

## **TED TALKS: THE OFFICIAL TED GUIDE TO PUBLIC SPEAKING BY CHRIS ANDERSON | BOOK SUMMARY & PDF**

TED Talks by Chris Anderson is an encouraging and relatable guide on how to give a good talk. Anderson examines the importance of public speaking and the joy it brings to both the speaker and the audience. TED Talks offers ways to plan and deliver a talk and to gain some more confidence in public speaking. Using examples from some inspirational TED talkers such as Jamie Oliver and Bill Clinton, this book is easy to read and full of useful advice, tips and tricks.

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There is no one way to give a great talk. The world of knowledge is far too big and the range of speakers and audiences is far too varied for that. This book doesn't offer rules prescribing a single way to speak. Instead, it offers a set of tools designed to encourage variety.

Your only real job in giving a talk is to have something valuable to say, and to say it authentically in your own unique way.

Public speaking is the key to unlocking empathy, stirring excitement, sharing knowledge and insights, and promoting a shared dream. Done right, a talk can electrify a room and transform an audience's worldview.

### **PRESENTATION LITERACY: THE SKILL YOU CAN BUILD**

You're nervous right? But, with the right mindset, you can use your fear as an incredible asset. It can be the driver that will persuade you to prepare for a talk properly. No matter how little confidence you might have today in your ability to speak in public, there are things you can do to turn that around.

Your goal is not to be Winston Churchill or Nelson Mandela. It's to be you. If you're an artist, be an artist; don't try to be an academic. Just be you. You don't have to raise a crowd to its feet with a thunderous oration. Conversational sharing can work just as well. In fact, for a lot of audiences, it's better.

Presentation literacy isn't an option extra for the few. It's a core skill for the twenty-first century. If you can commit to being the authentic you, I am certain that you will be capable of tapping into the ancient art that is wired inside us. You simply have to pluck up the courage to try.

## **IDEA BUILDING: THE GIFT IN EVERY GREAT TALK**

Your number one mission as a speaker is to take something that matters deeply to you and to rebuild it inside of the minds of your listeners. We'll call that something an idea. A mental construct that they can hold on to, walk away with, value, and in some sense be changed by.

### **Start with the idea**

An idea is anything that can change how people see the world. It can be a simple how-to. Or a human insight illustrated with the power of a story. A beautiful image. Or an event you wish might happen in the future. Even just a reminder of what matters most in life.

Many people massively underestimate the value of their work, and their learning, and their insights. More likely, you have far more in you worth sharing than you're even aware of.

In any case, there's one thing you have that no one else in the world has: Your own first-person experience of life. People love stories and everyone can learn to tell a good story. Even if the lesson you might draw from the story is familiar, that's OK.

### **Procrastinate no more**

You can use the opportunity of public speaking as motivation to dive more deeply into some topic. We all suffer, to a greater or lesser degree, from some form of procrastination or laziness.

So if you think you might have something but aren't sure you really know enough yet, use this public-speaking opportunity as an incentive to truly find out.

### **The astonishing efficacy of language**

OK, you have something meaningful to say, and your goal is to re-create your core idea inside your audience's minds. How do you do that?

Humans have developed a technology that makes it possible to re-create things in a group of strangers minds. it's called language and it makes your brain do incredible things.

You can only use the tools that your audience has access to. If you start with only YOUR language, YOUR concepts and YOUR assumptions, you will fail. So start with theirs.

### **The journey**

The speaker, like any tour guide, must begin where the audience is as far as understanding or knowledge goes. And they must ensure no impossible leaps or inexplicable shifts in direction is made.

## **COMMON TRAPS: FOUR TALK STYLES TO AVOID**

1. The Sales Pitch. Some speakers get it backwards, they plan to take, not to give. Reputation is everything. You want to build your reputation as a generous person, bringing something wonderful to your audience, not as a tedious self-promoter.
2. The Ramble. If you're going to gift people with a wondrous idea, you first have to spend some preparation time. Rambling is not an option. The audience's time matters and a talk should not meander with no clear direction.
3. The Org Bore. An organization is fascinating to those who work for it - and deeply boring to almost everyone else. Any talk framed around the exception history of your company or NGO or lab, may be interesting to you and your team. But alas, we don't work there. You have to focus on the nature of the work that you do and the power of the ideas that infuse it. Not on the org itself, or it's products.
4. The Inspiration Performance. Absolutely one of the most powerful things you can experience when watching a talk is inspiration. But it's a power that must be handled with great care. More and more speakers are attracted to the drug of audience adoration. But inspiration has to be earned. It can't be performed. Inspiration is an audience response to authenticity, courage, selfless work and genuine wisdom.

## **THE THROUGHLINE: WHAT'S YOUR POINT?**

The point of a talk is to say something meaningful. But it's amazing how many talks never quite do that. They leave the audience with nothing they can hold on to.

The number one reason for this is that the speaker never had a proper plan for the talk as a whole. It may be constructed from bullet points or even sentence, but there is no throughline - the connecting theme that ties together each narrative element.

This doesn't mean every talk can only cover one topic, or tell a single story. It just means that all the pieces need to connect. In the journey metaphor, the throughline traces the path that the journey takes. Ensuring that there are no impossible leaps. And at the end, the destination, is reached by all.

### **How do you figure out your through line?**

Find out as much as you can about the audience.

The biggest obstacle in identifying a through line is the idea that there is too much to say and not enough time. TED talks are a maximum of 18 minutes.

Don't condense your talk to include all the things you want to say, just by cutting them all back to make them shorter. Overstuffed equals under explained. You have to:

a. Show why it matters, what's the question, problem or experience? b. Flesh out each point you make with real examples, stories and facts.

You must slash back the range of topics you will cover to a single, connected theme - a through line that can be properly developed. No matter your time limit, you will only cover as much ground as you can dive into in sufficient depth to be compelling. Build a structure so that every element in your talk is somehow linked to your 'idea' or through line.

### **CONNECTION: GET PERSONAL**

1. Make eye contact, right from the start
2. Show vulnerability
3. Make 'em laugh - but not squirm
4. Park your ego
5. Tell a story

## **NARRATION**

When it comes to sharing a story from the stage, emphasise the following 4 things; 1. Build it on a character your audience can empathise with 2. Build tension 3. Offer the right level of detail. 4. End with a satisfying resolution; funny, moving or revealing.

Stories resonate deeply in every human. By giving your talk as a story or series of related stories you can greatly increase your connection with the listeners. But, please: let it mean something.

## **EXPLANATION: HOW TO EXPLAIN TOUGH CONCEPTS**

The core elements of a masterful explanation: 1. Start where the audience are 2. Light the fire called curiosity 3. Build in concepts one by one 4. Use metaphors 5. Use examples.

Sometimes, this isn't easy. We all suffer from a cognitive bias that means we find it hard to remember what it feels like not to know something that we, ourselves know well. You have to start where the audience is.

## **PERSUASION**

Persuasion means convincing an audience that the way they currently see the world isn't quite right. And when this works, it's thrilling for both speaker and audience. It requires taking down the parts that aren't working, and rebuilding something better.

### **Priming**

Priming is a way of nudging someone in your direction. This is the key to promoting that worldview shift, prime listeners' minds in several different ways before getting to the main argument.

### **Reason**

Once people have been primed, it's much easier to make your argument with Reason. Reason is capable of delivering a conclusion at a whole different level of certainty than any other mental tool.

For the process to work, it must be broken down into small, convincing steps. If X is true, dear fiends, then, clearly, Y follows (because every X implies a Y).

- Inject humour early on
- Add an anecdote
- Offer vivid examples
- Recruit third-party validation
- Use powerful visuals

## **REVELATION: TAKE MY BREATH AWAY**

What's the most direct way of gifting an idea to an audience? Simply SHOW it to them.

1. The Wonder Walk. Based on the revelation of a succession of images or wonder moments. Walk the audience through your work, or something your passionate about, one piece at a time. Slides, photos or video.
2. The Dynamic Demo. Technology, an invention or a brand-new process. We need to see it working, we need a demonstration.
3. The Dreamscape. Dreams can be shared with images, with sketches, with demos or just with words. Paint a bold picture of the alternative future you desire & do so in a way that others will also desire that future.

## **VISUALS: THOSE SLIDES HURT!**

Ask yourself, whether you need photos, illustrations, graphs, infographics? Slides can move at least a little bit of the attention away from the speaker and on to the screen. Slides can, sometimes, get in the way.

There are three categories to strong visuals: 1. Revelation 2. Explanatory Power 3. Aesthetic Appeal

Limit each slide to a single core idea. And remember, the main purpose of visuals is to share things that you can't communicate with words. Don't double up.

## **SCRIPTING: TO MEMORIZE OR NOT TO MEMORIZE?**

One of the first key decisions you need to make is whether you will:

a. Write out the talk in full as a complete script, OR b. have a clearly worked-out structure and speak in the moment to each of your points.

### **Scripted**

The advantage of scripts is that you can make the best possible use of your available time. But, unless you deliver it in the right way, the talk may not feel fresh.

1. Know the talk well so it doesn't SOUND scripted 2. Refer to the script, but compensate by looking up and making eye contact 3. Condense the script to bullet points.

### **Unscripted**

It can sound fresh, alive, real and like you are thinking out loud. But, it is important to not be unprepared. Problems that occur are; 1. That suddenly, in the moment, you can't find the words to explain a key concept. 2. That you leave out something crucial. 3. That you overrun your time slot.

## **RUN THROUGHS - REHEARSE**

There's a very simple, obvious tool that you can use to improve your talk. Rehearse, repeatedly. Do it multiple times, in front of people you trust. Work on it until it's comfortably under your allocated time slot. Insist on honest feedback from your rehearsal audience. Your goal is to end up with a talk whose structure is second nature to you so that you can concentrate on meaning what you say.

## **OPEN AND CLOSE**

### **Four ways to start strong**

1. Deliver a dose of drama
2. Ignite curiosity
3. Show a compelling slide, video, or object
4. Tease, but don't give it away

### **Seven ways to end with power**

1. Camera pull back - the bigger picture
2. Call to action for the audience
3. Ask for personal commitment

4. Create a vision of what might be
5. Satisfying encapsulation
6. Narrative symmetry - link back to the beginning
7. Lyrical inspiration - poetic language

## **MENTAL PREP: HOW DO I CONTROL MY NERVES?**

- Use your fear as motivation
- Breathe
- Drink Water
- Avoid an empty stomach
- Remember the power of vulnerability
- Find 'friends' in the audience
- Have a backup plan
- Focus on what you're talking about

## **SETUP**

- Have a comfort back up - a script or full set of notes on a table at the side or back to the stage. Knowing that they are there helps.
- Use your slides as guides
- Have hand-held note cards
- Smartphones or tablets - can be used to replace multiple cards or notes

## **VOICE AND PRESENCE: GIVE YOUR WORDS THE LIFE THEY DESERVE**

Speak with meaning. Use variety in your voice based on the meaning you're trying to convey. Use pauses and changes of pace. If your talk is scripted, underline words and phrases you want to give emphasis to, and apply a change in tone for these. And don't be afraid to let emotions out a little as you speak.

Pay attention to how fast you're speaking. Aside from changes in pace, plan to speak at your natural, conversational pace.

## **Body language**



The simplest way to give a talk powerfully is just to stand tall, out equal weight on both feet and use your hands and arms to naturally amplify what you are saying. Some speakers, prefer to walk the stage, and this can work too, provided the walking is relaxed, not forced.

Avoid shifting nervously from led to let, or walk backwards and forwards in a rocking motion.

## **FORMAT INNOVATION**

If you want your talk to truly start out from the crowd, there are many options open to you to be innovative. All of these need handling with extreme care. Done wrong, they can seem gimmicked. But done right, they can kick a talk up to a whole new level.

1. Dramatic props. If you have something you can powerfully, legitimately use, this can be a great tool.
2. Panoramic screens. The cinematic feel of these presentations is incredible. But, harder for an online audience to fully appreciate.
3. Multisense stimulation. Beyond 2D, chefs have filled the hall with aromas of a dish being cooked, or distributing samples for audience to sniff and taste. Limited to just a handful of topics though.
4. Illustrated interview. An interview can be a fine alternative to a talk.
5. Added musical soundtrack. Music intensifies every emotion.
6. Dual presenters. High risk, with two presenters, preparation is much more complex, but, there is possibility here.
7. New debate formats. If you are going to have two people on stage, it's usually more interesting when they are on opposite sides.
8. Surprise appearances. Works best when there is a real contribution made by the special guest.
9. Virtual presenters.

## **OVER TO YOU**

Whatever it is you pursue, if you truly go after it, predict two things: - Yes, you'll find a meaningful form of happiness - You'll discover something worth saying.

And then what? Well then, of course, you must SHARE it, using all the passion, skills and determination you can muster.