

SPEAKING TIPS: KNOW HOW TO CONNECT

Know how to connect. When you speak, you are speaking to people-so connect with them. Be friendly. Use eye contact, comfortable body language, and gestures to keep their attention on you. Setting your key points down on note cards or in an outline works better than writing the speech (when you read a speech, you're looking down and talking to the paper, not the people). Use pauses in your speaking, to let the audience and yourself breathe for a moment.

Know your audience. Use language, examples and stories that make sense to your listeners. Know what level of experience they have with your topic, so you don't talk down to them or go over their heads. And relate your topic to what they care about, so you can show that it has meaning for them.

Public Speaking: Seven Things You Should Know

Know yourself. If you're not comfortable with public speaking, don't try to start by giving a speech to a hundred people. Start small, and gradually challenge yourself, through speaking in small groups; talking in larger meetings; making short public presentations; then finally giving speeches. Get used to groups of people wanting to hear what you have to say. Always use language that you're comfortable with, and talk about things you know.

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Know the situation. Different situations call for different speaking styles-casual or formal, brief or in-depth, funny or passionate. Fit your message to the moment. Also, be sure you know how much time you have to speak-and plan on taking 25% less (speeches always go long).

Know your goals. What do you want to

Speaking with a purpose

Different speeches have different goals, so you should shape your message in different ways.

Information: Decide on a few (less than five) main points you want people to remember. Repeat them often. Say them in different ways. Use stories and examples the audience will remember. If you use numbers or statistics, interpret them so they make a point or tell a story. Consider giving handouts that the audience can take with them.

Persuasion: Assume that your audience is a group of smart, decent people with common sense. Use reasonable arguments and passionate examples to connect with both their hearts and their heads. Be positive. Avoid negative tactics, like shame, criticism, anger or fear-these often backfire on the speaker.

Setting a mood: A festival, a rally, a memorial service-each situation uses public speaking to help a group express a particular feeling. In these situations, speak to the audience's hearts, not their heads. Don't tell your audience how to feel-show them, through your own words and body language. And use stories, memories,

accomplish by speaking-to provide information? To change people's minds? To get them to act? Be clear on your goals, and shape the speech to achieve them. Generally, it's a good idea to keep to a few, straightforward goals-don't try to do too much.

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Know your message. Don't try to do too much in one speech or presentation. Decide on a few key points, and repeat them frequently, to help your audience remember them.

Practice. You've never learned how to do anything hard without practice, and speaking is the same way. Practice the experience of speaking, by frequently talking in groups or meetings. Practice a speech or presentation several times before you give it-practice with your group, with your friends or family, and in front of the mirror. Practicing often feels awkward, but nothing else will build your skills and confidence. When you stand up to speak, you don't want to be stumbling through something for the very first time-you want to be delivering a message that you've already rehearsed. You owe that to your audience-and to yourself.

and examples to bring out that feeling in them.

Getting people to act: This is one of the most challenging goals for a speaker. It's very important to know your audience and how to motivate them. You must also be very clear on what action they should take. Your speech has three parts: making it clear to them what they should do; showing them how they can do it; and helping them understand why they should act. Get them to picture themselves taking that action. Remember, you have to make them care enough so that they'll follow through even when your speech is done.

Lastly, take your time and greet people as they arrive. Get excited about your speech