! Call it Mercury Retrograde, or whatever you may; always be prepared with a plan B should technology fail. Anticipate the worst and think of how you would manage a situation if all PPT and other visual aids were to fail you! How would you proceed? Play this out in your head a few times over, and should you ever encounter this situation, you will be clam and composed – after all the show must go on!

Don't clutter the slides

There are many helpful tips out there on the internet but the basic gist of them all is don't overwhelm your audience by bombarding them with information or flashing up a slide that they need to decipher and decode before they get the intended message. Clutter could be in the form of words, graphs, images which if used incorrectly could and will dilute your audience's attention from what you are saying, instead of complementing what you are saying. Less is more – visuals are for emphasis; you are the message and grab your audience's attention for the right reason.

Here is a link you may find helpful:

<https://www.presentation-guru.com/10-tips-for-creating-great-visual-aids/>

If you are using a clicker - be familiar with it

Nothing is worse than having to watch a speaker get fiddly with technology, watch slides go back and forth like a real glitchy movie, soon the audience begins to question the speaker's ability and yes, get a little judgy along the way. The point is these are distractions that leave a negative aftertaste for the audience. So even if your message is on point, you have prepared for this moment rigorously, you have collected your nerves and numbed them the best you can, a small meddlesome object can ruin your moment. So be very sure the battery is fresh, and you are confident with how it works!

Try not to use links - embed the videos

We always know the pain of using links for essential videos we want to share with our audience. We run the risk of broken links, videos being removed, Wifi issues, and the general hassle of having to flip about screens, slides, and well ruin the otherwise smooth flow of your presentation. Apply a little bit of "Vidusha Wisdom" and embed the videos into your presentation. You can transition seamlessly from making a point to watching a clip and continuing with your presentation – Hassle free yes?!

Always test the equipment before the presentation/speech

It's always prudent to check equipment before you go on. Plan to arrive a bit early and get set up and run through your presentation before anyone gets there. Remember Murphy's law? Please do at this point, put it to the test. Test the audio, the connections to HDMI, any adaptors are they faulty? Check the visibility of your slides from different vantage positions, look for and even setup your power supply, turn off screen savers, or other pop up notifications that can interrupt and sometimes embarrass you, and maintain a clean and clear desktop, even if you have to dump everything in to one folder, and get a professional looking wall paper while you are at it!

Make sure you check for copyrights of all material you use

We often pay little heed to copy rights and its infringements in general, as application of the same here in Sri Lanka is lax. However, if you hope to present overseas or somehow your presentation finds its way to the internet then you are susceptible to it. These include images, videos, audio, and even written content. Do familiarize yourself with the concept of fair use, and you can usually, attribute the copyright holder. As recommended: "A nice little copyright statement at the bottom of your slide can help show that you weren't trying to claim the content as your own." It also helps to arm yourself with the knowledge of what copyright infringement is.

If you are using custom fonts - ensure you bring the font with you Helvetica at 42 pts is the recommended font, but if you want to be fancy, add in a little color and personality to your slides, do so, but remember that if it's not a standard font it's prudent to take the font files along with you. If you are forced to switch PC's etc, the other machine may not have it readily installed, in which case font will revert to a standard font leaving your presentation looking like a disaster area, and you scrambling to fix it or worse down load the font! So, take it along.

Always carry your presentation and related documents in a thumb drive as well

It's always good to have a backup or even a backup of a backup! It's smart to have all your related files and presentation on an external source, like a thumb drive, some even have it on cloud or uploaded on YouTube. Just know you must create backups, and these must work if your PC or Wi-Fi connection fails.

Chapter 6

Perfecting your craft

“Trust in your craft enough to admire it, study it, perfect it, breath it. Never stop getting better at whatever it is that you love to do” – Reyna Bidy

Excellence is never an act, but a habit. Since all humans are creatures of habit, we are what we repeatedly do. It becomes really easy to master or perfect your craft if you are fully immersed in what you do. Build up critical factors and tasks around what you hope to achieve. Build these into your rituals for success.

Upgrading your vocabulary

While vocabulary is not something, we often focus on when we speak.

When writing we pay heed to switch out words, so it does not seem repetitive, however when we speak, we tend to be a tad nonchalant. However, the vocabulary people use reveals a lot about them, where they are from, their level of education: or the industry they work in. It's surprising how hardwired people are and pick these out almost instantly. The trick is to speak succinctly and clearly, your vocabulary does not need to be immensely academic or jargon heavy and use vocabulary to impart rather than impress. Here is how you can improve your vocabulary game: without sounding pretentious.

Read: invest time in reading, it's amazing the effects reading can have as a vocabulary pick-me-up. Obviously, the type of book you read matters but in general pick a book that is interesting and challenging at the same time.

Look up the word and used it: When reading, our tendency is to encounter a new word, read it and in relation to its content decipher what it means. However, as a vocabulary growing exercise, make the effort to look up the meaning, listen to how it's pronounced, and immediately form a sentence with the word. Tedious? – Yes.

Effective – Totally! A good shortcut would be to subscribe to a site which introduces a word a day – like:

<https://www.thesaurus.com/> or www.merriam-webster.com
for a quick fix if you are pressed for time.

Watching movies: A great way to see how language and vocabulary is applied. Again, this is subject to the kind of movies you choose, and if you are watching a movie with the intention of improving your vocabulary then you need to choose wisely. However, the pros are that you will identify new words, their application, effective use as well as accents if it's a foreign language. Also, please follow the look up point on the new words you encounter in movies to try and remember to build the word in.

Perfecting your grammar

Grammar in any language lays the foundation for effective communication: granted grammar in some languages is hard to perfect, it's important to keep upskilling yourself in this area, as good grammar enhances language accuracy, thereby enhancing the effectivity of your message. The pros of brushing up on your grammar is that it makes you a logical thinker and with practice you improve your language capability. Remember communication is a learned skill and an essential if you are taking up public speaking. Proper use of grammar is a sign of respect, both for speakers and listeners. On the flipside do consider that poor grammar can reflect poorly on you and could irritate your audience as this could be a distraction. While points mentioned in vocabulary are also relevant to grammar building, ample and more focused resources are available online to improve yourself!

Recording yourself and critiquing yourself

Practice makes perfect. In order to perfect your craft practice is key. However, to practice isn't to merely say your speech a dozen times over. Practice like anything can be done systematically by following a few tips and tricks. An important point to remember when perfecting your craft is to record and critique yourself. Here are a few tips when recording and critiquing yourself.

- **Record yourself in a manner that you can observe your every move clearly:** Don't your video yourself up close. Doing this makes it unclear as to how you utilize the stage and how best you make use of the space you have. So, when recording yourself do so by telling someone who is in the last row to do so. This way you will be able to clearly see how you utilize the stage. As you would be able to get a clear view of the entire stage from the back as opposed to when you record from the front row where you only see part of the stage. This will allow you to identify if your utilizing the entire space of the stage effectively or just a part of the stage.

- **Don't record the moment you start speaking, start recording from the moment you are about to enter the stage:** Stage presence is key to a good speech. In order to deliver a good speech one's persona must be felt right from the very start till the very end. So don't start recording just as you are about to speak but from the moment you're being invited on stage till your speech and don't stop recording the instant you finish your speech but keep rolling till you leave the stage. This will enable you to identify how confidently you walked in and how confidently you left the stage. By observing this you will be able to rectify your flaws or better your strengths.

- **Evaluate yourself:** Asking for feedback from an audience is great and is important. Yet one must also be able to reflect on one's own speech and self-critique. In order to evaluate yourself you must record yourself and once you have done this, first just listen to yourself and observe without criticizing or commenting on your speech. Simply listen and observe. The second time around don't watch the video but listen intently to your speech and question your delivery in terms of how loud / soft you were? How your vocal variations were? Was it used appropriately and make a list of all the things you did right and all that you didn't do too well. I believe that during this process it is best to have a copy of your speech and highlight the areas where you could have done better. It would also be helpful to write what exactly those flaws were. Finally watch yourself, observe your body language. Did you look smart and confident? Did you utilize the stage appropriately? Did your actions complement your words? By doing this you yourself will be able to identify your own flaws and better yet validate the opinions of your audience.

- **Record the audience:** While it is important to record yourself in order to identify your strengths and weaknesses recording the audience will enable you to identify the impact your speech created and how the audience reacted to your speech. So place your phone on a tripod in front of the audience (Not too close though) and record the audience. Start recording the audience from the moment you enter stage till you leave the stage. This way you can observe the audiences' reaction right from the very beginning till the very end. When you are watching the video, you need to be like Sherlock Holmes carefully, intently observing and deducing their every action. As Sherlock would say never trust general impressions but concentrate yourself upon details. So carefully watch audience, observe their every action and see how they react and then deduce how well you would have delivered your speech.

- **Ask the audience for feedback:** At the end of the day how well you believed you delivered your speech is inconsequential. What matters is what the audience thinks of your speech. So, ask the audience. The three fundamental questions to be asked I believe are:

- Was the message of your speech clear? The key to a good speech is to have a good solid message. And this message needs to come across clearly for your speech to be a good one.

- The next question to ask the audience is if they enjoyed your speech? A good speech is like baking a cake you may have added all the ingredients but the cake just doesn't taste good despite having all the ingredients, it is the same when delivering a speech, you may have had a core message, a good opening and a good end but the audience may not have enjoyed your speech. So in order to figure out if they enjoyed your speech you need to ask the audience if they enjoyed your speech.
Ask and you shall find!

- The final question to ask is what the audience thinks you can do to be better? Different audiences have different opinions on how one speaks. Asking the audience what they think you can do to be better or rather what you could have done better will enable you to identify what your mistakes were. So always ask!

A point to keep in mind is that you are being recorded. By this what I mean is that you must be aware of the place in which you are giving your speech and from where you would be recorded. By identifying this you will be able to adjust your voice accordingly thereby ensuring that you do not sound too loud nor too soft. Another point to keep in mind is to constantly review these recordings and evaluations in order to keep track of your progress. One must also to do this continuously.

Watching others and learning from them

One of the best ways of learning is through observation, pretty much everything that we learn is through observation. Even developing a skill such as becoming a competent communicator can be done through observation. An effective way to perfect your craft is to watch others and learn from them. Here are a few tips you can use to perfect your craft:

- **Watch videos**

With the internet at our very fingertips almost anything and everything can be learnt so why not use it to polish our skills in public speaking! I find that watching videos of competent communicators to be extremely helpful. Former president Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Simon Sinek even legendary speakers such as Martin Luther King can truly teach a lot in terms of how to write a good speech as well as how to deliver a speech. When watching these videos, it will prove useful to note down each speaker's strengths as well as their weaknesses at the same time it will be helpful to note down how best you can utilize their strengths to your advantage. Watch a variety of videos, we all have certain preferences when it comes to listening to speeches yet don't listen to one particular type of speech, listen to a variety. Watch humorous speeches, listen to informative speeches. By doing this one can learn how to approach a certain audience as well as how to effectively deliver speeches. There are even videos and online classes such as the ones on coursera about speech writing and how to deliver a winning speech.

- **Take notes**

Note taking is extremely helpful. I believe that carrying a notebook, be it for a competition or for a public speaking event will prove to be very useful. There is, I believe no method of taking notes per say however, the fundamental points to keep in mind when taking notes is that one must evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of a speaker. Sometimes when going for competitions or events especially we are always looking for things we can add to better our speech and may tend to ignore identifying the weaknesses. Yet every speaker has a few flaws, and by identifying these flaws we can ensure that we do not repeat those mistakes in our future speakers. It is also vital to refer these notes constantly to not forget what has been learnt and to constantly keep refreshing ones' memory on the things that one has learnt.

Go for events and competitions

The atmosphere when watching someone speak live as opposed to when watching someone on YouTube speak is rather different. So once in a while, go for an event such as TEDX and it will prove helpful in identifying and learning things such as how one can connect with the audience. By being a part of the audience and being physically present, one will be able to understand how precisely a speaker should make an audience feel. It is also important to participate in competitions. Participating in competitions gives you the ability to put into practice what you have learnt. At the same time, it gives you the opportunity to be evaluated by good competent communicators. Thereby, enabling you to further develop your skills in communication.

Be open to diversity

Each speaker has their own style of speaking which comprises of its own strengths and weaknesses. So be open to diversity. Don't only search for people who speak "like" you, instead listen to a variety of different speeches with different styles compared to yours. You must be able to choose the strengths of each speaker and use them to your advantage. In order to do this, one must be open to diversity, and not simply search for people who sound "like" you. Listening to a variety of speeches will widen your horizons and allow you to further strengthen your style of communication. So, invite diversity to your speeches and use diversity to better your speech.

Apply what you learn

It is important that as much as we learn and gather knowledge to apply that knowledge. There is no point in knowledge being gathered if it is not going to be made the maximum use of. So, whatever you learn by watching others use it to grow and better yourself as a communicator.

You could start writing a speech every week, you can practice that speech every week as well. This way you will constantly keep growing. You will also constantly be applying whatever you learn. So, utilize your knowledge because just like Anton Chekhov says "Knowledge is of no value if you don't put it to practice".

Finding that Perfect Coach

Everyone needs a coach in whatever field you are in. Professionals, like athletes, need someone who's on their side, who understands which issues need attention, and recognizes the shortest distance from point A to point B.

A presentation coach is especially invaluable when you suddenly find yourself in the cross hairs of the classic issues of public speaking - when you are facing a high-stakes presentation that will propel you to a higher stage or may affect everyone around you including your team.

There are 2 different types of speech coaches. You may sometimes find it in one person if you are lucky!

1. **Content Coach:** This type of coach specializes in helping you write, structure, and wordsmith your speech. Writing a speech includes a lot of work - Refer Section on Organizing your speech for more information.
2. **Delivery Coach:** Once you've got a remarkable speech, it's time to work on your delivery skills and stagecraft. A delivery coach ideally is from an acting or theatre background. They work out the elements of gestures, vocal variety, accents and staging your talk.

If you decide you need a coach - identify the one that works for you and your specific needs. You should speak to friends, colleagues, or even speakers you've met before and you feel may work accordingly to your style of speaking. Ask them for recommendations and interview at least 3 people before you decide on who is your right fear. Consider it like a job interview because they need to make you comfortable.

Remember, word of mouth trumps the unknown company that manages to get the top end presenter.

Things to consider:

- Does the coach practice tough love when you need a gentler approach? In order to achieve real, lasting results, it's critical to identify the approach you will respond best to and identify a public speaking coach who embodies that approach
- Speaking coaches always have a trusted model on how to coach people to be great speakers. They may even have qualifications such as Toastmasters or CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) or years of experience training the best speakers in your Area. They should clearly be able to watch you speak and identify your strengths and points of weakness, evaluate your progress and give you learning points on how to improve

- A cricket coach and a swimming coach both improve athletes' performance, but you wouldn't hire a swimming coach to train your batsman. And the same is true for a public speaking coach: Look for someone who understands the specific pressures of the industry and the needs of the audiences you engage with. It is preferred if your speaking coach has some business acumen and so can help you in a more practical sense when you are putting together presentations. This may not mean they should be directors of major leading companies in your area
- Who has this coach worked with in the past? Look at their past clients if possible and watch their speeches to see if they have made a difference. Talk to them if possible and see how they feel about their model. If you are not getting the answers you want - it may be too good to be true
- Finally, perhaps most importantly, hire someone you jive with. Someone who you can laugh with and who you know is going to give you solid feedback in a way that builds you up and not tear you down.

Chapter 7

Some Final Tips

Ethos, Pathos and Logos

What the ancient Greeks considered critical for good 'communication' holds true to date: and is relevant for speeches/presentations too.

The Greeks spoke of 3 aspects :

- Logos : The 'Logic and Reason' round what you say
- Ethos : The 'Emotional Connect' you have with your audience
- Pathos : The 'Credibility' you have as a speaker (around the topic or subject you have undertaken)

Most of the time, we tend to over rely on ONE aspect of a speech/ presentation. Those of us who are more 'logical' stick to facts and figures and knowledge sharing. Those of us who are more 'relationship based' tend to do storytelling, and ensure we 'engage' the audience - but don't have enough content or 'depth' in our speeches. Those of us who are slightly more egotistical than the others tend to focus on who we ARE and therefore over emphasize our experiences - generally with the immortal phrase 'when I was...' hoping to establish absolute credibility in what we are saying.

So, never get tempted to over use any one of them: rather, include ALL THREE 'aspects' in to the speeches / presentations you craft :

Some things to watch out for

Often, there are lots of 'little things' that make a huge impact. Now that you know the basics, here are some things that generally get blindsided.

Here are a few 'little' points to consider:

- Switch off your phone: it is awful when your phone starts ringing during YOUR speech or presentation. Even if it is on a silent mode, the mic will pick up on it, and make a rather awful noise - breaking the impact of the speech you prepped so hard for. So, switch off your phone.
- Be there early: Murphy's Law DOES apply here - so, make sure you are early, and be able to have a cup of tea, relax and watch the event unfold rather than turning up breathless just in time for your speech. Being there early also ensures you can test the equipment and the layout yourself.
- Develop your own style: NEVER get tempted to 'copy' others who are really good speakers. Take ideas from them for sure - but MAKE IT YOUR OWN. There is nothing more awful than a 'wannabe'
 - Remember the audiences you speak to - keep a notebook for your speaking events: Far too often, if you are well received, you are invited back. There is no greater mistake to make than to repeat the jokes or the stories you shared with the same audience twice. So, keep a tab of the speeches you make - and ensure you continuously have new material to work with.

Picking yourself after a bad day

It is important to understand that no matter how good you are: you are bound to have your 'off day.' So, if it hasn't happened to you yet - count yourself lucky - but also know that it is only a matter of time till it DOES !

It is important to ensure that you do NOT allow a 'bad day' to ruin your passion for speaking: but it is ALSO important to ensure you do NOT negate bad feedback as 'the audience's fault!' Whenever things go wrong, always get back to basics - and ask some fundamental questions : and ensure you are able to learn from it and enable it to GROW you as a speaker.

- See if you have understood the 'brief' and worked accordingly
- Understand where the issues were - in the content, in the relevance, in the delivery or in something around the logistics like a venue related aspect
 - Learn to let it go - and not allow emotions to take over - and overwhelm you
 - Put feedback into context - NEVER change EVERYTHING you do based on ONE bad feedback
 - Give it time. Sometimes, taking a break and immersing yourself in something else helps
- Talk about it: specially with family or friends. Talking always help thin the 'pain'

Some books and articles to read

Some awesome speeches and presentations to get inspiration from Ok... Now that you are done with the basics, and ready to rock and roll, why not watch a few videos we thought were truly remarkable - both from content perspective and also delivery style.

Enjoy!

EPILOGUE

A skill is something you can get better at

The moment you stop looking at public speaking as an inherent ability that some of us possess and some of us don't, and instead look at it as something to be adopted, learned and crafted, you are truly on your way.

Rarely do people say; 'public speaking ability', instead we more often than not, hear them say 'public speaking skill'. It is yet another skill just like walking, running, driving along with the numerous other skills, that you had zero ability to carry out at some point in your life, but now probably happens as second nature.

If we could put down the only key differentiator between an established public speaker and beginner, we would undoubtedly say it's practice. If you look at it in an overall sense; the major problems people face when they start have been framed, the knowledge is out there, the resources are available, the support system exist. All there is to do for you, if you want to truly hone this skill is to practice and practice consistently.

The occasion, stage, audience or scale doesn't matter, if an opportunity arises, you take it and the rest as they say, will be history.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Training and also the organization's founder member. His areas of expertise lies with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



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Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL, Anton won accolades for his superlative work there; and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional Clients.



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Fahad Farook is a Certified Transformative Coach (ICF), International Trainer, and Motivation Specialist who has carried out numerous training and consultancy projects in the USA, Australia, Japan, India, Dubai, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Fahad is a CIMA (UK) passed finalist, although he has stayed away from the management accounting profession as his passion lies in the areas of Individual Development, Transformational Coaching, Habit Building, Team Dynamics, Interpersonal Relationships, Personal Brand Development and Communication Skills. Fahad is also an energetic emcee, involved in a range of events including dinner dances, awards nights, pageants and other corporate events.



SAFRA ANVER

Safra is celebrated as the convener of the hugely successful TEDx Colombo; possibly Sri Lanka's most looked forward to corporate event. She is also an advocate for social causes and runs her own boutique event management company. Safra is also a Toastmaster; and has held several positions within Toastmasters.

Safra's unique insights to how TEDx speakers are groomed to be 'awesome' on stage enables her to groom Senior and Middle Managers in Public Speaking and overcoming their fear of the 'stage'. She is also uniquely gifted in being able to patiently persist until the desired level of perfection is achieved.



SHAAKYA NATHAVITHARANA

Shaakya is a full time student, reading for her Bachelors in Psychology. She completed her secondary education at Methodist College Colombo 3, where she was voted in as a House Vice Captain a member of the school committee. Shaakya has secured places in 3 national speaking competitions, and is a member of the Kandy ToastMasters Club. When not writing assignments and prepping for exams, Shaakya reads, writes poetry, cooks, swims and plays 'army' with her 10 year old brother.



TATUM DE SOUZA

Tatum started her career in the banking sector, working both Locally and Internationally, culminating as a Corporate Relationship Manager. Her 18 year career includes exposure in the areas of Sales and Marketing, Content Creation, Creative Writing, HR, Event Management & Social Media Management, covering industries such as Hospitality, Telco, Recruitment and Education.