

an audience member or buddy, one of their own, up there doing something.

You can do benign things like simply asking one or two people to help you move something or hold something (they always get a hand, don't they?). You can build in a demonstration of what you're talking about and ask someone to participate in it with you, if you can't make it a group exercise.

Sum Up: Your audience's inattention and disengagement due to their physical and psychological passivity should be handled by including them in the action of your speech. Surprise them by involving them. It's energizing, effective, and memorable.

Now to the content of your speech.

## **Presenting Subject Matter**

### *From the Familiar to the New*

The best way to start explaining a new subject is by describing something familiar and then working up to what's different. The *old*, not the *new*, gives an audience the sense of security that they will understand your material.

If you start with ". . . something like opening a screw-top jar," they can instantly picture it because they've done that a thousand times. On safe ground conceptually from the start, they'll stay with you as you add the differences one at a time.

"Picture a boat. Now if I add X, it begins to be able to . . ." makes something become interesting as you unfold or add on layers to the rest of your story because they have begun with confidence, able to imagine and identify with it.

### *Process First—Not Detail*

Everyone can grasp a process when it's pared down to the bare bone. You lose them when you add too many details at the outset.

They're just trying to get the general idea: What it looks like, what it does, and something about how it works. Analyze and give only the *essentials* they need to know; no fancy technical terms or deadly details yet. Otherwise you invite them to shut off the master switch.

### *Explain and Intrigue*

Here's a progression of how to edit and unfold information: