

Course Five

How to Become a Powerhouse Speaker

Making Impressive “Power Points” with Your Audience

Free Lesson. This is Lesson 2 from the course. The Number One Cause of Fear of Public Speaking

After this free lesson team members will:

- Know the number one cause for fear of public speaking
- Rehearse perfectly for a perfect delivery
- Command the room before you speak with the “Grounding” strategy

If you fear public speaking, believe it or not, you can fully control the number one factor that causes it. Can you guess what it is?

The number one cause of the fear of public speaking is lack of preparation, which is something you can fully control. Take the time to practice and rehearse your content. The more time you spend with your material, the more automatic and familiar it will be during your delivery. When you are well rehearsed, your confidence will automatically increase, and nervous behaviors will decrease. It is reasonable to feel nervous. Most people do not recognize the nervous behaviors of a speaker when they have them under control, but they do recognize when someone is poorly prepared.

The signs of a poorly prepared speaker are obvious.

- Struggles with the content
- Turns body toward the screen for visual help or depends on handouts
- Fumbles over notes and presentation objects
- Rushes introduction and abruptly starts into the presentation

- Displays physical signs, such as shaking, thin voice, or poor breath control

You can have full control of being prepared. When I work with clients who are afraid of public speaking, they say it is hard to find time to practice. If speaking before others makes you feel overwhelmed, then find time to practice. It will make a massive difference in your confidence in delivering the information. There is nothing worse than being in front of a group and wishing you had prepared more. At that moment, it's too late. Find time to review your material and have full control over the number one fear of public speaking.

The First Five Minutes

Stating the obvious, if you want to deliver a sharp and effective presentation, you must know your content well. What is unfair is that the first five minutes is when you are the most nervous as you settle into your talk and it is during those first five minutes when the audience is judging the quality of your talk and whether you are competent, organized, and worth the time to listen to or whether you have leadership skills. The first five minutes is very important because your ability to communicate is being established.

Your introduction is a small part of your presentation, but if it is well rehearsed, it will begin your presentation on a very strong note—and you have full control over this. When you walk to the front of the room, you should walk with big, quick steps to burn off some of that nervous energy. Then when you turn to see your audience, you should take a moment to plant your feet firmly on the ground before you speak and tell your brain that you feel your feet. The small pause is very important for establishing your leadership positioning. Then take a full diaphragm breath and begin to introduce yourself with a well-prepared introduction and your presentation topic. These small tasks won't be seen by the audience, and you will start your presentation on a strong note.

If you begin with a strong introduction, you will set the tone for a very effective delivery. You will begin your presentation feeling more confident. This will help to manage nervous anxiety and create a more positive experience for

delivering presentations. There is a method to a strong delivery. Remember that the first five minutes set the tone for your credibility and leadership positioning. You have full control of how smoothly this goes.

Ground Yourself for a Strong Start

When people are nervous, they often go to the front of the room quickly and begin speaking without ever taking a moment to ground themselves first. As a result, the presentation does not begin smoothly. The first few minutes of the talk appears disjointed, you sense this and your nervous energy builds. To avoid that, ground yourself first.

This is how you ground yourself. Walk to the front of the room with intention. Your shoulders should be back, head up and looking confident. Take big steps, and move your arms to burn out any nervous energy. When you get to the front of the room, feel your feet. Tell yourself, “I feel my feet.” Then take a full diaphragm breath as a short pause and say to yourself, “I’m going to crush it”. Then begin with a strong, confident sounding introduction with solid intonation. Taking that short pause is “grounding yourself.” That one-to-two-seconds will not be noticed by the audience and it will allow you to have a moment to collect your thoughts and begin speaking with a full diaphragm breath. By taking that brief moment to ground yourself, you will begin your presentation on a strong note, looking confident and you will look well prepared and that you belong in front of a group.

What Can Weaken an Introduction?

It seems that from the beginning of careers, we have always done introductions. They are usually done in meetings and before delivering information. The problem is (and see if you do this) that they are often done with a consistent upspeak, even if upspeak does not exist in your speech patterns. Often, people will up-speak on the last syllable of their first and last name, department name, or presentation title. With too much upspeak, the introduction sounds whimsical and lacks authority. This is extremely ineffective because the upspeak behavior positions you to speak with thinner and higher

pitch tones and sends nonverbal signals that you are not confident or positive that what you are saying is reliable.

Practice your introduction often to shape out any upspeak. Practice in your car whenever you have a moment. Breaking the habit of upspeak for introductions actually takes time if the behavior of upspeak is a habit. It could take as long as two to three weeks to break the habit. It will take time to end your statements in a lower tone and eliminate this behavior from your introduction. Be very intentional using the speech stairs strategy to end your name and title on the lower step. When you can deliver a strong introduction at the beginning of your presentation, you are positioning yourself to deliver a strong talk and feel more confident from the start.

Can You Rehearse Too Much?

You actually can rehearse too much. Rehearse your content so you can be conversational with it, like a storyteller. You should not have to look at slides to know what to say. Be familiar with charts and graphs. The goal is to be conversational with your topic. Avoid putting notes in the note section of the PowerPoint because you will gravitate toward them and be stiff and awkward with your delivery. In the beginning, practice your presentation frequently; then practice it less once you are familiar with it. I recommend practicing once the night before, but I don't recommend practicing the day of. You can rehearse too much. Practicing too much can cause you to get lost in your thoughts and not be sure of what you said or didn't say during your delivery, which can cause you to get nervous and fumble. Rehearse, but don't rehearse so much that you lose your spontaneity. Know your content and be spontaneous with it to be more of a storyteller. Your audience will find you interesting and appreciate your delivery.

Thank you for participating in this free lesson. I hope you found it insightful and helpful. I wish you great success!

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